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**The Implementation of
Transition Planning and Service Coordination
for Special Education Students
Leaving High School in Ontario**

by

Dale R. Petruka

**Thesis submitted to the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
at the University of Ottawa
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
Faculty of Education
Department of Educational Administration
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ABSTRACT

Research has shown that developing a transition plan with students with disabilities while they are in high school helps to make the transition into adult life less stressful and more successful. This research examines the state of transition planning in Ontario in 1997/98 using Bronfenbrenner's (1972) ecological framework. A four phased, mixed methods design was employed.

In phase 1, policies and documents pertaining to transition planning were requested from all English school boards in Ontario. Only 8 boards provided documentation suggesting that not many school boards had published documentation about transition planning in 1997. If transition planning was occurring, it was mostly in place for students with developmental disabilities.

In phase 2, a questionnaire was mailed to 536 high schools across Ontario. The resulting data revealed that the majority of respondents believe they are doing most of the best practices for transition but many do not have a formal transition program in place for identified students. This part of the study showed that schools were not utilizing the services of community agencies to facilitate the process to the level of its potential. Furthermore, respondents indicated that the key to a successful program was the people in the school that managed it. The top barriers to transition programs were lack of money, personnel, resources, and time.

The questionnaire was followed-up by 36 telephone interviews: phase 3. The interviews provided detailed information about the barriers that transition programs face,

like transportation, community size, parental involvement, teacher training, levels of collaboration, money, time, and difficulties finding work placements.

In phase 4, a week long case study of a highly collaborative transition program provided an example of how one region coped and overcame some of the barriers to implementing transition planning.

This research provides a snapshot of transition planning in the province of Ontario in 1997/98 and suggests that the implementation process by the Ministry of Education needs to be improved if transition planning is going to be as effective as possible. Many issues were revealed that have potential implications for ongoing research and theory beyond the boundaries of Ontario.

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DEDICATION

**This thesis is dedicated to my parents, Clarice (née Mandziak) and Stanley Petruka,
who instilled in me a belief that I could do anything I put my mind to.**

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The transition from high school to adult life is a stressful time for all students, but it is a particularly difficult time for students with disabilities (McDonald, McKie, Newton, Webber, & Steele, 1992; Wehman, 1992, 1996; Wehman, Moon, Everson, Wood, & Barcus, 1988). The Council for Exceptional Children (1994) defines transition as:

A change in status from behaving primarily as a student to assuming emergent adult roles in the community. These roles include employment, participating in post-secondary education, maintaining a home, becoming appropriately involved in the community, and experiencing satisfactory personal and social relationships. (Halpern, 1994, p. 116)

For the purposes of this research, a student with a disability is any student that is identified by the school system as a special education student regardless of the type or severity of disability or disabilities (excluding solely gifted students). The disability may be visible or invisible, and may be categorized as one or more general types of disability; physical, behavioural, emotional, developmental, or learning.

Currently in Ontario, students with identified disabilities receive services to meet their needs as required by Regulation 305 and 306, popularly known as Bill 82 (Keeton-Watson, 1985), the 1990 Education Act (Montastyrskyj, 1995), and most recently Regulation 181/98 (1998). An Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) is written and followed for each identified student, and an Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC) ensures that the student receives the most appropriate services

available¹. Once students leave school, however, formal plans do not exist and services are not universally available. Although a variety of services and programs are in place across the province, they are not coordinated. Each organization has specific eligibility criteria, their own methods of organization, and different rules. These services are in high demand and long waiting lists can be expected (McDonald et al., 1992). As a result, access to, and information about services and programs can be difficult to obtain (Disabled Persons' Community Resources, 1991).

Families with a son or daughter who has "graduated" from high school may find themselves in the position of searching for vocational and/or residential services with little or no support from professionals. Lengthy waiting lists, segregated services such as sheltered workshops and large residential facilities, or absence of adult services are only some of the problems that may face these families. (McDonald et al., 1992, p. 4)

The fragmentation and lack of coordination between high schools and adult service agencies complicate the transition process and act as barriers to the development of the individual with disabilities. Since transition is not made in isolation but is influenced by the relationships of many people and services working directly and indirectly with the student, improving coordination among schools, human service agencies, post-secondary educational or training institutions, and local employers (herein referred to simply as services) is very important (Halpern, 1994). Improved coordination is perceived as being a vital link in the chain of events that results in a quality of life that includes employment, leisure activities, independent living, social interaction, and personal

¹ For a discussion of what is considered to be appropriate services, see Duquette (1990).

satisfaction for people with disabilities (Benz & Halpern, 1987; National Center for Youth with Disabilities, 1993; Repetto & Correa, 1996).

The problem faced by most special education students is that they are not fully prepared for the fact that when they leave high school, there are a limited number of work, educational, social service, and independent living options available, which are difficult to access. Outcome data revealed that people with disabilities do not achieve the same quality of life as their non-disabled peers. The most recent statistics from the 1991 Health and Limitation Survey conducted by Statistics Canada (1995) revealed that only 54% of people with disabilities aged 15-34 were employed compared to 70% of people without disabilities. The survey also showed that people with disabilities in the labour force were concentrated in lower paying jobs and were more likely to experience unemployment. This is related to the problem that people with disabilities tend to have less formal education than people without disabilities. People between the ages of 15-64 with disabilities were more than twice as likely as those without disabilities to have less than a grade 9 education. Only 6% with disabilities completed university while 14% without disabilities had done so (Shain, 1995). Although outcome data cannot solely be attributed to the state of transition programs or the fragmented and uncoordinated state of service coordination, it is assumed the present delivery system contributes to the less than desirable quality of life for people with disabilities.

Foreseeing this problem and addressing the need for transition planning and coordination of services, the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Labour of Ontario

jointly published Bridges to Employment for Students with Disabilities: A Resource Guide for School-to-Work Transition (SWT) Programs in 1988. This publication may be viewed as the government of Ontario's first attempt to implement transition planning in the province. This resource guide recommended a model to facilitate the school-to-work transition for students with disabilities, which included recommendations for service coordination. This model included best practices widely cited in the literature. It discussed three elements that made the transition process successful: job exploration, parental input, and interagency agreements. With regards to interagency agreements, it was written

... in order for the student to obtain the necessary support, an agreement should be made between the school and the appropriate agencies in consultation with the student. The agreement should address the specific support that the student requires, the types of resources required, and the responsibilities of both the school and the community agency. The parameters of such agreements should be reviewed as necessary. (p. 6)

The report noted that the needs of students with disabilities are so varied and unique that an Individualized Transition Plan (ITP) needs to be developed with each student early in the youth's high school career. It indicated that the transition plan should identify the student's needs, interests and strengths. The guide suggested that the following stakeholders be involved in the SWT program: the student; parents; employers; union representatives; educators; and community-service-agency personnel. The weakness of the SWT program was that it was not mandated, there were no incentives for schools to begin the program, and there were no repercussions if schools chose not to implement it.

Ten years after Bridges to Employment for Students with Disabilities was published, the need for transition planning continued to exist. Research, conducted primarily in the United States, where transition planning had been mandated nation-wide in 1990, identified best practices for a successful transition. But were these best practices suitable for schools in Ontario? Were high schools across the province already doing some of these best practices? To find out, educators' attitudes about transition planning and the current state of transition practices across the province needed to be examined. Once the current state was known, an investigation of factors that explain the discrepancy between best and current practices could be identified. Obstacles impeding the process could also be identified, and strategies to improve implementation could be suggested.

Purpose and Research Questions

This research provides a snapshot of transition programs for special education students in Ontario during the 1997/98 school year and then examines the gap that exists between *current practice* as recounted by special education department heads in Ontario to *best practice* for transition as identified in the literature. Any discrepancies between *current* and *best practice* are examined from a planned change perspective. The study identifies obstacles to carrying-out best practices and suggests ways to overcome these obstacles. Recommendations for further implementation of transition planning are made. Suggestions for further research are offered.

The questions that guided this research are:

1. To what extent are best practices for service coordination and transition of youth with disabilities from high school to adult life being implemented in Ontario high schools?
2. a) What factors explain observed discrepancies between best and current practices?
b) What obstacles prevent schools from moving toward the ideal?
3. What strategies could be used to overcome obstacles and help schools to reduce the gap between current and desired practice?

To underscore the timeliness of this research and to situate the reader in the proper context, it is relevant to note that soon after the data collection was completed, the provincial government of Ontario began steps to mandate transition planning for all special education students. On May 5, 1998, a memo was released to all school boards in Ontario requiring them to work with community agencies to develop transition plans for students with *developmental disabilities* over the age of 14². Knowing that this initiative may be poorly timed for students leaving high school in the immediate or very near future, the government began a temporary project to fund a limited number of students with developmental disabilities enabling them to remain in school for one to three years after the age of 21 (currently the maximum age at which a person can remain in high school). Soon after the memo was released, Regulation 181/98 (1998) was published, further extending the mandate of schools to create transition plans for all identified students excluding pupils identified solely as gifted (see Appendix A for an excerpt of the regulation). The regulation requires that the Individual Education Plans (IEP) include

² Memo from Veronica Lacey, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Education and Training, May 5, 1998.

a plan for the transition of the student from high school to further education or training, work, and community living. Transition plans are to be reviewed and updated annually from the age of 14 until the student graduates or leaves high school. Regulation 181/98 is clearly the provincial government's second and more earnest attempt to implement transition planning in Ontario. These developments support the relevance and value of this research as school personnel and policy analysts are currently in the process of implementing transition planning for special education students across the province.

Since 1998, the Ministries of Education and Community and Social Services have been working together to develop guidelines to assist school boards and community agencies with the formation of these transition plans. The guidelines are expected to be published during the winter of 2001. As of December 2000, there is no financial assistance or other forms of incentives being given to school boards to encourage or ensure the proper implementation of a transition program. Money is being awarded by the Ministry of Community and Social Services, however, to communities in Ontario that are working collaboratively to improve the transition process for students with developmental disabilities aged 18 – 28. The desire for more information about transition planning is great, indicated by the almost 300 requests for a report of this research from people across the province.

CHAPTER 2

Conceptual Framework and Literature Review

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework used to guide this study is based on Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological theory. Urie Bronfenbrenner was instrumental in the development of a holistic model which he originally called the ecological theory of human development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) and more recently named the bioecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). In the transition and collaboration literature the ecological theory has been used to promote a seamless model of transition services (Repetto & Correa, 1996), to support the integration of services for at-risk children (Mawhinney, 1994), and to examine integrated services and the Kentucky Family Resource Centers (Smrekar, 1993).

The ecological theory supports an integrated service model for transition planning (Repetto & Correa, 1996). It puts the child at the center of the transition process and recognizes that children do not develop in isolation - rather they co-evolve in relation to the evolution of relationships, systems, and the environment surrounding them (Dym, 1988). Bronfenbrenner's theory acknowledges and emphasizes the dynamic ecological relationships of an open system that includes family, friends, school, health services, employer, neighbourhood, transportation, recreation, assistive devices, and available resources. Alone, no one group or thing can make the transition from high school simple and easy, rather all parts of the system must work together to overcome the barriers

students with disabilities face as they transition into adult life. This theory adds force to the movement toward greater collaboration to meet the needs of children at risk (Mawhinney, 1994) and implement change in the education system.

The ecological model views the individual as existing at the center of hierarchical, nested structures which constitute the environment: micro-, meso-, exo-, and macro-systems (see Figure 2.1). The inner-most level is referred to as the microsystem and consists of the patterns of activities, roles, and interpersonal relationships experienced by the individual in a specific setting, for example, in the home, school, or place of employment. The next level, the mesosystem, is made up of the interrelations between two or more settings with which the child is in contact, for example, the home and school, or the school and peer group. In the case of service coordination, the relationship between the school and human service agencies would be examined. The next system in the hierarchy is called the exosystem and refers to those settings that have an effect on the student but in which the student has no active involvement. For example, government legislation, laws, and policies control transition services that affect students, but students do not normally have an active role in their creation. The final level is called the macrosystem and encompasses the preceding three levels as well as intangibles like culture, belief systems, and life style. Each system operates within itself and in relation to each other. Some systems touch the person directly while others have an indirect influence (Dym, 1988). Therefore a person's development is affected by events occurring in settings in which the person is not even present (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

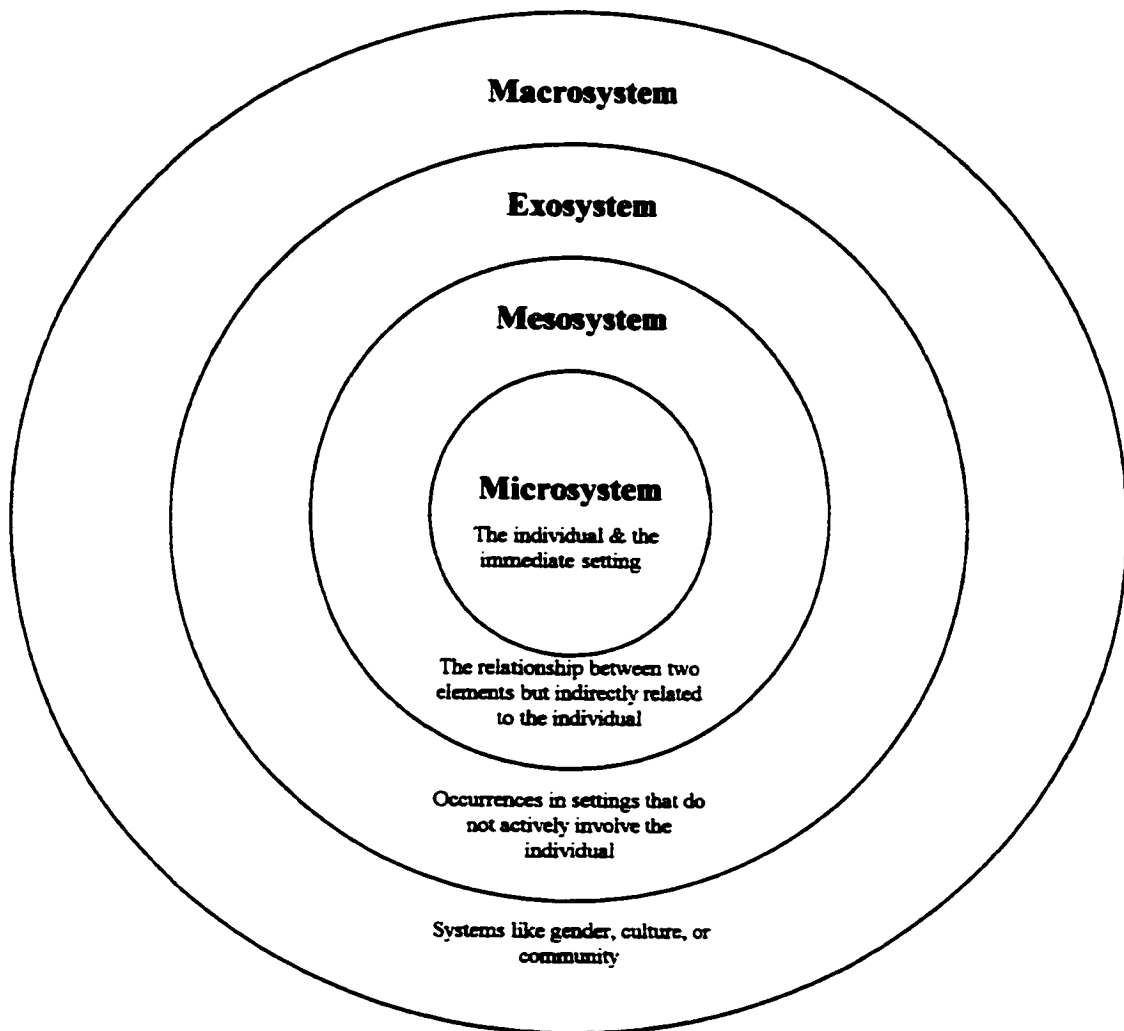


Figure 2.1. Researcher's conception of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) nested structures of child development.

Magnusson (1994) describes basic propositions of the ecological model. The ecological model recognizes that the individual functions and develops as a total integrated organism and that development does not take place in single aspects taken out of context. Understood in this manner, development is best described as a series of dynamic, complex, processes that often operate in a non-linear fashion. The second proposition recognizes that the individual functions and develops in a continuously ongoing, reciprocal process of interaction with the environment. For example, as the youth approaches adulthood, the parents adapt to the youth's differing needs; the youth then accommodates to meet the parents' expectations; the three person configuration may stabilize until one of the members change and then the process of reorganization begins again (adapted from Dym, 1988).

An ecological transition is a shift in role or setting (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The transition from school to adult life is considered an ecological transition because the person's position in the ecological environment is being altered as a result of a change in role, setting, or both which also involves a change "in expectations for behaviour associated with a particular position in society" (p. 6). Roles have the power to alter how a person is treated, how a person acts, what a person does, and even what a person thinks and feels.

Magnusson (1994) assures us that a holistic, integrated model does not imply that the whole system of an individual must be studied at the same time. Rather a focus on a set of relationships within one of the levels can reveal important information about the

development of the individual. The ecological model draws a researcher's attention to the dynamic interaction of a student's support systems.

The purpose for applying an ecological framework to the transition of youth with disabilities from school to adult life is to discover and identify the systems and processes that affect and are affected by the development of the student in transition. "The primary purpose of the ecological experiment becomes not hypothesis testing but discovery - the identification of those systems' properties and processes that affect and are affected by the behaviour and development of the human being" (Bronfenbrenner 1979, p. 37-8).

The ecological framework is an appropriate and useful framework from which the elements affecting the development of a student with disabilities in transition from high school to adult life can be examined. It views the child as developing in an open system and therefore recognizes the effect of the many elements and the relationships between elements that affect that transition and subsequently the child's development. This model goes beyond the cause and effect relationships of other models. It is more complex and dynamic.

Literature Review

The conceptual framework of this study is supported by current research. The following literature review looks at (a) the history and development of transition services, (b) best practices for transition and collaboration, and (c) the literature on planned change and implementation. The history of transition services and service coordination between schools and human service agencies puts the development of transition services

in Ontario in perspective. The literature on best practices for successful transition and service coordination lends empirical support and reveals the opinions of people whom work and research in these areas. The best practices are presented in the framework of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) "nested structures". An examination of planned change variables provides factors that affect the implementation of an innovation like school to work transition programs in Ontario. This framework forms a basis from which the gap that exists between best practice and current practice can be explained.

The History and Development of Transition Services

The large majority of literature about transition services and collaboration comes from the United States. Other than articles indicating that a transition planning process was implemented in Scotland in 1981 and that a pilot study was conducted in Edmonton, Alberta in 1990, little research on this topic that was published outside of the United States was found. Since the 1960s, education reformers in the United States have been concerned with the post-school outcomes of young adults with disabilities. When compared to their peers without disabilities, students with disabilities experienced: higher dropout rates; substantial levels of unemployment and underemployment; economic instability; greater dependence on parents and others; low levels of participation in post-secondary education and training programs; and restricted participation in community and leisure time activities (Halpern, 1990; Heiden, 1989; Mithaug, Horiuchi, & Fanning, 1985; Wehman, Kregel, & Seyfarth, 1985). Further, when individuals with disabilities turned to community services for support and assistance, they were faced with limited

access, disincentives for participation, and long waiting lists for needed services (Love & Malian, 1997, 1998; Roessler, Brolin, & Johnson, 1990).

In 1983, the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, U.S. Department of Education, identified transition from school to work for students with disabilities as a federal priority. In 1990, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (P.L. 101-476) mandated transition planning as part of the Individual Education Plan for all students with disabilities ages 16 years and older, with the rules becoming effective in 1992. The age that transition planning must begin was adjusted to 14 with amendments to the act in 1997.

To aid the implementation of transition services, five-year grants were awarded on a competitive basis to individual states for the purpose of promoting statewide systems change focused on the improvement of school-to-work transition services for youth with disabilities and families. By the year 2000, 46 states were anticipated to have participated in and completed a five-year state systems change project (Johnson & Halloran, 1997). By identifying transition from school-to-work as a priority and providing grants to support system's change projects on transition, the U.S. government demonstrated a commitment to improve transition outcomes (Katsiyannis, deFur, & Conderman, 1998).

Research on the success of implementation and transition planning efforts has proven inconclusive. On one hand, the U.S. Department of Education (1995) reports that more individuals with disabilities graduated from high school in 1995 than 10 years ago; post-secondary education participation rates have tripled; and today's youth with

disabilities have higher employment rates than older persons with disabilities. On the other hand, the National Organization on Disability and Louis Harris and Associates (1998) reports that adults with disabilities remain more likely to be unemployed, lonely, and unhappy with their lives than are adults without disabilities. Consequently, further research efforts are required to determine if systemic changes have resulted in tangible outcomes for individuals with disabilities with regard to employment, post-secondary education, and community living (U. S. Department of Education, 1995; Katsiyannis et al., 1998). Such nation-wide research has been difficult to conduct and compare because of the geographic disparities, and the varying goals, activities, and impacts of each program.

Johnson and Halloran (1997) note that some promising developments that have occurred in the United States due to the enactment of IDEA. These include: (a) the development of linkages among schools, other community service agencies, and employers; (b) a broadening of the scope of the secondary school curriculum; (c) the development of interagency agreements; (d) changes to the roles and skill requirements of transition personnel; (e) and the promotion of social competence, personal choice, and self-determination skills among youth with disabilities. The positive benefits of these efforts cited in this research indicate that transition services, although not a panacea to solve all problems for people with disabilities, is a very worthwhile endeavor.

Ontario has followed the initiatives of its southern neighbors. In 1988, Bridges to Employment for Person's With Disabilities: A Resource Guide for School-to-Work (STW) Transitions was published which demonstrated a concern but not a commitment

to this issue. It was not until ten years later, in September 1998 that the Government of Ontario mandated that transition plans be part of the Individual Education Plan of all identified students. Further commitment in the form of financial incentives and resource support has not been given as of December 2000.

Introduction to the Transition Literature

The factors contributing to a successful transition are numerous and complex. Kohler (1993) conducted a meta-analysis of literature published between 1985-1991 to determine which transition practices had been implied or substantiated as having a positive impact on outcomes for students with disabilities. The most frequently cited best practices were vocational training, parent involvement, and interagency collaboration. In previous work, I conducted the same type of meta-analysis of literature published between 1985-1996 focusing on youth with physical disabilities (Petruka, 1997). I identified interagency collaboration, involvement of parents, vocational classes and training, and formation of an Individual Transition Plan (ITP) as the most frequently cited best practices. After much further research and considering these analyses as well as the large body of research on transition planning, I identified 21 practices for transition and 12 practices for service coordination (see Table 2.1 for a list of practices and Appendix B for practices and references). Practices were selected based on their frequency and emphasis in the literature as well as the way they were linked to the other practices. As in Kohler (1993), practices have been categorized as substantiated or

Table 2.1**List of Transition and Collaboration Practices****Transition Practices**

1. Development of a formal Individualized Transition Plan (ITP).
2. The student's wishes, interests, needs, strengths, and abilities are incorporated into the transition plans.
3. Planning for transition begins before the age of 16.
4. The student is notified of vocational options, opportunities, and support services before reaching the age of 16.
5. Vocational and academic curricula are integrated.
6. The student is placed in the least restrictive instructional setting (age appropriate, aiming for regular classroom placement as much as possible).
7. Students are encouraged to take occupationally oriented vocational courses.
8. Student gains work experience while in school (e.g., co-operative education).
9. Job placement services are available in the school for students with disabilities prior to and following completion of vocational courses.
10. Curriculum and transition programs are focused on resources and jobs available in the community.
11. School provides career education curriculum.
12. School provides vocational training.
13. School provides social skills training.
14. Instructional support services are available (e.g., teacher aides, special materials, assistive technology, interpreters, peer tutors).
15. School provides career guidance services for special education students.
16. Students receive on-going job support (e.g., job coach, supported employment, regular contact between the school and the agency).
17. School provides vocational assessments for special education students.
18. Alternative assessments like portfolios are used.
19. Parents are involved in the transition planning process.
20. Parents receive training to prepare them for the transition their child is about to make.
21. Follow-up data on the post-school outcomes of former special education students are collected.

Collaboration Practices

22. The school and agencies share a common problem (the need to prepare for the transition from high school).
23. Schools and agencies are committed to a common mission (to prepare students for the transition).
24. Schools and agencies understand each other's eligibility and entitlement requirements.
25. Schools and community agencies share common definitions of disabilities.
26. Teachers and agency personnel were involved in the formation of plans and policies for collaboration at the local level.
27. a) Formal written agreements to coordinate services between the school and human service agencies exist.
b) Agreements state the roles and responsibilities of both the school and the community agency.
c) Written agreements state the specific supports and resources the student requires.
28. Schools and agencies share and combine resources so that services overlap.
29. All costs are shared equally between schools and agencies.
30. Lines of communication between the school and agencies have been developed.
31. Monitoring occurs to ensure that responsibilities of the school and agencies are being carried out

implied. A substantiated reference is supported by the results of a study. Practices that are implied are deemed desirable or effective by the publication's author(s) but are not specifically linked to evidence from a study. The majority of references are implied rather than substantiated. This fact indicates that many of the practices are socially accepted but lack empirical validation at this time. This is likely due to the recent introduction of transition planning to schools in countries around the world and the need for more research in this area. Each best practice will be discussed under the appropriate system in Bronfenbrenner's framework on the following pages. These practices provide a framework for analyzing existing policies and programs that will be used during data collection.

It should be noted that a study by Hughes, Eisenman, Hwang, Kim, Killian, and Scott (1997) identified 10 best practices for transition but was not published in time to influence the creation of the questionnaire used in this study. In their study, Hughes et al. conducted a review of 113 empirical studies identifying ten best practices and verifying their findings with 54 researchers who publish in this field. The 10 best practices identified by this group were (a) teach social skills, (b) teach self-management and independence, (c) identify independence objectives, (d) assess social acceptance, (e) identify co-worker, peer, and family support, (f) identify student's preferences and choices, (g) monitor social acceptance across time, (h) identify environmental support, (i) match support to student's needs, and (j) teach choice making and decision making. The findings from this research were worded and categorized differently than the best practices identified by Kohler (1993) and Petruka (1997). Two of the practices match the

practices identified for this study: teaching social skills, and identifying student's preferences and choices. Five of the practices would be included as part of the development of a formal Individual Transition Plan (ITP) if needed by the individual: teaching self-management and independence; identifying independence objectives; identifying people supports; identifying environmental supports; and matching the supports to student's needs. Teaching choice making and decision making would be part of the curriculum and training the student would receive. Assessing and monitoring social acceptance are the only two practices that do not fit into the practices that have been identified for this study.

Best Practices Organized in Bronfenbrenner's Framework

An examination of best practices for transition and collaboration are presented using Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological framework to demonstrate the many people and systems that have an impact on the transition of students with disabilities and the impact the students with disabilities have on people and existing systems. Each practice is linked to one of the systems in Bronfenbrenner's model. The practices demonstrate the multiple levels of interaction that occur and have an impact on the transition of an individual from high school to adult life. They also illustrate the suitability of this model to the study of transition planning. Bronfenbrenner's ecological model has been previously applied to transition and collaboration research. Rusch and Mithaug (1985) applied the micro-, meso-, exo-, and macrosystems to understand transitional programming for students with severe disabilities. Gajar (1992) used the four levels as a

framework to present the major barriers and facilitators encountered by post-secondary programs. Mawhinney (1994) used the ecological perspective to understand the barriers to service delivery for 'at risk' families and children. Utilizing such a framework aids conceptualization and understanding of the complex issues that surround transition and service coordination. Although the systems are presented separately, overlap exists.

Microsystem.

The microsystem involves face-to-face interactions with the student. Therefore it focuses on the youth with disabilities in relation to parents or guardians, teachers, agency personnel, employers, or friends (see Figure 2.2). The literature discusses the influence of parents, the involvement of the student in transitional planning, the importance of work experience before school-leaving, and curriculum.

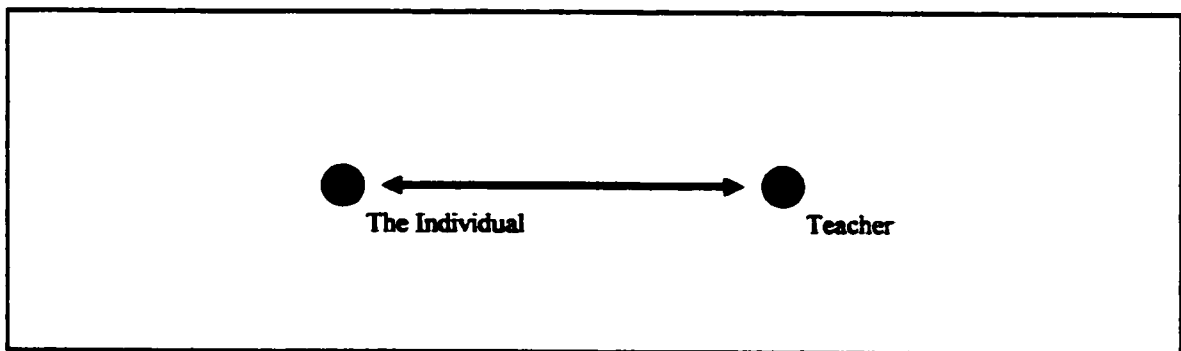


Figure 2.2. An example of a relationship in the microsystem.

An Individualized Transition Plan (ITP) is a tool by which a student's educational program and school experiences are made to match the student's post-school goals (Thomson, Latter, & Ward, 1995). The ITP should place the student in the least restrictive learning environment (Benz & Halpern, 1986, 1987; Hudson, Schwartz, Sealander, Campbell, & Hensel, 1988; Wehman et al., 1985). The process should focus on the student's goals, desires, and needs for the future (Maine Department of Educational and Cultural Services, 1990; Roeher Institute, 1994) and be built on the youth's abilities and competencies (University of Minnesota, 1995). The ITP should promote self-advocacy: "the transfer of power and control over the values, decisions, choices, and directions of human services from external entities to the service consumers" (Wehman, 1996, p. 424). Self-advocacy ensures that the wishes, desires, needs and goals of students are considered (Wehman, 1996). Individuals have the right to participate in determining their own future; this is called self-determination (Cashman, 1995). In order for self-determination to be possible, students must be informed of their options and have input into the planning process (Wehman, 1990).

Transition planning should begin no later than age 16 (Halpern, 1993; Wehman, 1990). At this time, the student should be notified of vocational options, opportunities, and support services (Hardman & McDonnell, 1987; Stremel, 1995; Wehman et al., 1988). Services being used in the transition process need to be clearly identified (Meers, 1992), and everyone involved must be aware of their responsibilities and made to attach a date of completion to their goals (Milner, 1995; Virginia State Department of Education, 1994). Long and short-term goals need to be set (Milner, 1995). Services, support and

follow-up may need to continue past school-leaving (Hardman & McDonnell, 1987; Reetz, Wheeler, & Aplan, 1990; Thomson et al., 1995).

The need for parental involvement is seen as an important component of the transition process (Benz & Halpern, 1987; Hardman & McDonnell, 1987; Haring, Lovett, & Saren, 1991; Roeher Institute, 1994; Wehman, 1990). In a study by Hudson et al. (1988), 94% of students with disabilities interviewed said support from parents played an important role in the completion of their education. Parent involvement is so important that the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA; P. L. 101-476, 1990) mandates family involvement in the development of transition plans. Transition planning should be family and student focused (Repetto & Correa, 1996; Nesbit, Clark, & Covert, 1991).

Paid work experience in the community during high school is a strong predictor of post-school employment (Bates & Panscofar, 1981; Hasazi & Clark, 1988; Hasazi, Gordon, & Roe, 1985; Roeher Institute, 1994). The personality of the student should match the requirements of the workplace (Meers, 1992). Worksite modifications and job support, perhaps a job coach, may be necessary. Close proximity relationships are fostered at work, which aid in the development of the youth and, in turn, community workers develop a better understanding of youth with disabilities.

As for school curriculum, the focus on preparing students for adult life necessitates "that secondary education programs provide curricula that not only focus on academic skill development, but enhance the vocational, social, and personal development of students" (Kohler & Rusch, 1995, p. 188). Knowlton and Clark (1987) recommend curricula and experiences that address job finding, job maintenance, and

leisure skills. Mithaug et al. (1987) recommend altering instructional goals to teach goal setting, planning, independent learning, self-evaluation and adjustment. Hardman and McDonnell (1987) write that students need assistance to develop necessary social, academic, daily living and employability skills and require practical skill application experience. Wehman (1996) promotes training models that improve self-advocacy skills. Various literature also notes that curriculum needs to be community referenced (Hardman & McDonnell, 1987; University of Minnesota, 1995; Wehman, 1990). Schools can focus on developing skills by providing academic and vocational instruction, identifying and providing necessary supports, and by regularly assessing the instructional program (Kohler & Rusch, 1995).

Mesosystem.

The mesosystem includes the interactions between two systems with which the student is involved, but which have only an indirect influence on the student (see Figure 2.3). For example, the ability of the school and agencies to work together indirectly affects the provision of services and subsequently the development of the student. The literature reveals details about interagency collaboration, intra-agency collaboration, and curriculum.

To encourage systemic change and promote greater interagency collaboration, the United States congress passed The Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA; P. L. 101-476) in 1990. This law requires each state to include transition services in educational

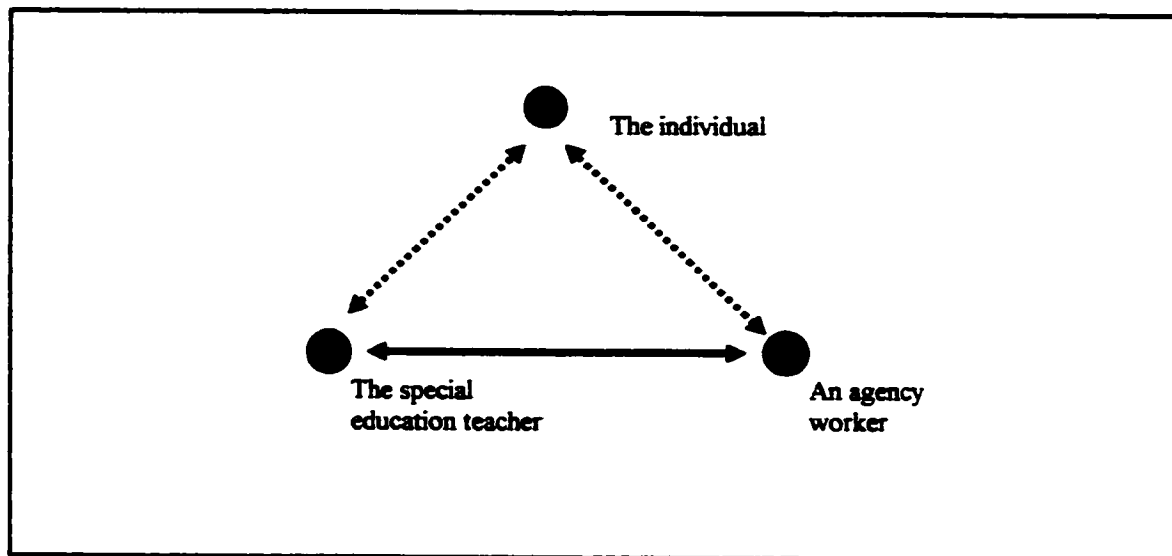


Figure 2.3. An example of relationships in the mesosystem.

programming for secondary students with disabilities which incorporates collaborative transition planning between schools and post-school adult service providers (Lombard & Neubert, 1994). In their study of the effectiveness of this law, Taymans, Corbey and Dodge (1995) found that 34 of the 40 states they surveyed had formal interagency committees that specifically addressed transition policies. When state level transition coordinators were asked to rate the effectiveness of interagency agreements, on a scale of 1 to 5, the average rating was a 3 meaning they believed interagency agreements were only somewhat effective. Baer, Simmons, and Flexer (1996) conducted a survey in September 1993 to determine the status of transition practice in local education agencies in Ohio. Their findings suggested that there was little concern for coordination of services among transition providers. Adler (1994) writes that collaborations are

frequently promoted by individuals who are unfamiliar with the realities of the people they are attempting to help, and unaware of the strengths and weaknesses of the organizations to be brought together in partnership. Collaboration is more often driven by its anticipated improvement of bureaucratic efficiency rather than by a goal of helping people in need.

Wehman (1996) created a continuum of models of agency interaction (adapted from Wehman et al., 1988) (see Figure 2.4) that can be used to determine the level of interaction between schools and agencies. The degree of interaction can be determined by (a) the amount and type of communication and information exchange, (b) service planning and implementation, and (c) cost sharing. Based on the degree of interaction, agencies can be classified as being either cooperative, coordinated, or collaborative (Cashman, 1995).

Although he uses different labels for the levels of interaction, Wehman (1996) explains that cooperative agencies have no planned procedure for communication between agencies. Receiving agencies may doubt the validity of information or services received and require duplication of tests or services. As a result funds are inefficiently utilized.

With coordinated agencies, services are designed so that when services end with one agency they begin, and thus continue, with the next in a smooth uninterrupted fashion. Services are pre-planned as part of Individualized Transition Planning (ITP) meetings. Communication is ongoing and funds are better utilized because repetition of services is avoided.

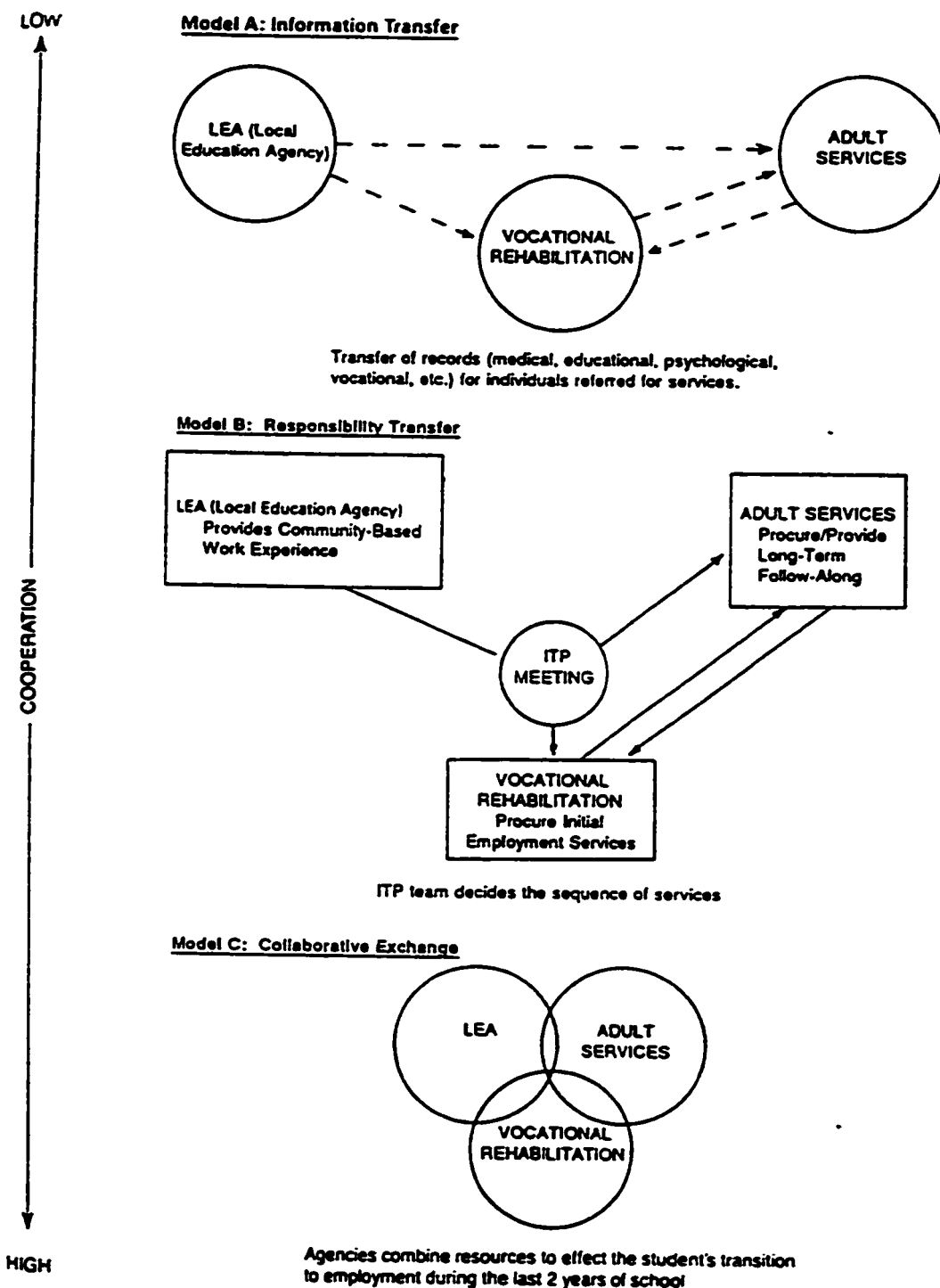


Figure 2.4. Models of agency interaction (From: Wehman, 1996, p.116).

Agencies in collaboration have a plan for communication and information exchange. Service implementation is coordinated and overlapping. In this model, agencies combine resources before the student in question leaves high school. Services overlap without duplication of spending - cost sharing is equitable.

Plans and policies for collaboration need to be formed at the local level (Brown, Halpern, Hasazi, & Wehman, 1987; Hardman & McDonnell, 1987; Peters, Templeman, & Brostrom, 1987). Within these policies, guidelines to reduce differences in disability definitions and eligibility criteria between agencies must be set (Benz, Johnson, Mikkelsen, & Lindstrom, 1995). Johnson, Bruininks, and Thurlow (1987) write that a coherent and consistent policy framework includes

clearly articulated policy goals, understanding of service eligibility and entitlement requirements, commonly shared language and information among service delivery systems, and consensus on the type and scope of services provided within each level of the service delivery system. (p. 523)

Rachal (1995) writes that underlying the policies, agencies must have a commitment to a common mission. Policies must be based upon valid and tested planning models and theories of organizational change and knowledge (Johnson et al., 1987). They must be made using accurate information of the characteristics of the youth with disabilities to be served and on the range of services available within the community. Post-school outcomes, or follow-up data of youth with disabilities is important information that should inform policy creation and revision. In their study of the implementation of another reform in Ontario, Leithwood, Cousins, & Trider (1990) found that involving

staff in implementation decisions had a significant influence on the implementation of the reform.

Written agreements between agencies and schools need to be created and must clearly indicate roles for all people involved (Benz & Halpern, 1987). They should state the specific supports and resources the student requires. Once the collaboration is established follow-up is necessary to ensure that interagency plans are being followed (Peters et al., 1987) and to make compensations for any deviance from the plan. Monitoring the implementation process influences implementation (Leithwood et al., 1990).

Exosystem.

The exosystem encompasses at least one system that does not actively involve the youth, but rather has an indirect influence on the child (see Figure 2.5). For example, the

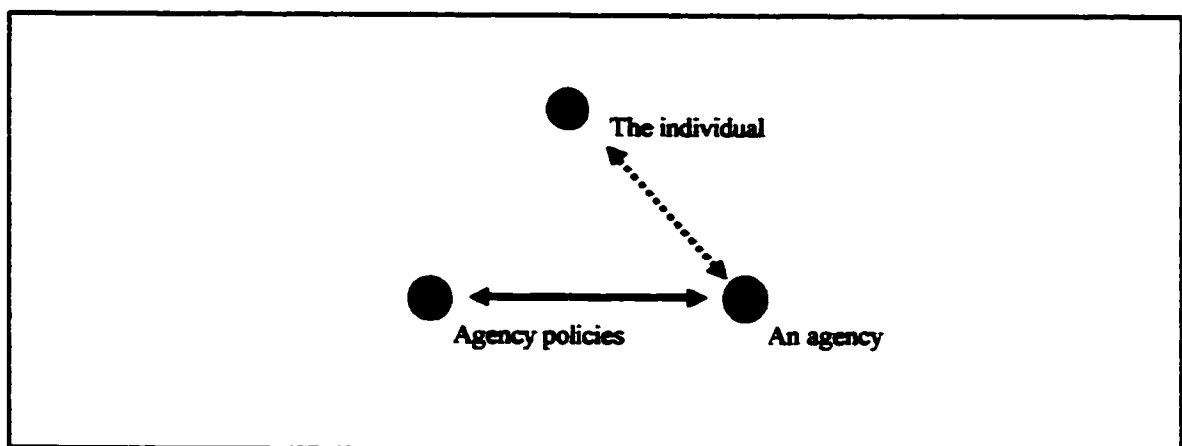


Figure 2.5. An example of relationships in the exosystem.

creation of the Bridges to Employment for Students with Disabilities resource guidebook did not actively involve students, but implementation of the program, or lack of implementation, has an influence on students' development. Training is another example. Students receive the benefits of their teacher's training, but are not actively involved in the training process themselves. Policy creation is yet another example.

Although innovative, government published documents like Bridges to Employment for Students with Disabilities: the School-to-Work (SWT) Transition have the potential to limit public thinking about transition. The SWT program can be criticized for its narrow focus on the goal of work as the main outcome of a successful transition and its failure to fully recognize the other aspects of adult life. As Halpern (1985, 1990) indicates, other dimensions of community adjustment like residential or social/interpersonal adjustment are important as well.

Although employment is obviously one very important dimension of community adjustment, it is extremely short sighted to allow this dimension to dominate entirely the way in which we conceptualize the desired outcomes of a public education for students with disabilities (or any group of students, for that matter). (Halpern, 1990, p. 19)

In response, Halpern (1993) put forth "quality of life" as a conceptual framework to evaluate transition outcomes (see Figure 2.6) which includes community adjustment in a residential environment and the development of social and interpersonal networks as well as employment. Anderson (1992) writes, "in the 1990's, there is no longer debate over the appropriateness of broadened perspectives of transition" (p. 3).

While discussing services for youth in general, Hewer (1993) argues that "prevailing policy and practice, despite the appearance of great concern, public

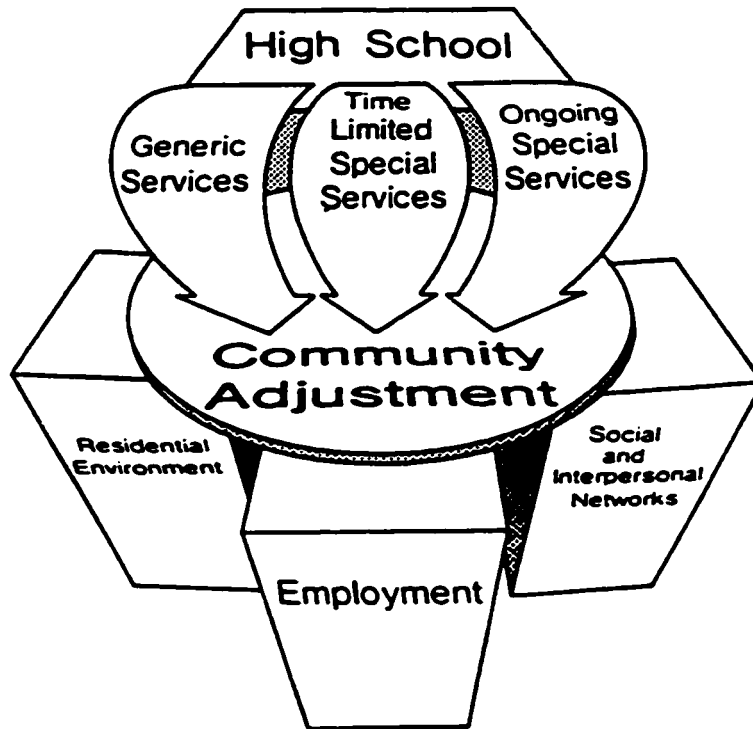


Figure 2.6. Transition model (From: Halpern, 1985, p.481).

expenditure and serious activity, may well be perpetuating, and not resolving the issues at hand” (p. 9). Although, legislation, policies, and rules are needed to ensure that processes facilitating transition are created, they do not guarantee that the procedures will be followed or used. For example, a survey of special education teachers in Oregon (Benz, Lindstrom, & Halpern, 1995) reported that less than half of their students participated in community or in-school work experience even though such programs were available. This example demonstrates that program availability is not synonymous with program utilization (Benz & Halpern, 1986). On the positive side, when policies are followed as intended, they can facilitate the transition process. For example, the Maine Department of Education and Cultural Services (1990) substantiated a link between successful

transition and adherence to policy. Schools with successful transition planning had formalized policies and procedures in place.

Regarding education and training, Reetz et al. (1990) implied in their research that a barrier to transition was a lack of training of teachers and agency personnel about transition issues. They and University of Minnesota (1995) report that there is a critical shortage of personnel trained in transition issues in the United States and that the shortage is even more pronounced in rural areas. Pre-service and inservice training should include transition planning, working with families (McDonald et al., 1992), and provide technical assistance, information, and training on topics like team building, time management, and curriculum modification and adaptations (South Dakota State Department of Education and Cultural Affairs, 1995). Educators also need to become skilled collaborators and effective communicators (Cashman, 1995) as do agency personnel (Steveley & Everson, 1995). Baer et al. (1996) wrote that the strongest predictor of transition policy implementation was the amount of transition training received. Joint training and joint development of supporting materials are recommended to establish common frameworks and practices (Benz et al., 1995). Staff training is an important part of the transition process (Bullis & Egelston-Dodd, 1990; Riches, Paramentoer, Fegent, & Bouley, 1993; Steere, Wood, Panscofar, & Rucker, 1993).

Researchers (Danek & McCrone, 1989; DeStefano et al., 1999; Haring et al, 1991; Milner, 1995; Nesbit et al., 1992; Reetz et al., 1990) note that families also need to be educated about the transition process. Reetz et al. (1990) indicate that there is a lack of awareness of post high-school options among parents of children with disabilities.

Families need to be made aware of all the services available after graduation and how to access them (Milner, 1995). Training would alleviate some of the concerns parents have and may provide opportunities for families to observe available options first hand (Haring et al., 1991). Some researchers (Boone, 1992; Collet-Klingenberg, 1998; McHair & Rusch, 1991) believe that strategies need to be developed to promote a more active role of parents in both the development and implementation of transition plans.

Salembier and Furney (1997) found that 30% of parents they interviewed in the United States were not satisfied with the Individual Education Plan and Individual Transition Plan (IEP/ITP) meetings. Collet-Klingenberg (1998) found that there was a gap between the expressed importance of student and parent involvement and the actual degree of their involvement in transition related activities. These two pieces of research reveal that students and parents tend to take a passive role in the transition process and do not feel they have enough input. Educating parents about the transition process may give them the knowledge and courage to participate more at meetings by helping them to understand the process and help them define their role. Salembier and Furney (1997) stress the importance of parental involvement in the transition process since in most cases parents have the greatest amount of available information about their child's skills, interests, needs, and desires. Danek and McCrone (1989) suggests that either a designated individual, one of the agencies involved, or the school needs to be responsible for providing information and training for families. Parents want more direction and advice (Thomson et al., 1995).

The Roehrer Institute (1994) believes that people with disabilities should be actively involved in the policy and program development process. Leithwood, Lehman, Bassett, & Sands (1987) found that when teachers were involved in the creation and implementation of a policy, respondents generally agreed that their “ownership” in the decisions was an aid to implementation. Involvement in policy creation aids implementation.

Macrosystem.

The macrosystem surrounds the student but its influence is subtle and may not be fully realized by the individual in transition (see Figure 2.7). Components of the macrosystem include culture, gender, community, and disability classifications.

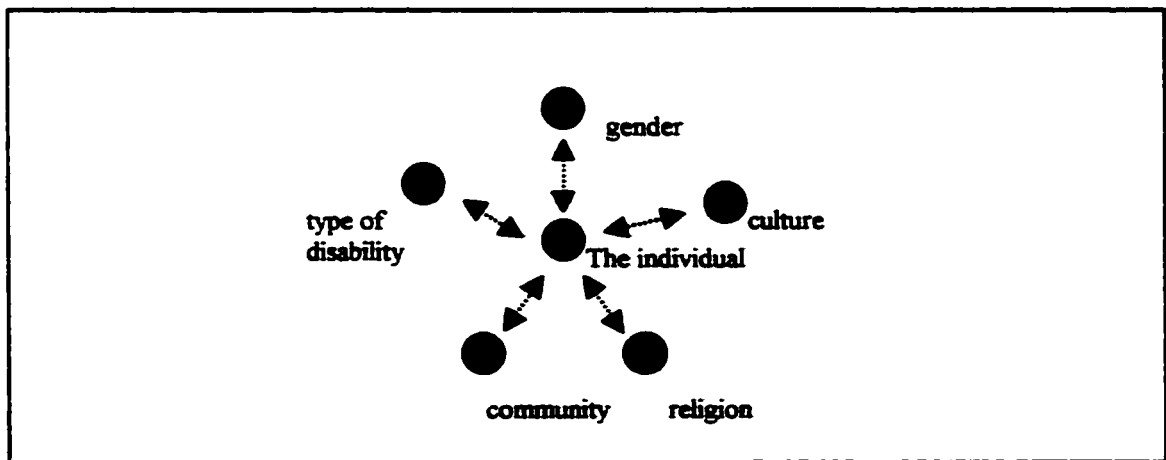


Figure 2.7. An example of relationships in the macrosystem.

In order for school-linked interventions like transition planning to be successful, they must be based on knowledge of the student's cultural background (Ogbu, 1992). Dias (1993) and the Kansas State Board of Education (1996) make a case supporting the need for alternative assessment practices like portfolios for minorities seeking transition services. Dias (1993) explains that standardized assessments are the predominantly used decision-making devices for services and are also used to predict post high-school outcomes. Since standardized tests are based on norm groups they do not fairly represent all cultural, linguistic, socioeconomic and disability groups. Transition programs need to be sensitive to cultural differences (University of Minnesota, 1995). Portfolio assessments are a less biased form of evaluation.

Post-school outcomes for men and women are quite different indicating that gender influences transition. Males are more likely to drop out than females (Marder & D'Amico, 1992). Males experience more labour market success than females (Hasazi et al., 1985, Mithaug et al., 1985; Wagner, 1991) and males tend to earn more money (Sitlington & Frank, 1990). These differences highlighted in the follow-up/along studies suggest that transition programs should be different for males and females.

The community plays an important role in transition. Researchers (Hardman & McDonnell, 1987; Nisbet et al., 1991; Steere et al., 1993; Wehman, 1990; University of Minnesota, 1995) believe that transition programs need to be community based and that curriculum should be community referenced (Hardman & McDonnell, 1987). Materials, activities, and natural cues from the local community should be incorporated into training and instruction (Steere et al., 1993). Rural areas, however, have fewer services and

employment opportunities than urban centers which means limited options and choices are available to rural students. Shea, Salhanni, Lewko, Boschen, Flynn, and Volpe (1993) found that small Northern Ontario communities have difficulty recruiting and retaining human service providers forcing parents to travel great distances to urban centers for required services therefore necessitating “outreach” models of service delivery. Wehman (1992) notes that transition programs in rural areas will have a different focus than programs in highly urban, inner city communities. Regarding collaboration, however, Mawhinney’s (1997) recent survey of school boards across Canada revealed little differentiation in the extent of collaboration between school and community agencies in rural and urban areas. Community characteristics influence the planning and implementation of the transition programs.

Disability classifications also play a role in transition. Thirteen percent of the total population of Canada were classified as being of working age (15-64) with a disability (Oderkirk, 1993). Of this number, 54% had a mild disability, 31% were moderately disabled, and 15% had a severe disability (Shain, 1995). Smithdas (1995) writes that the more severe the disability, the more demanding and intense is the challenge of transition. Since sight and hearing are two of the most important ways a person learns about the world, one of the most serious disabilities known is deaf-blindness. Everson (1995) asks, “Are the transition processes and outcomes any different for young adults who are deaf-blind than for other young adults in transition?” (p. 3). Her work, not being comparative in nature, did not answer this question. The research

reviewed tends to give specific suggestions for the severely disabled or general suggestions for practice that seem to apply to all disability classifications. Programs should be different for the varying levels of disability and an individual's needs.

As this portion of the literature review suggests, there are many practices for transition and collaboration that have a direct or indirect affect on the student's transition from high school to adult life. Bronfenbrenner's (1979) model demonstrates how the relationships at different levels of interaction have an impact on the student. The following section, which reviews the literature on planned change, will help to explain some of the discrepancy between best and actual practice.

Literature on Planned Change and Implementation

As Levin (1993) states, "We do not simply want schools to change, we want them to change in particular ways." This is the essence of planned change. Making schools change in particular ways, however, is difficult to do. Research on planned change reveals that merely introducing an innovation like the School-to-Work Transition (SWT) program does not guarantee its adoption by school boards. Similarly the adoption of an innovation does not guarantee successful implementation (Cohen, 1995; Huberman, 1992; Rand Corporation, 1974-1978, Sarason, 1990). Rather a gap exists between the intended innovation and the actual action. The research on planned change has produced a number of factors likely to influence the size of the gap: (a) adaptability of the innovation to current school procedures and organization; (b) having sufficient financial resources; (c) having sufficient personnel and supplies; (d) having the necessary skills for

implementation of the practices; (e) having the time to implement the practices; (f) need; (g) believing the practices are worthwhile; (h) the principal having the necessary skills; (i) the principal believing the practices are worthwhile; (j) school board administrators having the necessary skills; (k) transition programming being important to the school; (l) parents seeing the practices as being important; (m) practices being important to the city/town/community; and (n) having a high level of collaboration between staff within the school (see Appendix C for indicators of implementation capacity and references). The research has also revealed useful information about the stages of implementation as identified by Huberman and Miles (1984)³. Each factor will be discussed in greater detail demonstrating how these factors help us to understand why an innovation like the SWT program is implemented or not.

The adaptability of an innovation to current school procedures and organization is important to successful adoption (Fullan, 1991; Leithwood et al., 1990). The innovation needs to fit well with the teacher's situation (Fullan, 1991) and school context. Huberman and Miles (1984) discuss three ways an innovation is adaptable: (a) the way the innovation relates to the students; (b) if parts of the innovation are already familiar; and, (c) normatively, that the innovation is consistent to existing beliefs. Adaptable innovations are often separated into component parts and installed one step at a time with familiar components strategically implemented at the onset (Backer, Liberman & Kuehnel, 1986).

³ Huberman and Miles (1984) examined 12 sites in the United States that were carrying out innovation-based school-improvement programs under the aegis of the National Diffusion Network and Title IV-C.

Having sufficient financial resources is crucial to the implementation process as well. Change requires time, resources, and training, all of which require money (Fullan and Miles, 1992). If no “new” money is available, there must be a reallocation of existing funds (Fullan and Miles, 1992; Louis and Miles, 1990). Money could be reallocated as a result of combining resources (Hasazi, 1985).

People are central to the change process. The number of people, as well as the kind of people, play a role. One key person or a group of key people generally “champion” the innovation. The champion may be the principal, a member of the teaching staff, or a small group of enthusiasts. What motivates a person to champion a reform effort? Huberman and Miles (1984) found that in cases where adoption of an innovation occurred, most users were motivated by opportunities for professional growth. “In roughly half of the cases, the incentives for adoption were tied up with career plans for moving in, over, up, or away or alternatively, for consolidating one’s position” (Huberman & Miles, 1984, p. 272). In very few cases in their study was an innovation adopted because it was a solution to the problem.

Reform requires enormous effort, effort that must be sustained over time (Fullan & Miles, 1992). Huberman and Miles (1984) found that it takes about 18 months for an innovation to settle. During that time, stability of personnel is crucial. The problem with one person championship is that once the champion retires, leaves the school, or simply moves on, the innovation no longer has the spark to keep it going (Fullan, 1992).

Complicating this finding is the realization that people who are most often the champion are the most likely to seek a career move or change location (Huberman & Miles, 1984).

Resources can also be in the form of assistance to the people implementing the innovation. Assistance may be delivered in the form of conferences, in-service training, visits, committee structures, team meetings, peer consultation, access to external consultants, rapid access to central office personnel, coaching, coordination, and/or family support (Huberman & Miles, 1984). Sustained assistance is crucial to large-scale implementation. Good assistance “is strong, sustained over years, closely responsive to local needs, and focused on building local capacity” (Fullan & Miles, 1992).

Resources are also *things* that are needed for implementation. Things may include computers, training materials, resource documents, or guidelines. Without these things, implementation is more difficult and time-consuming. Fullan and Miles (1992) explain the need for “resourcing”. “Resourcing” involves scanning the school and its environment for resources and matching them to an existing need. It may involve buying, negotiating for, or simply grabbing resources; reworking the resource so it would better fit the situation; creating time through schedule changes; and/or developing support structures such as steering groups, committees, or groups of local trainers. If new resources are not provided, school personnel must use those things already available to them.

For successful implementation to occur, teachers need to be confident that they have the necessary knowledge and skills to carry out the innovation (Leithwood et al., 1990). An innovation often means learning to do something new. That entails professional development or in-service, both of which have been identified as an important part of the implementation process (Fullan, 1992, Huberman & Miles, 1984).

Simply having training, however, is not enough. The quality of the training is also important (Leithwood et al., 1990). Fullan (1991) stresses that training is “effective when it combines concrete, teacher specific training activities, ongoing continuous assistance and support during the process of implementation, and regular meetings with peers and others... The more complex the change, the more interaction that is required *during* implementation” (p. 86). Training must be relevant to the innovation and the trainee.

As already mentioned, change demands additional time (Fullan and Miles, 1992). Louis and Miles (1990) found that principals spent an average of 32% of a year on change management. Teachers spent an average of 13% of a year on reform. Substantial time and effort needs to be devoted to monitoring implementation, keeping people informed of what is happening, linking projects, locating unsolved problems, and taking clear coping action (Fullan and Miles, 1992). Considering the fact that principals and teachers have to maintain current school practices and procedures while implementing the change, it is no wonder overload is experienced. The extra work involved in change requires that release time or considerate scheduling be provided.

The perceived need for the innovation plays a large role in implementation. As Fullan (1991) explains, schools are faced with an overload of improvement agendas and many innovations are needed. Therefore the question becomes, ‘How important is this need compared to other needs?’ In their research on the implementation of a policy titled “Ontario Schools: Intermediate and Senior Division - 1984” (OSIS), Leithwood, et al. (1990) found that, “the perceptions held by school staff concerning the centrality of the policy to the core activities of the school appeared to be the greatest stimulant to

implementation of this type” (p.310-311). Therefore, the perceived need for the innovation affects implementation.

Beyond simply needing something, the teacher must believe, or be made to believe, that the practices are worthwhile. The teacher’s beliefs about the contribution of the reform and what was best for the students, as well as the teacher’s agreement with the goals of the reform influence implementation (Leithwood et al., 1990). It is for this reason that Fullan and Mies (1992) believe that change can not simply be mandated. They realize that change requires motivation, commitment, and discretionary judgment on the part of those who must change. Elmore (1995) concludes that reforms need to focus on changing norms, knowledge, and skills at the individual and organizational level. Goens and Clover (1992) believe we must go deeper than restructuring. We must target core values and question basic assumptions and perceptions. “It means changing people – how they perceive, think and behave. It means introducing coordinated, comprehensive change in all the components in a complex, interconnected system” (p. 41). As Lipsky (1971) explains, if the people at the grassroots level (the street-level bureaucrats) who are meant to implement the innovation do not see the practices as being worthwhile, they will not implement the practices as they were intended. Instead they will implement the practices half-heartedly, not as they were intended, or merely symbolically.

Even though a principal may believe in the value of the innovation, the principal must also possess the necessary skills to implement the change. What are the skills a principal needs to implement change? The principal must understand the desired

outcomes of the innovation and the practices that are needed to achieve those outcomes. Then the principal must understand the practices of the teachers and their concerns about changing (Hall & Hord, 1984). Together with the teachers, the principal must consider the levels and concerns of the teachers and put in place things that will help teachers reach the desired outcomes. A principal can affect implementation by changing the organization of a school, altering schedules, developing shared goals with staff members, providing time for collaborative work structures, creating a climate conducive to collaboration, and by developing procedures for monitoring progress. Although the principal may not play an active role in the actual implementation, it is the principal that has the ability and control to create an environment that permits implementation.

Another important factor influencing implementation is the principal's leadership (Fullan, 1991, 1992). Berman and McLaughlin (1977) found that the projects that were most successful had the active support of the principal. Trider (1985) found that the professional experiences, beliefs and values of the principals influenced the amount of attention and effort a principal gave to the innovation. "Principal's actions serve to legitimate whether a change is to be taken seriously (and not all changes are) and to support teachers both psychologically and with resources" (Fullan, 1991, p. 76). The principal needs to provide the right balance of support and pressure (Fullan 1991, 1992).

Support from the board office is also a factor. "The commitment and actions of central office administration are critical to the success of board-wide implementation efforts" (Fullan, 1992, p. 38). Huberman and Miles (1984) found that the central office administrator became the prime advocate of the new practice, leaving principals to play a

secondary role. They found that nearly half of the users adopted an innovation because of administrative pressure. Administrators were motivated to implement the innovation because of the innovation's potential to improve classroom instruction or school-wide management and by the added funds and resources made available by externally assisted programs. Similarly, Berman and McLaughlin (1977) found that some school districts in their study adopted external innovations only for opportunistic reasons. For example, extra resources may *not* have been used for their intended purpose or to solve the intended problem but rather they were used to meet another need in the school. These districts symbolically took action. Sometimes innovations were adopted to make administrators look good, and their motivation was largely to advance their careers. Consequently, Huberman and Miles (1984) found that administrators had the tendency to overweigh the merits of the innovation and to minimize the drawbacks.

Huberman and Miles (1984) found that it was necessary for administrators to sustain their pressure and commitment to the innovation to create the most change. However, the administrator as thug, caused users to be uncommitted, eventually killing the project. "Administrative pressure without support and commitment simply leads to teacher resistance and failure" (p. 279). Therefore a balance of pressure and commitment from the administrators is required.

A movement toward the increasing involvement of parents in educational decisions is evident. There is evidence that effective parental involvement positively impacts student achievement and cognitive development (Henderson, 1981, 1987). Leithwood et al. (1990) found that political support (e.g., from trustees who ideally represent the views of

the community), community supports, and especially the support of parents is a factor of implementation.

The level of collaboration within the school is another factor affecting implementation. Schools where staff members work collaboratively have a greater capacity to manage change (Fullan, 1991, 1992). Fullan and Miles (1992) believe that successful management of change is best when it is carried out by a cross-role group. Leithwood et al. (1990) found that one of the factors that influence implementation of an innovation is the quality of working relationships in the school system. Huberman and Miles (1984) found that efforts to develop cooperation, coordination, and conflict resolution between administrators and ground level users were critical to successful implementation. Networking is a form of collaboration that can reach beyond members of a single school. Lieberman and McLaughlin (1992) talk about the popularity and possibilities of networks. They write that too often traditional in-service and staff development inadequately meets the needs of people trying to implement change, and networks provide a fresh way of thinking and learning.

Four stages of implementation.

The research on planned change revealed useful information about the stages of implementation. In their seminal study, Huberman and Miles (1984) examined the implementation of innovations at 12 different sites in the United States. Their findings are summarized here because the observations they made reveal aspects of implementation that will be useful to the implementation of transition planning in the

province of Ontario. This section will be divided into four stages: early implementation, implementation in progress, stabilization, and institutionalism.

Early implementation.

Huberman and Miles (1984) found that initial use an innovation was nearly always rough. Teachers complained about the day-to-day coping, the inability to make the innovation work as they believed it was intended, continuous cycles of trial and error, the inability to get through daily or weekly objectives, loss of variety, and the sacrifice of core activities. Rough starting sites usually had lack of user commitment to and understanding of the practice, insufficient or unavailable resources and materials, and inadequate skills and training. When innovations began with a vengeance and consumed all available energy, pervasive changes occurred. Although not all effects of the changes were negative. Positively, people implementing the new practice felt more instructionally skillful and better able to differentiate instructional treatments. They felt they had closer relationships with pupils and improved interpersonal ties.

In contrast, smooth initial implementation usually meant reducing the scale of the project, which resulted in lowering the amount of actual change. Although most of the headaches of implementation were avoided, most of the potential rewards were sacrificed. People did not feel stretched or fulfilled by their work. Administrators who gave into users' requests for changes to the innovation produced watered down results. Those who did not give in were sometimes seen as authoritarian, but delivered more sizable results.

Implementation in progress.

Whether a large-scale innovation lived or died was dependent on the amount and quality of assistance users received once the change process was under way. Assistance was provided by conferences, in-service training, visits, committee structures, team meetings, materials, peer consultation, access to external consultants, rapid access to central office personnel, and the support of family. Assistance did not make early implementation smoother, but it did increase the levels of commitment and practice mastery. As the implementation of new practices took place, changes to the innovation often occurred resulting in the need for more assistance, the necessity of cutting back the innovation, later salvaging the original components and re-instating them, or refitting the innovation but depleting the substance of the new practice. As the school's structure and working procedures shifted to accommodate the new practices, it was necessary for administrator pressure and commitment to be sustained.

Stabilization.

After about 18 months, firm practice mastery of complex projects occurred. Most of this stage of implementation was spent on taking on more demanding segments, debugging outstanding flaws, refining and codifying weekly routines, integrating new materials with existing ones, adapting the practice to on-going changes in the student population, and extending the innovation to other activities. Stabilization was achieved partially through technical mastery, which was the result of initial preparation, follow-up assistance, strong local endorsement, and commitment of users to the project. It also

came from stability in pupil and program characteristics, staff, leadership stability, and building-level endorsement. The sites that enhanced pupil performance and performance-related attitudes the most were sites where there was a strong user commitment fed by good assistance, or where there was administrative pressure and good assistance. A key characteristic was clearly good assistance. Although administrator pressure was part of the equation to achieve implementation, it was important for administrators to lay off from close supervision and give dedicated professionals the chance to invent, adapt, and extend. To achieve the next stage, institutionalization, it requires administrative pressure, lack of serious local assistance, and at least minimal teacher-administrator harmony.

Institutionalization.

Institutionalization of a change is when the practices become a natural part of the institution's routines and procedures. Once institutionalization occurs, however, it does not ensure the change's lifelong existence. When key project leaders left their position, there was leadership instability, or when energies were re-directed to other projects there was a drop in institutionalization.

Summary of the Literature Review

Using Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological theory of human development as the conceptual framework, the preceding literature review identified 21 best practices for transition, 12 best practices for service coordination, 14 indicators of implementation capacity, and 4 stages of implementation. These practices, indicators, and stages will be

used to guide the examination of the current state of transition services in Ontario and the gap that exists between best practices and current practices.

Studying the implementation of transition planning in Ontario using Bronfenbrenner's framework is very fitting. His theory emphasizes the interconnectedness of the many elements that effect the development and growth of an individual and the importance of these social linkages (Goldring & Sullivan, 1996). His theory parallels a major revelation in the study of change - that we are all linked together and that no one part of the system can "fix" the problems of education (Hodgkinson, 1991). "The truth is, schools are complex socio-technical-political organizations, wrapped in diverse expectations by a broad and demanding public and operated in a web of state legislation and local policies, both of which are subject to short-term and conflicting priorities. Pulling any single lever in this kind of an organization will never launch an avalanche of reform" (Goens & Clover, 1992, p.41). The goals of education can best be aided by policies that build and strengthen the links between families, communities, and schools. Coleman (1987) believes that education will be most successful when schools, families, and community institutions share common values and beliefs. Therefore, simply introducing an innovation like the School-to-work program or mandating transition planning across the province without addressing these linkages, jeopardizes its adoption by school boards.

CHAPTER 3

Method

Data collection was conducted in four sequential phases over a period of 9 months (see Table 3.1 for a summary of the methodology in chart form). Each phase took a progressively closer snapshot of transition practices occurring in the province during the 1997-1998 school year. Each phase emerged and built on the phase preceding it, informing and validating the other. This cascading approach was designed to enhance the validity of the findings. The data were continuously analyzed as the study progressed. In phase 1, policies and/or documents regarding the transition of youth with disabilities from high school to adult life were requested from each of the English school boards in Ontario. During phase 2, a questionnaire was mailed to special education department heads in high schools across the province regarding their opinions of what the literature revealed as “best practices” for transition and collaboration and what their school was currently doing to prepare students with disabilities for the transition from high school to adult life. In phase 3, follow-up telephone interviews were conducted with people who responded to the questionnaire or with people who were recommended as more expert in the area of transitions by respondents to the questionnaire. The telephone interviews were followed by an in-depth case study of one highly collaborative transition program in the province: phase 4. Data collection began on August 6, 1997 and ended on May 1, 1998.

Table 3.1

Methodology Table

	Phase 1 Collection of Policies	Phase 2 Questionnaire	Phase 3 Telephone Interviews	Phase 4 Case Study
Purpose	- to request permission to survey special education department heads - to obtain the names of special education department heads and corresponding school addresses - to request copies of documents and policies pertaining to transition planning	- to determine the current level of transition services and service coordination for each responding school - to determine the gap between best practice as defined in the literature and current practice - to explain the gap using planned change variables as identified in the literature	- to verify and further illuminate the facilitators and obstacles to transition programs and service coordination - to determine differences in severity of disability and gender - to determine if there are different levels of service coordination for students with different levels of disability	- to compare the perspectives of all stakeholders involved in the transition process - to further illuminate barriers and facilitators to transition and service coordination - to make suggestions for improving transition programs and service coordination across the province
Sample	- 135 directors, superintendents or Chief Executive Officers as listed in the 1997 CEA Handbook	- special education department heads as indicated by directors/superintendents/CEOs in phase #1 and principals of the provincial schools	- 36 special education department heads at schools determined from phase #2	- 25 stakeholders* involved in the transition process at a school with the most highly collaborative transition program in the province as determined in phase #3 from convenience sample
Instrument	- letter of permission and a written request for policies	- mailed questionnaire (see Appendix K)	- telephone interviews	- face-to-face interviews
Procedures	- mailed letter - reminder letter mailed 7-10 days after first mailing - telephone call 3 weeks after first mailing as a further reminder - if board permission was not required, names of special education heads and school addresses will be verbally obtained from school boards to proceed to 2nd phase	- mail questionnaire - reminder letter 7-10 days after first mailing - telephone call 3 weeks after first mailing as a further reminder	- one semi-structured audio-taped interview with scenarios conducted by telephone at a convenient time for the respondent	- one semi-structured audio-taped interview in person

* principal, vice-principal, special education teachers, guidance counselors, human service agency personnel, parents, students

Analysis	- qualitative analysis of policies and documents using Policy Analysis Framework (Appendix H) - quantitative analysis using SPSS; Cronbach's alpha to determine reliability of variables; descriptive statistics to determine level of transition and collaboration; step-wise multiple regression to determine indicators that explain the gap between best practice and current practice; chi square tests to determine relationships between the variables.	- transcribed, coded, and sorted by pre-determined and emergent themes; data is displayed in tables (see Huberman & Miles, 1994) to reveal contrasts, similarities, and frequency of responses for high collaborative transition programs and typical programs as well as for the differing levels of severity and post high school goal	- transcribed, coded, and sorted by pre-determined and emergent themes; tables are used to display the data
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* principal, vice-principal, special education teachers, guidance counselors, human service agency personnel, parents, students

Mixed qualitative and quantitative methods were used to analyze the data. A mixed method was chosen for its suitability and feasibility to answer the research questions (King, 1987). As Trow (1957) stated, “The problem under investigation properly dictates the methods of investigation” (p. 33) (as cited in Sieber, 1972). Since the extent of transition services in Ontario was not known at the beginning of this research, an initial, mostly quantitative province-wide survey was useful. The survey revealed the range of transition services at high schools across the province and the extent to which best practices were being implemented. The survey also provided essential information informing the selection process for participants in phases 3 and 4. The qualitative phases of the research which included the description of policy documents, the follow-up telephone interviews, and the face-to-face interviews during the case study, provided rich detail which validated, clarified, interpreted, and illustrated the quantitative findings as well as each other. As Woods (1992) stated, “Qualitative and quantitative research methods gain strength from each other when used together.”

Substantial work preceded data collection. This involved the construction of a questionnaire, conducting a pilot study of that questionnaire, the development of questions and student scenarios to be used during the telephone interviews, and the creation of questions to be used during the case study. All instruments used were grounded in the literature on transition, collaboration, and planned change (see Appendices B & C), guided by the conceptual framework, and designed to answer the research questions.

A pilot of the questionnaire was conducted in a Ministry of Education Special Education Part III course in July 1997. Candidates of the Part III course were an appropriate sample for the pilot because of their knowledge of special education issues. Participants were asked to respond to the questionnaire and also write comments regarding the wording, type of questions asked, or structure of the questionnaire in the margins. The questionnaire was then edited to incorporate findings and suggestions. (See the final version of the questionnaire in Appendix D). A trial statistical analysis was conducted to foresee any difficulties with data entry and analysis.

In preparation for the telephone interviews, scenarios of special education students were created and verified by experts in the field of special education (see Appendix E). Questions that would be used to guide the interview were also created (see Appendix F). The scenarios and questions provided a common frame from which people who were interviewed over the telephone could comment on the practices within their own school therefore facilitating the capacity to draw comparisons between schools.

Phase 1 – Collection of Policies and Documents

The purpose of phase one was to begin answering the first research question from a board-wide perspective: To what extent were best practices for service coordination and transition of youth with disabilities from high school to adult life being implemented in Ontario high schools? This was done by requesting copies of any board level policies or documents regarding the transition of special education students from high school to adult life. This phase was also necessary to gain entry into the high schools by receiving

permission to send a questionnaire to the special education department head at each board's high schools, and by obtaining the names of the special education department heads and their school addresses.

Sample

The director⁴ at each English school board in Ontario was given the opportunity to participate in this research. There were 135 English school boards listed in the 1997 CEA handbook (before the amalgamation of school boards occurred in January 1998). Board responses and follow-up telephone calls revealed that 108 of these school boards had English high schools⁵. Over 80% of these school boards allowed a questionnaire to be sent to their high schools' special education department heads.

Instrument

Each school board director was mailed a package containing a cover letter, consent form (see Appendix G for copies of all letters and forms sent out during phase 1) and self-addressed stamped return envelope. The letter requested (a) permission to mail a questionnaire to the special education department head at each of their board's high schools, (b) the name of the special education department head and their school's

⁴ If a director's name was not listed, the superintendent or Chief Executive Officer's name was used.

⁵ Note that 27 school boards did not have any English high schools. Most of these boards were located in northern Ontario.

address, and (c) that any policies or documents regarding the transition of special education students (excluding solely gifted students) be returned.

Procedure

Phase 1 began on August 6, 1997 with the mailing of the packages to the directors of education. A follow-up letter was mailed to each board one week later to encourage greater participation. If a response was not received after three weeks, a follow-up telephone call was made.

Eighteen boards required that a detailed application to conduct research be completed and submitted to their research advisory committees for approval. Studies with these boards could not commence until their research committees approved the application. In some boards this process took months since the committees met at only specific times during the year, considered only so many proposals at a time, and waited until they felt it was a good time for the research to begin in their board.

Analysis

As policies and/or documents regarding the transition of special education students from high school to adult life were received, they were numbered, dated and catalogued. Each document was read. Some materials returned did not pertain to transition planning or working with community agencies. These were not included in the analysis. A policy analysis framework was used to examine each board's set of relevant documents (see Appendix H). A descriptive and comparative analysis was conducted.

The contents of the documents were summarized. Eleven common factors were examined and placed in a chart for comparative purposes.

As school boards returned consent forms, the names of special education department heads and their school addresses, the information was entered into an Excel database. Labels and personalized cover letters were printed. Phase 2 for each school board began as soon as this information was received.

Phase 2 – Questionnaire

The purpose of phase 2 was to further answer the first research question regarding the extent to which best practices for service coordination and transition were being implemented, and to begin answering the second and third research questions which sought information about the obstacles that prevented schools from implementing best practices and strategies that could be used to overcome those obstacles. This phase sought to (a) determine the current level of transition services and service coordination for each participating high school, (b) determine the gap between best practice as described in the literature and each school's current practices, and (c) explain the gap using planned change variables as identified in the literature.

Sample

Out of a possible 108 English school boards in Ontario having a total of 694 English high schools, a total of 535 questionnaires were mailed. That meant that

potentially⁶ 77% of high schools in the province received a questionnaire. The questionnaire was mailed to the special education department head at each high school. Although the research design did not allow control over the representativeness of the sample, chi-square goodness-of-fit tests revealed that there was no reason to believe that the surveys returned were not representative of all the English high schools in Ontario by school type, student population, and location. Results of these tests can be found in the phase 2 section of chapter 4.

Instrument

A package containing a cover letter, consent form, questionnaire, (see Appendices D and I) and self-addressed stamped return envelope was mailed to the special education department heads⁷ of the high schools as soon as board approval was given. The same package was also sent to the principals of each of the seven provincial schools for students with special needs. The 8-page questionnaire was divided into three sections. The first section asked for information about the respondent's school: area in which the

⁶ I am aware that in a few cases, the questionnaires did not make it to the high schools. In five cases, the questionnaires were directed to people at the board office who were believed to be most knowledgeable in the area of transition. In one case it was reported that the questionnaire was not received due to the mail strike. Since the names and addresses of high schools were provided by the school boards, there were sometimes differences in the board's definition of what a high school was and my own intentions. For example, one board provided me with the name and address to a correctional institution they classified as a high school, but the survey was returned by a person at the facility indicating that they were not a high school and that my study did not apply to them.

⁷ Respondents were asked to indicate their job title on the last page of the questionnaire. Although, questionnaires were originally intended for the special education department heads at each of the high schools, in some cases the questionnaire was re-directed to a person at the high school or board office that was believed to have a greater knowledge with which to answer the questions. Examples of some of these people are the head of guidance, the head of student services, the principal, vice-principal, or superintendent. The majority of questionnaires, 77.5%, were completed by the special education department heads or a special education teacher.

schools is located (urban, suburban, rural); student population; special education student population; and percentage of students classified as mildly, moderately, or severely disabled. The second section asked for the respondent's views and opinions of transition practices at their school. Respondents rated their agreement with each practice on a 5-point Likert scale. Then they rated the degree to which they believed that practice was actually being carried out in the school on another 5-point Likert scale. Respondents were asked who they believed should initiate and implement the transition planning process. Respondents were also asked to rate whether they agreed or disagreed that their school had in place certain implementation indicators on a 5-point Likert scale. The third section asked respondents to answer questions about their background: their training; if their school had a transition program in place; if they needed a transition program; and questions about facilitators and barriers to their program. At the end of the questionnaire, respondents were asked if the researcher could contact them for more information and if they would be willing to participate in a telephone interview. The questionnaire yielded mostly quantitative data and some qualitative data.

Procedure

The first sets of surveys were sent out on September 6, 1997 and surveys were still being sent out in January 1998. The sporadic and long distribution time was a result of many obstacles that stood in the way of data collection. The first obstacle was the province-wide teachers' protest in October and November, which lasted 2 weeks. A group of surveys were sent out just prior to the protest and were received by the schools

just days before the protest began. Needless to say, many questionnaires were left on the desks of the department heads during the protest and subsequently buried upon their return to school weeks later. The climate in the schools at this time was an additional deterrent to answering the questionnaire. This was followed by a postal strike in December, which lasted three weeks. Some surveys were mailed at this time but were reported as “not received” by potential respondents. As well, four respondents said they completed the survey and had put them in the mail, however these were never received (apparently the result of mysteriously missing mail that was common at this time). The third obstacle was the anticipated and actual amalgamation of the school boards in Ontario reducing the number of schools boards from 145 to 71 as well as the new education funding model for boards across the province. Some boards felt that there was too much going on in the education system at this time in the province to burden the teachers with a survey. The ice storm that hit eastern Ontario in early January 1998 also added another obstacle. All of these uncontrollable factors caused delays in: gaining approval from the school boards; receiving the questionnaires from the special education department heads; the actual completion of the surveys; and the eventual return of the questionnaires to the researcher. As a result, follow-up letters were sent and telephone calls were made to encourage people to participate and to extend due dates. A second package containing the questionnaire and consent forms was requested by, and mailed to eleven people. Collection of the questionnaires officially ended with the receipt of a group of questionnaires on April 24, 1998. Even faced with all of these obstacles, there

was an excellent response rate to the survey. A total of 300 questionnaires with consent forms⁸ were received by the cut-off date - a 56.3% response rate.

Analysis

As the surveys were returned, they were numbered. Some surveys could not be used because participants did not sign the consent form⁹. Chi-square goodness-of-fit tests were conducted to determine if the surveys returned were representative of all English high schools in Ontario during the 1997/98 school year. Although the questionnaires were primarily quantitative in nature, there were some qualitative questions as well. The analysis began by looking at the qualitative responses. This part of the analysis was emergent. Probable answers to the questions were inferred from the literature review and the researcher's previous experience. Responses from the questionnaires were copied on to a separate sheet of paper and were grouped by similarities. Each group of responses was given a simple code number. The code number that matched the response was handwritten beside the corresponding answer on the survey. These numbers were entered into the statistical analysis program SPSS along with the quantitative data.

Descriptive statistics and correlational research were conducted on all items in the questionnaire. Frequencies and descriptive statistics were calculated on all variables. To determine the average number of students and the percentage of special education

⁸ Six more surveys were returned without a consent form and therefore were not used.

⁹ Those participants who did not sign a consent form but returned a completed questionnaire were contacted again by letter, fax, and/or phone. Despite efforts, in some cases the consent form was not received by the cut-off date.

students in high school, all missing variables were excluded from the analysis. To determine the mean rating for each best practice, missing variables were also excluded from the analysis. The total of all transition variables (items 1 to 21) was calculated and then divided by the number of transition variables (missing variables not included). This produced an average of the scale variables which is referred to as the transition rating for the purposes of this research. The same procedure was conducted for the scale variables of items 22 to 31, creating a collaboration rating, and the implementation capacity variables, creating an implementation capacity rating for each survey. Average of scale variables were calculated to determine which practices were being carried-out and the schools' capacity to implement those practices. Cronbach's alpha was calculated to determine the extent of internal consistencies of the scale scores. Chi-square tests were conducted on select items to reveal significant relationship between variables. Step-wise regression was conducted to determine if there was a relationship among implementation capacity variables and transition/collaboration ratings to help explain the gap among best practices as stated in the literature and current practice as perceived by the special education department heads.

Phase 3 – Telephone Interviews

The purpose of this phase was to answer the second and third research questions in more depth and detail. The telephone interviews (a) verified the survey information, (b) further illuminated facilitators and obstacles to transition programs and service coordination, (c) determined the differences in transition programs based on the severity

of disability, work or further education goals, and gender, and (d) determined if there are different levels of service coordination for students with differing levels of disability.

Sample

On the last page of the questionnaire, respondents were asked if they would be willing to participate in a follow-up telephone interview. Sixty-two percent of respondents agreed. A purposeful sample was interviewed because a random sample would not have granted the breadth of information that the selected sample provided. Thirty-six people were selected with the intent of having representation from high schools with both high and low transition ratings, from all parts of the province, in rural, suburban, and urban settings, and representing public, separate, and provincial schools. Chi-square goodness-of-fit tests revealed that there was no reason to believe that the sample was not representative of all English high schools in Ontario by student population and Ministry of Education districts. This will be discussed in greater detail in the chapter 4.

Instrument

Semi-structured questions and scenarios were prepared for the telephone interviews (see Appendices E & F). Questions were formulated during the literature review, guided by the research questions and conceptual framework. They were re-visited and modified as more information and questions emerged during the first two phases of the research. The scenarios were created before the data collection began with the help of

four experts in the field of special education. Each scenario described a special education student with either a mild or severe disability, who was preparing either to enter a post-secondary educational institution or to begin working after leaving high school.

Procedure

Follow-up telephone interviews were conducted between February 2 and April 16, 1998. This phase of data collection was interrupted by March Break, however some respondents agreed, and even preferred to be interviewed during their holiday. One respondent arranged the interview while he was in Ottawa on holidays so that the researcher would not incur long distance service charges. The interviews were semi-structured. The average length of the interviews was 75 minutes. Approximately 45 hours worth of taped conversations were made.

An initial telephone call was made to potential respondents to arrange a convenient time and location for the telephone interview. Some respondents preferred to be interviewed at home in the evening or on the weekend, while others preferred to be interviewed at school, during their work period or before or after classes. Each interview began with a brief introduction, assuring the participant of confidentiality in the reporting of results, and allowing the respondent to ask any questions. Questions and scenarios were previously prepared to ensure that information the participants gave could later be compared (See Appendix F & E). Participants were encouraged to speak freely. Often, questions were answered without prompting.

Analysis

Each interview audiotape was transcribed verbatim and a hard copy was printed out¹⁰. The printed copy was read, coded and highlighted. The researcher found it more efficient to listen to the interview tape and follow-along while coding, stopping the tape and rewinding when necessary. Procedures for coding the qualitative data were based on those described by Miles and Huberman (1994). Before beginning the qualitative data analysis, 44 possible themes were identified during the literature review and given a start-code¹¹. As the researcher read through the interviews, themes were condensed and ordered. Notes were made in the margins to remind the researcher of ideas and reflections made during the reading and coding. Coded and highlighted sections from each interview were copied from the text and grouped in themes on the computer. The material in each theme was re-read many times. This process allowed the list of themes to be further refined and modified. By the end of the analysis, 20 themes had solidified. Commonalties and differences for each interview were also noted on a Telephone Interview Data Sheet¹² (see Appendix J) to ensure that the same points were examined in each interview and comparisons could be made. When information from all 36

¹⁰ A printed copy was preferred to analyzing data directly on the computer because the researcher found it more comfortable and convenient. At first, Folio Views was used to analyze the interviews. The researcher found this method to be more time consuming and difficult than analyzing the data by hand at the time. By no means does this imply that other researchers should not try Folio Views.

¹¹ Before analysis began, an elaborate coding system was devised using abbreviations of pre-determined themes. The researcher found this difficult to use since the 44 codes were difficult to remember and did not always fit the comments made. Instead, a system of coding evolved which used whole words, versus abbreviations, written in the margin.

¹² The telephone interview data sheet is similar to what Miles and Huberman (1994) call a document summary form.

interviews were recorded, a master tally sheet was created from the telephone interview data sheets to summarize information and look for trends. These findings were integrated into the 20 themes.

Being a lone researcher was advantageous. Since the interviews were conducted, transcribed¹³, read, coded, highlighted, re-read, categorized, and summarized by the same person, the researcher's familiarity with the data facilitated synthesis, comparisons, and judgements. As Miles (1983) learned, much analysis goes on in the mind of the fieldworker.

Phase 4 – Case Study

The goal of the case study was to obtain a detailed snapshot of highly collaborative transition practices from the multiple perspectives of the many stakeholders involved in the process and to verify and expand on issues revealed in the preceding phases and literature review. Its purpose was to answer the third research question through example and modeling: What strategies could be used to overcome obstacles and help schools to reduce the gap between current and desired practice?

Sample

One area with the most highly collaborative transition program in place in the province at the time of this study was selected for the case study. The location of the case

¹³ Seven interviews were transcribed or partially transcribed by someone other than the researcher.

study was determined by two factors; quantitatively from the transition and collaboration ratings from the survey; and qualitatively, from talking to respondents during the telephone interviews.

The area chosen was selected for many reasons. First, it had one person in the role of transition coordinator¹⁴ whose salary was jointly paid by both the Separate School Board and the Public School Board, as well as partially paid for by a local agency. This research did not find anywhere else in the province where this arrangement occurred. Second, the area for which the transition coordinator was responsible encompassed all types of settings; rural/remote, suburban and urban. This fact revealed the differences in service availability in all types of areas that provided a good comparison of urban/rural challenges to transition planning. Third, the transition coordinator for this area had established excellent working relationships with agencies, Ministry representatives, school personnel, and local employers. Fourth, because the transition coordinator worked with all high schools in the region from both school boards, there were examples of students who were in segregated classrooms, partially integrated settings, and totally integrated environments. Lastly, this was one of the few areas in the province that had already begun writing individual transition plans for students.

During the case study, 25 interviews were conducted with individuals or groups of people: 12 interviews with people from agencies, 1 private company, 3 families, and 9

¹⁴ At this particular board the role was titled Transition Planner and Supported Employment Coordinator. The person worked primarily with students who had developmental disabilities but occasionally found herself working with students with other disabilities.

school personnel. Both urban and rural perspectives were sought. The main contact person in the area, the transition coordinator, suggested who would be informative participants. She made introductory phone calls to prepare people for a potential interview if they agreed to participate. Her personal connections with people in the community were invaluable for gaining access to these people. Appointments were made with these contacts as well as with other people who were referred to during interviews or who played a role in the transition process in the region.

Instrument

Questions to be asked during the case study interviews were guided by the research questions and conceptual framework and originally prepared during the literature review. They were re-visited before the case study interviews took place and questions were added, modified, or deleted based on the knowledge and experience that emerged during the first three phases of the research and the appropriateness of the questions to the person being interviewed (see Appendix K for the case study interview questions). Participants were encouraged to speak freely and often answered questions before they were asked. The experience gained by the researcher during the first three phases facilitated the type of questions asked to the different stakeholders.

Procedure

The unique arrangement of the school district chosen for the case study meant that approval to conduct the in-depth study was required from two school boards. A letter

was sent to each school board's director of education (see Appendix L for copies of letters sent, and consent forms). The case study was conducted during the week of April 27 to May 1, 1998. Written consent was obtained from each participant before the interview began. The interviews generated approximately 21 hours worth of taped conversations.

Analysis

Audiotapes of the case study interviews were transcribed verbatim and a hard copy was printed out. Analyzed in the same manner as the telephone interviews, the printed copy was read while listening to the audio tape and the text was coded and highlighted. Analysis began using the 20 themes used in the telephone interview data analysis, however, as I read through the interviews, eight distinct themes emerged. Coded and highlighted sections of each interview were taken from the text and grouped in themes on the computer. The material in each theme was re-read while similarities and differences in the stakeholders' comments were sought and noted.

Summary

To summarize the process, mixed qualitative and quantitative methods were used. An introductory letter was sent to the directors of education at all English school boards in Ontario requesting permission to mail a questionnaire to the special education department heads at each of their board's high schools. Also, directors were asked for copies of any policies or documents their board had regarding the transition of special

education students from high school to adult life. A questionnaire was sent to special education department heads at 535 high schools across the province. Thirty-six follow-up telephone interviews were conducted. An in-depth case study of a highly collaborative transition program completed the data collection. The analysis emerged from the original design. Each phase helped to validate, clarify, interpret, and illustrate the other phases.

CHAPTER 4

Findings

Phase 1 – Collection and Description of Policies

The analytical goal of phase one¹⁵ was to begin determining the extent to which school boards, and subsequently high schools, were formally planning for the transition of special education students. In the introductory letter, school boards were asked to forward copies of any policies, documents, or information regarding transition and/or working with community agencies that their board had. Of the 108 school boards that have English speaking high schools, 13 boards returned related documents. Two people interviewed over the telephone during phase 3 sent documentation. One person added to the information already sent by his board and the other person sent information the board had not sent. Therefore information was received from a total of 14 boards. Six of the boards sent documents that did not pertain to transition planning or working with community agencies¹⁶. The remaining eight boards sent information that dealt with transition planning and working with agencies. Each of the eight boards was assigned a letter to identify them. A discussion about possible reasons why the return rate of policy documents was so low will be made in Chapter 5.

¹⁵ The other goals of this phase were to obtain entry into the high schools to conduct the second phase of this research, and to obtain contact names and addresses.

¹⁶ These documents included: a form used to record necessary student accommodations at post-secondary institutions; the board's overall philosophy regarding special education that did not mention the transition from high school to adult life; various pamphlets and documents about special education containing nothing about transition; information about Section 27 classes; information about IEPs; literature about a special school within the school board; and information about peer helping.

A teacher in board A who taught the Community Living Class for students with developmental disabilities and who was very involved with the local Community Living Association sent two brochures, an article, and a job description for a youth involvement worker. All of the material was published by the local Community Living Association and distributed at the school. This board participated in a one-year pilot project with the local Association for Community Living to facilitate the transition for students with disabilities. According to the materials sent, transition planning normally began one year before graduation. The Community Living Association sends a person to the school to help students with developmental disabilities and their families connect with resources in the community before leaving high school. The documentation did not state that an Individualized Transition Plan (ITP) was written although the process did seem student centered and involved the student's family. Work experience that would continue after graduation was sought, and volunteer job coaches from the community were solicited.

Board B sent two brochures about the transition from high school to adult life, a sheet about a process called Making Action Plans (MAPS), and a four-page transition planner. The transition process described was for students with developmental disabilities only. Although this was one of the few boards that had any sort of transition planner, the planner was very simple and general, not providing much room for notes or comments. The transition process began when the student entered grade nine. While it involved the parents and the student, it did not center on the student's wishes. In-school work experience was sought during the student's second year, and work experience outside of the school was sought during and after third year. A job coach was available if

a request for funding was approved by the Community Living Association. This school board was clearly working with the Community Living Association to provide transition planning for students with developmental disabilities.

Board C had been working with their local Community Living Association developing a school-to-work transition program since 1987 for students with developmental disabilities. This board sent a draft of a school-to-work transition program written in 1987. Whether or not this draft became official and its ideas put into practice remains unknown. However, the main goal of their program was competitive, supported employment and community integration. The collaboration between the school board and the Community Living Association began during the student's final year in elementary school and continues throughout the student's high school years. When the student reached the age of 16 or when the planning process indicated a need, the student began to gain work experience with the support of the Community Living Association. The school's objective was to provide the opportunity to develop communication skills and life skills that are required in everyday living. The aim of the program was "to provide the developmentally delayed student with a bridge between the security and structures offered by the school and the risks and responsibilities of employment". The policy did not mention a separate transition plan but did mention the Individual Education Plan and the IPRC process as an occasion around which to discuss transition planning. The document did not indicate that the process focused on the student's wishes, dreams, strengths or weaknesses.

The board office of Board D sent only a one page sheet which described, very generally, the transition from elementary to secondary school and the transition to post-secondary school. The later section simply stated that during high school, the special education and guidance departments would work cooperatively to inform and counsel students and their families. They would assist students with course selection and in clarifying their options as they made decisions related to post-secondary opportunities. The sheet did not provide much information. Interestingly, the questionnaire and telephone interview portion of this research revealed that this board had quite an extensive transition program focusing on providing work experience for exceptional students. The board had published a 257 page binder containing the procedures and resources of the work experience program as well as an employer handbook and parent handbook. This board also conducted two studies related to the transition of students with disabilities. Their transition program began preparing students for life after high school before the student reached the age of 16. It involved the parents in the transition process. It provided work experience for the students while they were still in school. The program focused on the student's wishes, interests, needs, strengths, and abilities. It allowed the Educational Assistants to act as job coaches. The program focused on available work in the community. The program did not include the development of a formal transition plan and focused mostly on work experience for students who are identified as developmentally disabled, autistic, slower learner, and multiply-disabled (but not all identified students).

Board E sent a Vocational Division Application Form (which is used to assess the student's level), copies of business cards, a brochure to indicate what services are available in the community, and 3 pages of information about the transition out of secondary school for students with special needs. This board worked closely with the Association for Community Living once the student reached the age of 16. Their goal was to find work for all students with disabilities that would continue after high school. Their program did not involve the development of an Individual Transition Plan. The board/schools appeared to work with community agencies and post-secondary institutions to help students move to the next step in their life, whether that is work or further education.

Board F has had a transition planning process in place for students with developmental disabilities since 1993. This board forwarded a copy of their transition planning guidelines and forms, which were revised in 1995, as well as a policy statement regarding transition planning. The policy stated that students with developmental disabilities must have transition plans in place before their final year of school. The plan included goals regarding living arrangements, daily activities, and recreation. The process began when the student was 17. The student and parents were involved with the process but it was very much a team approach. Gaining work experience was not included in the guidelines as part of the transition process. This board worked with community agencies but the guidelines did not indicate that any type of written agreements were formed between the schools and the agencies. The forms and

guidelines included a questionnaire that was sent to students one year after leaving the school system as a form of follow-up.

Board G forwarded a school-to-work transition planning document including forms that outlined six stages to the transition process at that board. It included: a student information sheet; student profile; a history of the agencies and other relevant personnel who have provided services for the student; long range goals and plans; a list of courses and credits received during high school; an employment history; and minutes from meetings with relevant people in the student's life. The document did not indicate the type of students that transition planning is done for, nor did it say at what age the transition planning process began. Although the document included a section to record the student's employment history, it did not indicate that gaining work experience was part of the transition planning process.

Board H sent information regarding a grant they received from Human Resources Canada in 1992 to start a Next Step Program for students with developmental disabilities in 1993. The goals of the program were for students to gain work experience with the support of a job coach, to allow students to make the transition at an earlier age, and to provide on-going support to students in the workplace once they left high school. The local Association for Community Living provided job coaches, the school board provided a facilitator to enable the supported co-op program to continue year round, and family services provided the co-ordination, implementation, and supervision of the project. In 1996 a report was written making recommendation to continue to improve the transition process for students with disabilities. By 1997 the funding for the project had depleted. It

was not clear in the documentation provided if the program continues to run or if the recommendations in the report were followed.

A summary of findings from phase one is displayed in Table 4.1. This shows that out of the eight boards that provided various documents regarding their transition program, the majority (five) of the boards do planning for students with developmental disabilities only. Two boards do transition planning for students with other disabilities as well, while the remaining boards' documents did not indicate the type of students that receive help with transition planning. Four of the boards write an Individualized Transition Plan for their students. Although the student is obviously involved in the transition process, documentation indicated that the student was at the center of the process at only three schools. The parents were involved in the transition planning process at each of the boards. Work experience was clearly part of the process at five of the boards with job coach support only guaranteed at three of the boards. Five boards worked closely with their local Community Living Association. Two boards and associations had clearly stated roles written in the documentation provided. According to the information provided only one board conducted formal follow-up to determine the success of their students and program. Only one board had an actual policy statement regarding the transition from high school to adult life for students with disabilities.

In conclusion, it is evident that few boards had policy statements or documents regarding the transition of special education students from high school to adult life at the time of data collection. The boards that did have transition planning in place accommodated primarily students with developmental disabilities with the help of

Table 4.1

Findings from Documentation Received During Phase One

Board	Type of student	Writes an ITP	Process begins before the age 16	Student is at the center of the process	Parents involved	Provided work experience	Job Coaches Available	Written agreements with Agencies	Roles clearly stated in documents	Follow-up	Community Based Curriculum
A	DD	no	final year of high school	yes	yes	sometimes in final year	NI	with CLA only	no	NI	NI
B	DD	yes	yes	Somewhat	yes	yes	funding from CLA	with CLA only	no	no	no
C	DD	no	yes	Somewhat	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	yes
D	DD+	no	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes - EAs	no	with employers	no	yes
E	DD+	no	yes	no	yes	yes	NI	no	no	NI	NI
F*	DD	yes	17	no	yes	no	no	no	no	yes	no
G	NI	yes	NI	yes	yes	NI	NI	no	no	no	NI
H	DD	yes	NI	NI	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	NI

* = This is the only board that had a formal policy in place to ensure transition planning occurred for students with developmental disabilities before the student's final year of school

DD = Students with Developmental Disabilities

DD+ = Students with Developmental Disabilities as well as students with other types of disabilities

NI = Not indicated

Somewhat = The process involved students but it was not student centered

CLA = Community Living Association

their local Association for Community Living. The low return rate of policy documents could be misleading since it could falsely indicate that transition planning is not occurring in many schools. This notion will be challenged in the findings of the next three phases.

Phase 2 – Questionnaire

The following pages reveal the findings from phase two: an eight-page questionnaire sent to the special education department heads at high schools across Ontario. This section begins by reporting the results of chi-square goodness-of-fit tests used to determine if the distribution of the sample was similar to the distribution of all English high schools in Ontario at the time of data collection. Findings from descriptive and inferential statistics follow. A discussion of these findings is presented in chapter 5.

Chi-square Goodness-of-fit Tests

Chi-square goodness-of-fit tests were conducted to determine if the questionnaires returned were representative of all English high schools in Ontario during the 1997/98 school year¹⁷. The school type, student population, postal codes, and location within Ministry of Education districts for the groups were compared. Schools were classified as public, separate, or provincial (see Table 4.2). Out of the 300 questionnaires returned, 68% were from public schools, 31% were from separate schools, and 1% came from provincial schools. At the 5% significance level, the data did not provide sufficient evidence to conclude that the sample differed from the population of all English high schools in Ontario with respect to school type.

¹⁷ A list of all high schools open during the 1997-1998 school year was obtained from the Ministry of Education in order to determine how representative the sample was. This point will be discussed further in the limitations section in Chapter 5.

Table 4.2**Comparison of the Surveys Mailed and Returned by School Type**

	All English High Schools in Ontario (n = 693)	Surveys mailed (n = 535)	Surveys returned* (n = 300)
Public	76.2%	72.5%	68%
Separate	23.2%	26.2%	31%
Provincial	0.6%	1.3%	1%

NB: Columns do not always equal 100% due to rounding.

* At the 5% significance level, the data does not allow us to reject the null hypothesis of no differences [χ^2 (2, $N = 300$) = 3.77, $p < .05$].

Student population was categorized as small, medium, or large. Since no guidelines or precedents have been set to define a high school as small, medium, or large according to the Center for Educational Statistics at Statistics Canada (Borde, 2000), for the purposes of this study, the following method was used. Small, medium and large high schools were determined by taking the number of high schools in Ontario (693) and performing a percentile split dividing that number into thirds (231 and 462). The student populations for all high schools in Ontario were ordered from smallest to largest. The 231st largest population marked the upper boundary of a small school and the population that was the 462nd largest marked the highest population of a medium school (see Table 4.3). One third of the high schools have a student population less than 747, one third has a population between 748 and 1135, and one third has a population greater than 1136. As noted in Table 4.3, of the 300 surveys returned, 30.2% came from small schools, 37.6%

came from medium schools, and 32.2% came from large schools. When categorized by school size, the data did not provide sufficient evidence to conclude that the distribution of schools by student population in the sample differed from the distribution of all English high schools in Ontario at the 5% significance level.

Table 4.3

Comparison of Surveys Mailed and Returned by Size of the School Population

School Size (student population)	All English High Schools in Ontario (n = 693)	Surveys mailed (n = 535)	Surveys returned* (n = 300)
Small (747 or less)	33.3%	29.7%	30.2%
Medium (748 – 1135)	33.3%	38.4%	37.6%
Large (1136 or more)	33.3%	32%	32.2%

NB: Columns do not always equal 100% due to rounding.

* At the 5% significance level, the data does not allow us to reject the null hypothesis of no differences [χ^2 (2, N = 300) = .89, $p < .05$].

To group the schools by location, two methods were used. Schools were categorized by the first letter of the school's postal code (see Table 4.4) and secondly, by their location within the Ministry of Education's four district divisions; north, south-east, south-west, and Toronto area (see Table 4.5). Postal codes in Ontario begin with one of five letters and represent a geographical area in the province. At the 5% significance level, the data did not provide sufficient evidence to conclude that the surveys returned

differed from the population of all English high schools in Ontario with respect to postal code region or Ministry of Education district divisions.

Table 4.4

Comparison of Surveys Mailed and Returned by Postal Code

First letter of postal code	All English High Schools in Ontario (n = 693)	Surveys mailed (n = 535)	Surveys returned* (n = 300)
K	16.5%	19.3%	19.3%
L	30.2%	32.9%	35.3%
M	20.0%	20.4%	13.3%
N	22.4%	16.6%	20.3%
P	11.0%	10.8%	11.7%

NB: Columns do not always equal 100% due to rounding.

* At the 5% significance level, the data does not allow us to reject the null hypothesis of no differences [χ^2 (4, $N = 300$) = 3.83, $p < .05$].

Table 4.5

Comparison of Surveys Mailed and Returned by Ministry of Education District

District	All English High Schools in Ontario (n = 693)	Surveys mailed (n = 535)	Surveys returned* (n = 300)
North	10.0%	9.2%	11.0%
South-east	13.9%	18.3%	13.7%
South-west	19.0%	13.5%	16.0%
Toronto area	57.1%	59.1%	59.3%

NB: Columns do not always equal 100% due to rounding.

* At the 5% significance level, the data does not allow us to reject the null hypothesis of no differences [χ^2 (3, $N = 300$) = .66, $p < .05$].

Descriptive Statistics and Intercorrelations

An analysis of the data revealed the following descriptive statistics. Findings will be reported in order of appearance on the questionnaire. A copy of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix D.

Part A – Information about schools.

Of the 300 questionnaires returned, 39.5% were identified by the respondent as being from an urban area, 32.7% were from a suburban setting, and 27.9% were from a rural area. School populations ranged from 45 to 2365 students. The mean student population was 1000 ($SD = 432.77$). The reported number of special education students ranged from 2 to 500 with a mean of 131 ($SD = 84.87$). This meant that the average percentage of special education students was 14.93% of the total school population, which is higher than the normal estimate of 10% of the student population. (For a list of descriptive statistics for Part A of the questionnaire, see Appendix M.)

Part B – Views and opinions.

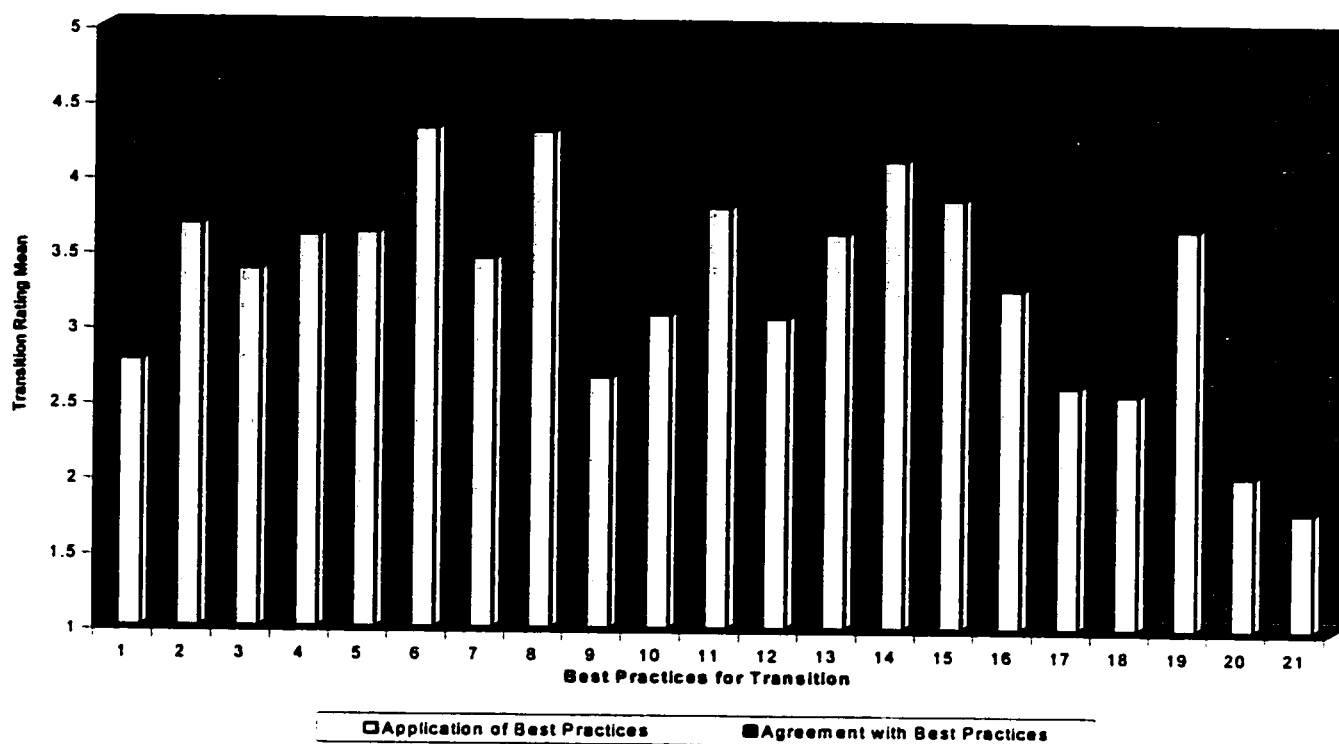
Respondents agreed or strongly agreed with all of the best practices for transition. Mean scores ranged from 3.79 to 4.81 out of 5. “Strongly agree” was the most frequent response (mode = 5) for all but two of the practices. Respondents agreed least (mode = 3) with the practice that follow-up data of post-school outcomes of former special education students be collected ($M = 3.79$, $SD = .93$). (See Appendix N for frequency, mean, mode,

standard deviation, and correlations for agreement with all transition and collaboration practices).

Respondents reported most frequently that their schools are already doing 16 of the 21 best practices for transition at least some of the time (modes ranging from 3 to 5)¹⁸. The least frequently carried-out practices (mode = 1) in order from the lowest mean to the highest mean were: collecting follow-up data on the post-school outcomes of former special education students ($\underline{M} = 1.80$, $\underline{SD} = 1.00$); parents receiving training to prepare them for the transition of their child from high school to adult life ($\underline{M} = 2.04$, $\underline{SD} = 1.15$); using alternative assessments like portfolios ($\underline{M} = 2.58$, $\underline{SD} = 1.31$); having job placement services available in their schools for students with disabilities prior to and following high school leaving ($\underline{M} = 2.68$, $\underline{SD} = 1.39$); and the development of formal Individualized Transition Plan (ITP) ($\underline{M} = 2.79$, $\underline{SD} = 1.35$). (See Appendix O items for frequency, mean, mode, standard deviations, and correlations for all actual transition and collaboration practices).

Pearson correlations between the mean ratings for agreement with transition practices and actual transition practices reveal the practices are moderately related at a .00 significance level. See Figure 4.1 for a visual presentation of the gap that exists among agreement with best practices and actual carrying-out of the best practices. The

¹⁸ It should be noted that this portion of the questionnaire is regarded as a self-report measure: respondents evaluate their own or their school's performance. Other researchers (Bradford, 1994; Manfreda & Shelby, 1988) have found information from this type of data collection to be somewhat exaggerated. Findings from Phase 3 of this research indicate that the findings from Phase 2 of this research may also be somewhat exaggerated. This point will be further discussed in the Discussion section of this thesis.



Best Practices for Transition

- 1 = Development of a formal Individualized Transition Plan
- 2 = The student's wishes, interests, needs, strengths, and abilities are incorporated into the transition plans
- 3 = Planning for transition begins before the student reaches the age of 16
- 4 = The student is notified of vocational option, opportunities, and support services before reaching the age of 16
- 5 = Vocational and academic curricula are integrated
- 6 = The student is placed in the least restrictive instructional setting (age-appropriate, aiming for regular classroom placement as much as possible).
- 7 = Students are encouraged to take occupationally oriented vocational courses
- 8 = Students gain work experience while in school (e.g., co-operative education)
- 9 = Job placement services are available in the school for students with disabilities prior to and following completion of vocational education courses
- 10 = Curriculum and transition programs are focused on resources/jobs available in the community
- 11 = School provided career education curriculum
- 12 = School, provides social skills training
- 14 = Instructional support services are available (e.g., teacher aides, special materials, assistive technology, interpreters, peer tutors)
- 15 = School provides career guidance services for special education students
- 16 = Students receive on-going job support (e.g., job coach, supported employment, regular contact between the school and agency)
- 17 = School provides vocational assessments for special education students
- 18 = Alternative assessments like portfolios are used
- 19 = Parents are involved in the transition planning process
- 20 = Parents receive training to prepare them for the transition of their child
- 21 = Follow-up data on the post-school outcomes of former special education students are collected

Figure 4.1. Agreement and application of best practices for transition.

largest gap exists for the following transition practices: collecting follow-up data on former students; training for parents; vocational assessments for special education students; and job placement services for students prior to and following completion of courses. The smallest gap exists for the practice of placing students in the least restrictive instructional setting possible.

Respondents also agreed or strongly agreed with all of the best practices for collaboration. Mean scores ranged from 3.49 to 4.46. “Strongly agree” (mode = 5) was the most frequent response for all but three collaboration practices. Respondents “agreed” (mode = 4) rather than “strongly agreed” with the practice to: monitor activities to ensure the responsibilities of school and agencies are being carried out ($\underline{M} = 3.88$, $\underline{SD} = 1.08$); state the roles and responsibilities of the school and community agency in written agreements ($\underline{M} = 3.94$, $\underline{SD} = .97$); and state specific supports and resources that the student requires in written agreements ($\underline{M} = 4.05$, $\underline{SD} = .87$). (See Appendix N for practices 22-31 for means, modes, standard deviations, and correlations).

Respondents reported most frequently they were already carrying-out seven of the 12 collaboration practices some of the time (mode = 3) and that they never carried-out five of the practices (mode = 1). The five practices never carried out in order from the lowest mean to the highest mean were (a) having a written agreement to coordinate services between school and agencies ($\underline{M} = 1.50$, $\underline{SD} = .43$), (b) sharing costs equally between schools and agencies ($\underline{M} = 1.66$, $\underline{SD} = .97$), (c) monitoring activities to ensure that the responsibilities of schools and agencies are being carried-out ($\underline{M} = 2.27$, $\underline{SD} = 1.27$), (d) schools and agencies share and combine resources so that services overlap ($\underline{M}$

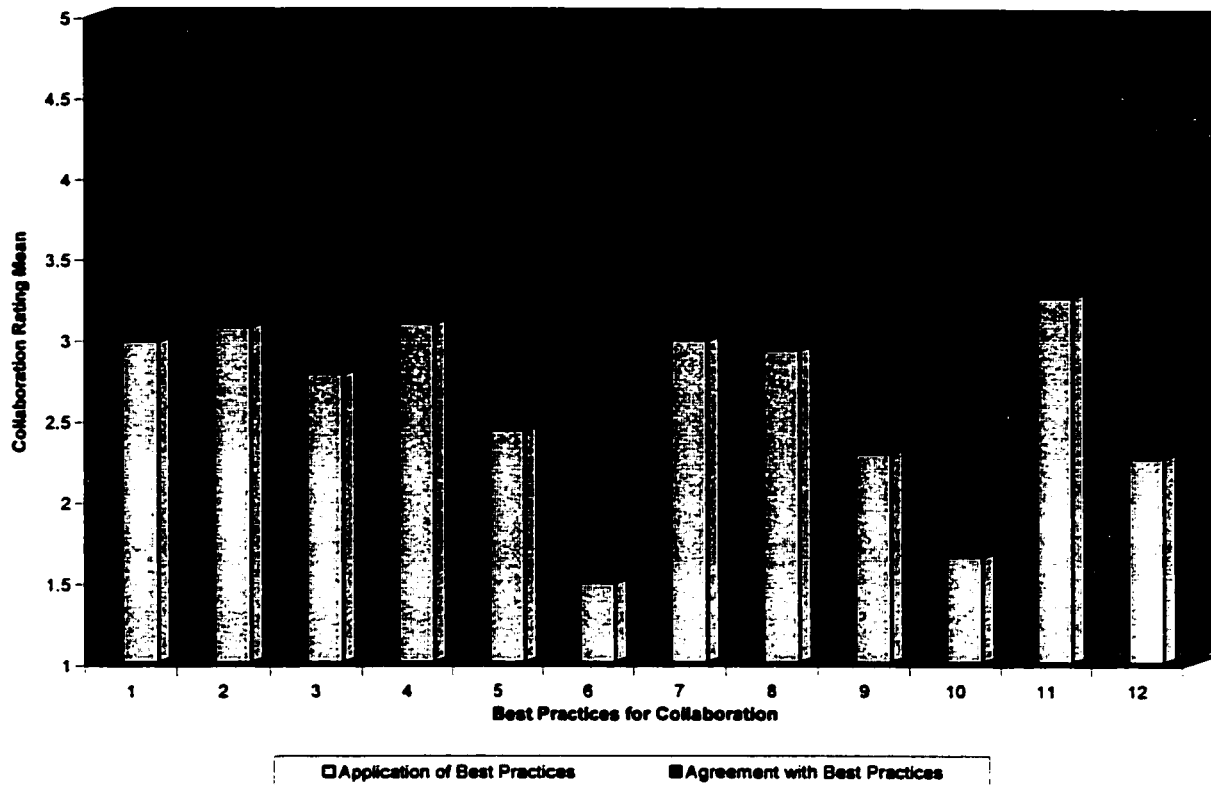
= 2.3, $SD = 1.18$), and (e) teacher and agency personnel were involved in the formation of plans and policies for collaboration ($M = 2.44$, $SD = 1.26$).¹⁹ (See Appendix O practices 22-31 for collaboration means, modes, standard deviations, and correlations.)

Pearson correlations between the mean ratings for agreement with collaboration practices and actual collaboration practices reveal the practices were moderately related at .00 significance level. See Figure 4.2 for a visual presentation of the gap that existed between agreement with best practices for collaboration and actual carrying-out of the practices. The largest gap existed for the following collaboration practices: having a written agreement to coordinate services between the school and human service agencies; equal sharing of costs between schools and agencies; and involving teachers and agency personnel in the formation of plans and policies for collaboration. There was no practice that stood out as having the least gap.

A “level of transition” rating was created for each responding school by calculating the mean of the first 21 “best practices”²⁰. The majority of schools rated themselves above 3.1 on a scale of 5: 61.8% had a rating of 3.1 or higher. A mean rating over 3.1 was considered a high transition rating because the scale used to measure the degree to which each practice was rated ranged from never (1) to always (5). A rating of

¹⁹ As mentioned in footnote 18, findings from Phase 3 of this research indicate that the findings from Phase 2 may be somewhat exaggerated as has been found to occur when employing self-report data collection methods.

²⁰ If a respondent skipped a question then the rating was based on the average of the number of questions the respondent did answer.



Best Practices for Collaboration

- 1 = The school and human service agencies share a "common problem" (the need to prepare students for the transition from high school)
- 2 = School and agencies are committed to a common mission (to prepare students for the transition)
- 3 = Schools and agencies understand each other's eligibility and entitlement requirements
- 4 = Schools and agencies share common definitions of disabilities
- 5 = Teachers and agency personnel were involved in the formation of plans and policies for collaboration
- 6 = There is a written agreement to coordinate services between the school and human service agencies
- 7 = Agreements state the roles and responsibilities of both the school and the community agency
- 8 = Written agreements state the specific supports and resources the student requires
- 9 = School and agencies share and combine resources so that services overlap
- 10 = All costs are shared equally between schools and agencies
- 11 = Lines of communication between the school and agencies have been developed
- 12 = Monitoring occurs to ensure that the responsibilities of the school and agencies are being carried out

Figure 4.2. Agreement and application of best practices for collaboration.

3 meant the respondent believed the practice was carried out some of the time. If the average of all transition practices was higher than 3.1, that meant the respondent believed that many of the practices were being carried out more than some of the time. The definition of a high transition rating was not based on the data received from the questionnaires, rather it was based on the scale used to measure whether or not schools were doing the best practices for transition and collaboration more than some of the time. This means that only 36.2% of high schools had a low transition rating less than 3.1²¹. This indicates that many personnel in schools across the province believed their schools were already doing many of the practices that are considered to be “best” for the transition of students with disabilities more than some of the time (see Figure 4.3).

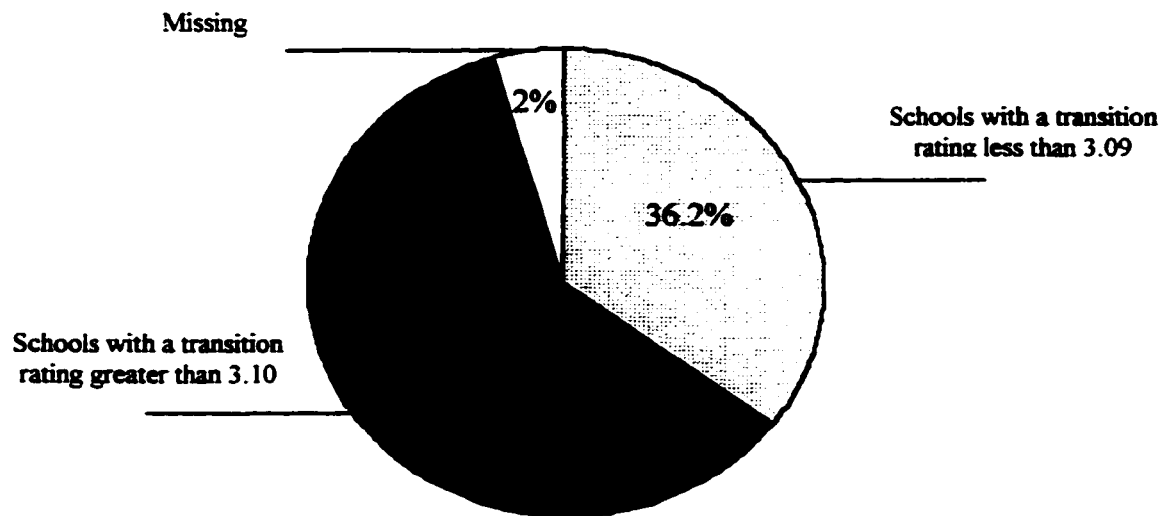


Figure 4.3. Pie chart of transition ratings.

²¹ A transition rating could not be calculated for 2% of high schools.

A level of collaboration rating was also created for each responding school on the remaining 12 best practices. A mean rating of 3.1 and higher was viewed as a high collaboration rating once again because by definition this meant that the best practices for collaboration were being carried out more than some of the time. Only 27% of personnel rated themselves 3.1 or higher which was classified as a high collaboration rating. The majority, 67.7% had a low collaboration rating (less than 3.1)²². The agreement with collaboration practices reveal that school personnel in Ontario see the benefits of collaboration but their collaboration ratings reveal they need to exercise more of the best practices to improve relationships (see Figure 4.4).

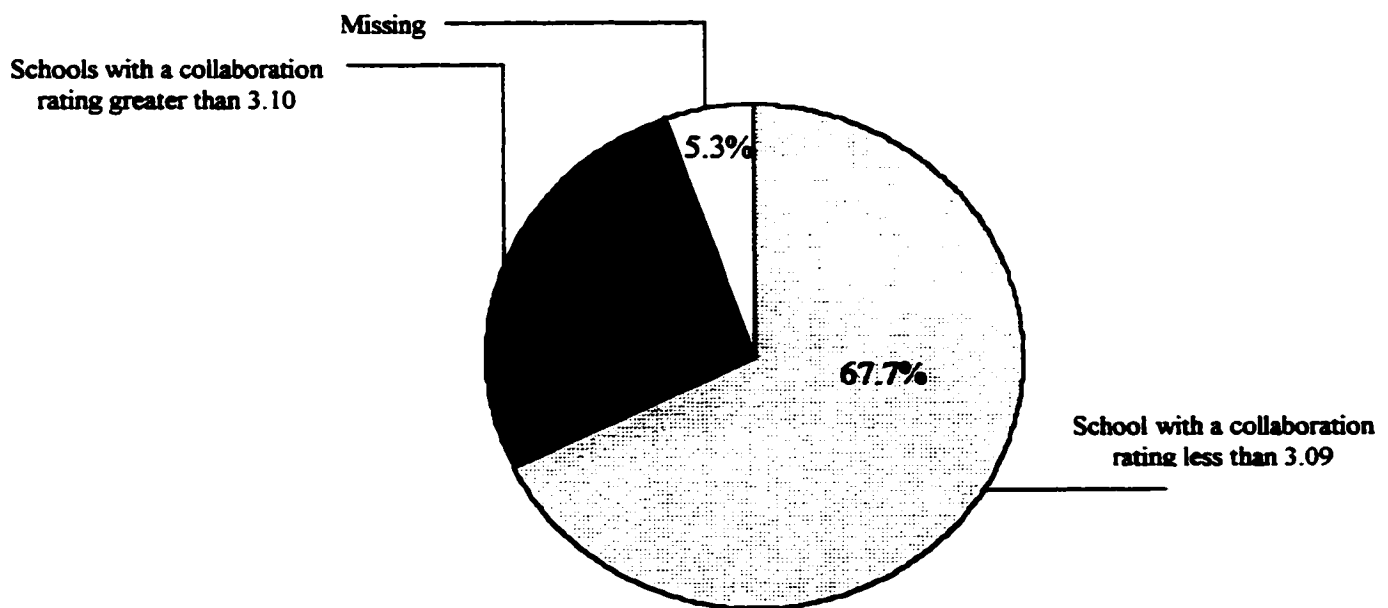


Figure 4.4. Pie chart of collaboration ratings.

²² A collaboration rating could not be calculated for 5.3% of high schools.

When asked whose responsibility it is to initiate and implement the transition process, one of the most frequent responses was one not given as an option on the questionnaire: a team approach. Initiating the process was viewed as the special education teacher's responsibility by 35.5% of respondents while 23% chose a "team approach" that would involve all or some of the following people; special education teacher, parents, agency, school administration, and/or student. Similarly, respondents who gave their school a high transition rating reported that special education teachers (39.5%) or the team approach (26.7%) should initiate the process. When asked whose responsibility it was to implement the transition planning process, 28% chose the special education teacher while 31.9% selected the "team approach" involving some or all of the people previously mentioned. Teachers at the schools with a high transition rating reported that special education teachers (26.3%) or the team approach (32.7%) should implement the process. It is important to highlight that respondents were not given the option to select the "team approach" but rather wrote it on the line beside the option "other (please specify)". Had the option "team approach" been given, more respondents may have selected it.

Respondents were given a list of 14 items, which was intended to indicate the capacity to which a school was implementing the transition planning practices. It should be noted that not all of the 14 indicators were permitted to be present on the questionnaires for all schools to which the survey was sent. Some school boards required that certain items be removed because they felt that some items violated their teachers'

collective agreements. For example, the item which asked if the school's principal had the necessary skills to support best practices for transition was viewed as placing the teacher in a position to evaluate the principal which was not allowed under their teachers' agreement. In these cases, a modified version of the questionnaire was prepared that eliminated questions in violation of their collective agreements.

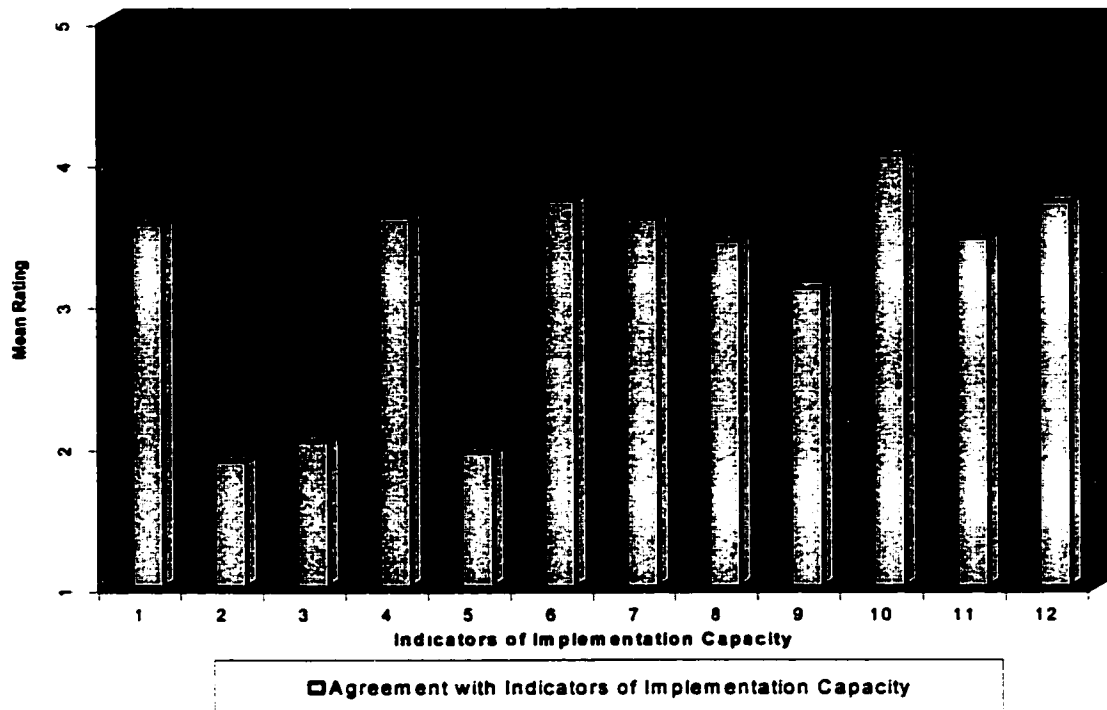
Only 12 indicators were used in the final analysis. The indicators "These practices are worthwhile" and "These practices are needed at your school" were removed from the analysis. Although respondents strongly agreed that the best practices are worthwhile ($M = 4.34$, mode = 5, $SD = .73$), this item was removed because it was redundant with the 33 responses regarding agreement with practices answered on the preceding pages of the questionnaire. The second indicator regarding the need for transition practices was removed from analysis because as the questionnaires were analyzed, it became apparent that many respondents misunderstood this question. Some people who already had a transition program in place answered that they did not need a transition program because they already had one. The intent of the question was misunderstood since it was intended that if a respondent's school had a transition program, they must have one because it was needed.

The number of respondents, frequency of responses, mean, median, and mode for each of the indicators for implementation capacity was calculated (See Appendix P). Respondents agreed most frequently (mode = 5) that: they would be able to adapt the best

practices to their current school's procedures and organization ($\underline{M} = 3.58$, $\underline{SD} = .97$); they have the skills to implement these practices ($\underline{M} = 3.62$, $\underline{SD} = 1.03$); the school's principal had the necessary skills to support these practices ($\underline{M} = 3.74$, $\underline{SD} = 1.04$); transition programming is important to their principal ($\underline{M} = 3.60$, $\underline{SD} = 1.03$); the school board's administration have the necessary skills ($\underline{M} = 3.46$, $\underline{SD} = 1.02$); transition programming is important to the parents of special education students at their school ($\underline{M} = 4.06$, $\underline{SD} = .89$); and there is a high level of collaboration between staff members at their school ($\underline{M} = 3.72$, $\underline{SD} = .95$). Respondents were neutral in their opinion (mode = 3) that transition programming is important to their school board ($\underline{M} = 3.15$, $\underline{SD} = 1.11$) and transition programming is important to their city/town/community ($\underline{M} = 3.46$, $\underline{SD} = 1.16$). They disagreed (mode = 1), however, that they had sufficient money ($\underline{M} = 1.91$, $\underline{SD} = .99$), resources (i.e., personnel and supplies) ($\underline{M} = 2.05$, $\underline{SD} = 1.07$), or time to implement these practices ($\underline{M} = 1.97$, $\underline{SD} = 1.05$). See Figure 4.5 for a visualization of mean scores of each indicator of implementation capacity.

Part C – Background information.

This section of the questionnaire asked respondents if they had read and considered themselves familiar with the document Bridges to Employment for Students with Disabilities: A Resource Guide for School-to-Work Transition (SWT) Programs (Ministry of Labour & Ministry of Education, 1988). Only 38.8% of the respondents who answered this question had read and considered themselves familiar with the document. The degree of familiarity was not solicited.



- 1 = Your school would be able to adapt the practices to your current school's procedures and organization.
- 2 = Your school has sufficient financial resources to adapt these practices.
- 3 = Your school has sufficient resources (i.e., personnel and supplies) to adapt these practices.
- 4 = You have the skills to implement these practices.
- 5 = You have the time to implement these practices.
- 6 = Your principal has the necessary skills to support these practices.
- 7 = Transition programming is important to your principal.
- 8 = Your school board's administrators have the necessary skills to support these practices.
- 9 = Transition programming is important to your school board.
- 10 = Transition programming is important to the parents of special education students at your school.
- 11 = Transition programming is important to your city/town/community.
- 12 = There is a high level of collaboration between the staff within your school.

Figure 4.5. Agreement with indicators of implementation capacity.

The respondents were asked what was the highest academic degree that they had earned: 68.4% had a bachelor's degree (including the B. Ed. degree); 30.9% had a

The respondents were asked what was the highest academic degree that they had earned: 68.4% had a bachelor's degree (including the B. Ed. degree); 30.9% had a master's degree; two of the respondents had their doctorates representing less than 1% of the respondents. The majority, 85.8% had their special education specialist as well.

Respondents were asked how much training they had regarding transition issues; 49.1% responded no training (zero hours of training), 40.1% had less than 20 hours of transition training, and 10.8% had more than 20 hours of training. Of those respondents who had transition training, 19.7% received training during their Ministry of Education Part I, II, or III special education courses, and 33% received in-service training on transition. Only 6.3% learned about transition in their B. Ed. program. (Note that respondents were allowed to check off more than one response). Approximately 76% of respondents who had training found their training somewhat beneficial, 32% found it very beneficial, and less than 1% did not find the transition training beneficial. More than 89% of respondents felt they would benefit from more training in the school-to-adult life transition of youth with disabilities.

When asked how much training the respondent had regarding service coordination and/or working in collaborative interagency teams, 68.9% responded "no training", 24.8% responded that they had less than 20 hours of training, and 6.3% responded having more than 20 hours of training. Respondents were then asked where they had received their training. Of the 31.1% of respondents who answered yes, 19.3% responded "in-service training" while 9.3% responded they received training during one of their Ministry of Education Special Education courses, most often Part III (note that

respondents were allowed to check off more than one response for this question). When asked how beneficial their training was, 69.4% responded “somewhat beneficial”, while 28.2% answered “very beneficial”. An overwhelming 88.1% of all respondents said they would benefit from training, and/or more training on how to work on interagency collaborative teams to facilitate the school-to-adult life transition of youth with disabilities. When all respondents were asked if they believed that transition programs should include service coordination between schools and community agencies, 98.5% said yes.

One question was misunderstood by respondents and therefore the information it provided was questionable. Similar to the predictor that was eliminated due to misunderstanding, the results from question 6a are not reliable. Question 6a asked respondents if their school needs a transition program for special education students. Hand-written notes in the margins of the questionnaire made by respondents revealed that some people who already had a transition program answered “no” to this question. Respondents did this because they believed if they already had a transition program they did not need another one. The intent of this question was that people who already have a transition program would have answered “yes” as well. This will be discussed further in Chapter 5.

Respondents were asked if their school had a school-to-work or school-to-adult life transition program for students with disabilities: 57.3% responded “no” while 42.7% responded “yes”. Those people who answered “yes” were asked if members of their school communities were involved in the creation of the program: 78.8% responded

“yes”. Those same people were asked if there was frequent assessment of the quality of the program: 40.7% responded “sometimes” while 37% responded “often”. When asked if their school’s transition program included service coordination with human service agencies, 71.9% responded “yes”.

Answers to most of the qualitative questions were too diverse and varied from which to derive any useful information. However, two questions provided important data. Respondents were asked what barriers inhibited their school from having a transition program in place for all special education students. They answered money, personnel, time, that a program was not needed, and lack of resources most often. When asked what facilitated their school’s transition program the top five responses were staff dedication, co-op programs, special education or resource personnel, parents, and the guidance department.

Additional information.

Almost 90% of respondents gave me permission to call them if I needed clarification about their responses. Almost 70% of respondents were willing to participate in a telephone interview. The majority of questionnaires, 77.2%, were completed by a special education teacher. Other questionnaires were completed by the head of student services, a teacher, or principal.

Cronbach's Alpha

To test the internal consistency of agreement with transition best practices, actual transition practices, agreement with best practices for collaboration, actual collaboration practices, and the indicators of implementation capacity, an analysis of scale revealed a favourable Cronbach's alpha for each of the constructs. (See Table 4.6 for a list of Cronbach alpha ratings for the variables.) The scores reveal that the results are consistent for the different items within the same construct.

Table 4.6**Cronbach Alpha Scores for Variables**

	Cronbach's Alpha
Agreement with transition best practices	.88
Actual transition practices	.88
Agreement with collaboration best practices	.93
Actual collaboration practices	.93
Indicators of Implementation Capacity	.85

Intercorrelational Matrix

An intercorrelation matrix was built to determine the relationships among indicators of implementation capacity, agreement with best practices for transition, application of best practices for transition, agreement with best practices for collaboration, and application of best practices for collaboration. The large matrix was

divided into 3 smaller tables for readability (See Tables 4.7, 4.8 & 4.9) All calculations demonstrated that there is a moderate correlation among the variables and that conditions of multi-collinearity are not likely to be violated.

How well did the 12 indicators of implementation capacity actually predict the transition and collaboration ratings? The correlation coefficient table shows that all of the indicators were significantly related to the actual transition and actual collaboration ratings (see Table 4.9). Therefore results demonstrate that the indicators do help to predict a school's capacity to implement transition and collaboration practices. The following regression tests indicate the degree to which the indicators explain the transition and collaboration ratings.

Regression

Regression tests were performed on the individual indicators of implementation capacity and actual transition and collaboration means. Results show that the indicators explain 37.3% of the actual transition practices ($R^2 = .373$, $p = .00$). With regards to actual collaboration practices, test results show that indicators explain 33.7% of the actual collaboration scores ($R^2 = .337$, $p = .00$). A scatterplot diagram of transition and collaboration ratings with the mean ratings for the indicators of implementation capacity visually demonstrates these values (See Appendix Q). The scattered distribution shows that these findings indicate that there is some, but not a strong relationship among the indicators for implementation capacity and a school's readiness to implement a change

Table 4.7

Intercorrelations Among Indicators for Implementation Capacity (N = 300)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Adaptability of practices to school's current procedures and organization	---	.43*	.46*	.59*	.43*	.34*	.38*	.34*	.38*	.46*	.40*	.42*
2. School has sufficient financial resources to adapt these practices		---	.71*	.41*	.59*	.17*	.20*	.24*	.33*	.24*	.22*	.18*
3. School has sufficient resources (like personnel and supplies)			---	.45*	.66*	.18*	.22*	.22*	.31*	.23*	.18*	.16**
4. Respondent has the skills to implement practices				---	.49*	.46*	.40*	.37*	.35*	.44*	.38*	.40*
5. Respondent has the time to implement practices					---	.19*	.28*	.28*	.40*	.24*	.23*	.21*
6. Principal has the necessary skills						---	.70*	.69*	.45*	.55*	.47*	.46*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
7. Transition programming is important to principal							---	.58*	.64*	.61*	.54*	.48*
8. School board administrators have the necessary skills							---	---	.63*	.49*	.42*	.39*
9. Transition programming is important to school board administrators									---	.58*	.58*	.44*
10. Transition programming is important to parents of special education students										---	.72*	.59*
11. Transition programming is important to city/town/community											---	.47*
12. High level of collaboration between staff												---

Note. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* $p = .00$

** $p = .05$

Table 4.8**Intercorrelations Among Agreement and Actual Transition and Collaboration****Means and Indicators for Implementation Capacity Mean (N = 280 – 293)*****

	1. Agreement with Transition Best Practices	2. Agreement with Collaboration Best Practices	3. Actual Transition Rating	4. Actual Collaboration Rating	5. Mean Rating of the Indicators for Implementation Capacity
1. Agreement with Transition Best Practices	—	.57**	.37**	.14*	.26**
2. Agreement with Collaboration Best Practices		—	.16**	.28**	.22**
3. Actual Transition Rating			—	.57**	.37**
4. Actual Collaboration Rating				—	.42**
5. Mean Rating of the Indicators for Implementation Capacity					—

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*** Pearson Correlation
2-tailed significance
Pairwise comparison

Table 4.9

Correlations Among Agreement and Actual Transition and Collaboration Means
and Indicators for Implementation Capacity Mean (N = 284 – 300)***

	Agreement with Transition Best Practices	Agreement with Collaboration Best Practices	Actual Transition Rating	Actual Collaboration Rating	Mean Rating of the Indicators for Implementation Capacity
1. Adaptability to school's current procedures and organization	.25**	.23**	.32**	.32**	.67**
2. School has sufficient financial resources	.05	.09	.22**	.35**	.53**
3. School has sufficient resources (e.g. personnel and supplies)	.07	.12	.27**	.35**	.53**
4. Respondent has the skills to implement practices	.18**	.17**	.35**	.36**	.68**
5. Respondent has the time to implement practices	.14**	.12	.34**	.37**	.57**
6. Principal has the necessary skills	.15*	.06	.20**	.19**	.73**
7. Transition programming is important to principal	.19**	.13*	.30**	.26**	.77**

	Agreement with Transition Best Practices	Agreement with Collaboration Best Practices	Actual Transition Rating	Actual Collaboration Rating	Mean Rating of the Indicators for Implementation Capacity
8. School board administrators have the necessary skills	.17**	.11	.18**	.26**	.72**
9. Transition programming is important to school board administrators	.19**	.18**	.25**	.28**	.77**
10. Transition programming is important to parents of special education students	.27**	.22**	.21**	.21**	.78**
11. Transition programming is important to city/town/ community	.22**	.20**	.17**	.20**	.72**
12. High level of collaboration between staff	.10**	.06	.17**	.16**	.65**

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*** Pearson Correlation
2-tailed significance

like transition planning. It also demonstrates the differences among schools in the province with respect to level of carrying out transition practices and implementation capacity.

Step-wise multiple regression was performed with the indicators of implementation capacity and actual transition and actual collaboration practice means²³. The test was performed even though step-wise regression has been criticized as an operational technique for allowing the statistical program to generate which variables best predict an outcome, therefore accumulating chance effects. It was performed here because it reveals interesting, although fragile, information. Since this research looks at the earliest stages of implementation of an innovation, it provides potentially useful information for policy analysts and practitioners implementing transition programs. Although these findings are grounded in the literature and supported by the findings in other phases, it would be prudent that this information be further tested in future research efforts to determine its robustness.

Step-wise regression was conducted to determine which of the indicators of implementation capacity best predict actual practices. The indicators that best predicted transition practices were (a) the person has the skills to implement transition practices, (b) transition programming is important to that school's principal (c) the person has the time to implement the practices, (d) there is a high level of collaboration among

²³ Only cases with a mean greater than zero were selected for the calculation. The dependent variable was the mean transition ratings or the mean collaboration ratings. The independent variable was the indicators of implementation capacity excluding the indicators that had been previously omitted.

members of the staff, and (e) transition programming is important to the parents of special education students at your school (see Table 4.10). The indicators that best explained actual collaboration practices were (a) the person had the time to implement the collaboration practices, (b) their school would be able to adapt the practices to their current procedures and organization, (c) the person has the skill to implement the practices, (d) the school has sufficient financial resources to adapt the practices, and (e) transition programming is important to that school's principal (see Table 4.11). The three common indicators of these tests are having the necessary skills and time to implement the practices as well as having the support of a principal who believes transition programming is important.

Chi-square Tests

A number of tests were performed to determine if there was a relationship among variables. Based on the research questions and driven by information learned during the literature review, tests were originally run on variables where a relationship was expected. Further tests were conducted to determine if there were any unexpected relationships.

Since multiple chi-square tests were performed, there is the potential of a high experimentwise error rate. Therefore, tests with a significance level of .00 will ensure that the overall experimentwise error rate will be kept within acceptable limits. I begin by reporting where relationships were expected to be found followed by a report of relationships in order of increasing significance levels, beginning at a .00 level.

Table 4.10

**Summary of the Step-wise Multiple Regression Analysis for Indicators of
Implementation Capacity That Best Predicted Actual Transition Practices and
Mean Transition Ratings**

Indicator of Implementation Capacity	B	SE B	β	Cumulative R^2
Has the skills to implement these practices	.31	.04	.45*	.20
Transition programming is important to your principal	.18	.04	.29*	.27
Has the time to implement these practices	.13	.04	.21*	.32
There is a high level of collaboration between the staff within your school	.12	.04	.18*	.35
Transition programming is important to the parents of special education students	.11	.04	.15*	.37

*p = .00

Table 4.11

**Summary of the Step-wise Multiple Regression Analysis for Indicators of
Implementation Capacity That Best Predicted Actual Collaboration Practices and
Mean Collaboration Ratings**

Indicator of Implementation Capacity	B	SE B	β	Cumulative R^2
Has the time to implement these practices	.37	.05	.43*	.18
The school is able to adapt the practices to their school's procedures and organization	.27	.06	.27*	.25
Has the skills to implement these practices	.19	.06	.20*	.28
The school has sufficient financial resources to adapt the practices	.15	.06	.17**	.30
Transition programming is important to your principal	.13	.05	.15**	.32

*p = .00

**p = .01

Relationships were expected to be found among schools that had high transition and collaboration ratings and when respondents (a) were familiar with the Bridges to Employment for Students with Disabilities: A Resource Guide for School-to-Work Transition (SWT) Program (1988) document, (b) had training in transition and collaboration practices and benefited from that training, (c) wanted service coordination as part of their transition program and included service coordination as part of their program, (d) said their school had a transition program, (e) said members of their school community were involved in the creation of the program, and (f) performed regular assessments of their programs. Relationships among transition, collaboration, and indicators of implementation capacity means and (a) urban, suburban, and rural schools, (b) student population, (c) special education student population, (d) public, separate, or provincial schools, and (e) geographical location determined by postal codes and Ministry of Education districts were not expected but were curiously explored. Further tests were conducted to test the relationship of other variables but proved uninformative for the most part.

Tests revealed that when reading and being familiar with the document Bridges to Employment for Students with Disabilities (1988) was related to respondents reporting that they had a transition program, out of the schools that reported having a transition program approximately 55% had read the document while 45% had not ($\chi^2(1, N = 273) = 9.19, p < .00$). This is consistent with the findings calculated from correlating the reading of the document to not having a transition program: 63.9% had not read the document and did not have a transition program. Being familiar with and reading the document did

not necessarily relate to a transition program being put into place, but not reading the document usually related to a low transition rating. Similarly, reading the document did not always relate to a high collaboration rating, but not reading the document more often related to a low collaboration rating ($\chi^2(1, N = 269) = 9.31, p = .00$).

Out of all schools that reported having a transition program in place, only 44.6% had a high collaboration rating while 55.4% had a low collaboration rating ($\chi^2(1, N = 279) = 28.01, p = .00$). This indicates that schools may have had a transition program in place but they were not necessarily utilizing the services of community agencies. The majority of schools that did not have a transition program did not collaborate (84.2%). As one might expect, 78.5% of respondents who reported having a transition program had a high transition rating ($\chi^2(1, N = 281) = 21.97, p = .00$). Interestingly, that meant that 21.5% reported having a transition program but had a “low” transition rating which would indicate that their transition program did not utilize best practices. Also interesting is that of schools that reported not having a transition program, 51% had a high transition rating while 49% had a low transition rating. This means that some schools are already doing many of the transition “best practices” but do not regard it as a transition program.

The following relationships are significant at the .05 level. A relationship was found among high collaboration ratings and regular assessments of the quality of transition programs ($\chi^2(2, N = 106) = 7.693, p < .05$). Those schools that performed frequent assessments of their programs had a higher collaboration rating.

Suburban schools, rather than urban or rural schools, tended to have a higher transition rating ($\chi^2(2, N = 286) = 7.55, p < .05$). Crosstab analysis revealed that 73.4% of suburban high schools had a high transition rating. Almost 61% of urban schools and 54% of rural schools had a high transition rating. The urban, suburban, or rural location of a school did not have a significant relationship with collaboration ratings.

Reading and being familiar with the document Bridges to Employment for Students with Disabilities (1988) was significantly related to a school's transition rating ($\chi^2(1, N = 271) = 4.924, p < .05$). Out of the 62% of schools that had a transition rating of 3.1 or higher (which was considered a high transition rating), 44.6% had read the document and considered themselves familiar with it, while 55.4% had not read it. Out of the 38% of schools that had a low transition rating (below 3.1), the majority, 68.9 % had not read the document. Out of the number of people who actually read the document, 70.1% had a high transition rating.

Whether a school was public, separate, or provincial had a significant relationship to transition ratings ($\chi^2(2, N = 276) = 6.70, p < .05$). More public schools had a higher rather than low transition rating: 57.7% had a high transition rating while 42.3% had a lower transition rating. Far more separate schools had a higher transition rating than low rating: 71.4% had a higher transition rating while 28.6% had a low transition rating. All provincial schools (100%) had high transition ratings. Crosstab analysis demonstrates that a higher percentage of separate schools than public schools had a high transition rating.

A relationship was found among who respondents stated they believed should initiate the transition process and transition ratings ($\chi^2(5, N = 275) = 11.56, p < .05$). The people that reported the special education teacher, the student, or a group should initiate the transition process, had a higher percentage of high transition ratings (68%, 63.2%, and 70.8% respectively). Those people who believed the school administrator should initiate the transition process had a low transition rating 61.3% of the time.

Training in transition practices is significantly related to collaboration ratings ($\chi^2(2, N = 278) = 6.48, p < .05$). Training is not significantly related to transition ratings but a crosstab analysis gave some indication of a relationship at the .06 significance level ($\chi^2(2, N = 280) = 5.58, p < .06$). As would be expected those respondents with low transition and collaboration ratings most often had no training. The amount of transition training did not have much bearing on a high collaboration rating, perhaps indicating the lack of emphasis on collaboration practices as part of transition training. People who gave their schools a high transition rating usually had extensive or at least some training. Not having training, however, did not necessarily mean that person's school had a low transition rating. Therefore the amount of transition training was somewhat related to a high transition rating.

Significant relationships were not found among high transition and collaboration ratings and the following variables: (a) believing transition programs should include service coordination between schools and agencies; (b) whether or not members of respondents' school communities were involved in the creation of transition programs;

(c) the size of the student population; (d) the number of special education students; and (e) the geographic location of the school. Significant relationships were also not found among respondents reporting that a transition program included service coordination and a high collaboration rating nor regular assessment of transition programs and transition ratings.

Summary of Findings from Phase 2 – Questionnaire

The data from the questionnaires revealed that respondents agreed with the best practices for transition and collaboration. The majority of respondents believed that many of the best practices for transition were already in place in their schools although the following phase indicates these reports may be somewhat inflated. Although the value of collaborating with human service agencies was recognized, many schools were not utilizing this resource. Respondents believed they did not have sufficient money, resources, or time to implement the best practices for transition or collaboration. Almost all respondents said they would benefit from more training in the school-to-adult life transition of special education students. The questionnaire provided a general view of respondent's perceptions about transition planning in their own schools and collectively provided a view of transition practices across the province. (To view a table of tests conducted and findings, See Appendix R). The following two phases, the telephone interviews and case study, support and challenge findings from the questionnaire and provide a more in-depth look at transition planning across the province.

Phase 3 – Telephone Interviews

The telephone interview phase provided richer, more explicit information. It confirmed and elaborated on data gathered during phases one and two. A purposeful sample of 36 individuals was selected from across the province. Respondents were from small (29.7%), medium (38.4%) and large (32%) schools²⁴. Out of the 36 interviews, 65.7% of respondents worked in the public school system, 28.6% worked in the separate school system, and 5.7% worked at a provincial school. Geographically by Ministry of Education districts, 13.9% of people interviewed were from the north region, 16.7% were from the south-east, 16.7% south-west, and 52.8% were from what the Ministry defines as the Toronto area. Chi-square goodness-of-fit tests demonstrate that the sample did not provide sufficient evidence to conclude surveys were not representative of all high schools in Ontario by student population (see Table 4.12), Ministry of Education district (see Table 4.13), and by school type when the provincial schools were not included (see Table 4.14). Personnel at schools that had some level of transition programming were selected to be interviewed more often because they were better able to answer the interview questions and respond to the scenarios. Subsequently they were better able to inform the original research questions.

²⁴ As in phase 2, small, medium, and large schools were determined by taking the number of high schools in Ontario (693) and performing a percentile split dividing that number into thirds (231 and 462). The student populations from all high schools in Ontario were ordered from smallest to largest. The 231st largest populations marked the upper boundary of a small school and the population that was the 462nd largest marked the highest populations of a medium school. Small schools have a student population less than or equal to 747, medium schools have a population between 748 and 1135, and large schools have a population greater than or equal to 1136.

Table 4.12**Comparison of People Interviewed and All English High Schools by School Size**

School Size (student population)	All English High Schools in Ontario (n = 693)	Schools represented by people interviewed* (n = 36)
Small (747 or less)	33.3%	29.7%
Medium (748 – 1135)	33.3%	38.4%
Large (1136 or more)	33.3%	32%

NB: Columns do not always equal 100% due to rounding.

* At the 5% significance level, the data does not allow us to reject the null hypothesis of no differences ($df = 2$, $\chi^2(0.5)=5.99$, $\chi^2=14.02$).

Table 4.13**Comparison of People Interviewed and All English High Schools by Ministry of****Education District**

District	All English High Schools in Ontario (n = 693)	Schools represented by people interviewed* (n = 36)
North	10.0%	13.9%
South-east	13.9%	16.7%
South-west	19.0%	16.7%
Toronto area	57.1%	52.8%

NB: Columns do not always equal 100% due to rounding.

* At the 5% significance level, the data does not allow us to reject the null hypothesis of no differences ($df = 3$, $\chi^2(0.5)=7.81$, $\chi^2=7.76$).

Table 4.14**Comparison of People Interviewed and All English High Schools by School Type**

School Type	All English High Schools in Ontario (n = 693)	Schools represented by people interviewed* (n = 36)
Public	76.2%	65.7%
Separate	23.2%	28.6%
Provincial	0.6%	5.7%

NB: Columns do not always equal 100% due to rounding.

* Including the provincial schools, at the 5% significance level, the data provides sufficient evidence to allow us to reject the null hypothesis of no differences, concluding that surveys returned differ from the population of all English high schools in Ontario ($df = 2$, $\chi^2(0.5)=5.99$, $\chi^2=46.06$). Excluding the provincial schools, at the 5% significance level, the data does not allow us to reject the null hypothesis of no differences ($df = 1$, $\chi^2(0.5)=3.84$, $\chi^2=2.71$).

Twenty-two themes emerged during the analysis of the telephone interviews. The themes are divided into three sections: roles, barriers to the transition process, and strategies to improve the transition process (see Table 4.15). Some of these themes overlap. Each one plays a role in the ability of a high school to help a student make the transition into adult life. The findings from each theme will be revealed in the following pages.

Table 4.15**Themes that Emerged from the Telephone Interviews**

Roles	Barriers to transition planning	Strategies to aid transition planning
• Guidance counselor • Special education teacher • Transition coordinator • Co-operative education teachers • Principal and vice-principal	• Transportation • Location and size of a school • Lack of staff • Attitude • Parents • Finding work experience/co-op placements • Lack of appropriate university and college programs • Agency constraints • Career inventories • Time and money • Gaps in services	• Individual Transition Plans (ITPs) • Offering a variety of learning environments • Follow-up studies • Cooperation/coordination /collaboration • Supports to teachers • Breaking the rules

Roles

During the interviews, respondents talked about the roles of the different people that played a part in the transition process. Forty-seven percent of teachers interviewed said their guidance, special education, and co-op departments worked together. The location of these three departments within the school played a role in the level of collaboration that occurred between them. In some schools, the three departments were located within close proximity to each other facilitating informal communication. At other schools long hallways or flights of stairs separated the three departments making

informal communication less likely to occur. The size of the school played a role. The smaller the school, the more often respondents said they worked together. A relationship was noted between transition rating and working together, with people working together more often as the transition rating increased. The length of time a member of the school staff had been at the school also played a role. Five respondents mentioned the fact that some staff members had been around for a long time and therefore knew each other very well, facilitating their ability to work together.

Twenty percent of teachers said that the guidance, special education and co-op departments did not work together. One respondent said the people in the different departments just left each other alone. One teacher of students with severe disabilities said she often felt isolated from other members of staff. The roles the different departments and people had in the transition process differed from school to school.

Role of the guidance department.

It was clear during the telephone interviews that the role of the guidance department in each school was slightly different. As one respondent explained,

[It] really depends a lot on what kind of relationship the teachers within that school have. Some guidance departments are very specific - [working only with] students that are going onto college or university or are having difficulty in school. Others see it as their role to be concerned about every student in that school and where they are headed. So it really does vary from high school to high school.²⁵

²⁵ Please note that all direct quotes taken from the telephone interviews are written in italics. Any words that may have identified the respondent or the respondent's board have been replaced in square brackets. Also since conversational English is not as precise as written language it was necessary to modify some quotes to make them clearer to the reader who is reading the quote out of its original context. All modifications are written in square brackets.

Some schools did not have a formal guidance department, but instead had student services, which was a combination of the guidance, co-op and/or special education departments.

Respondents at 44% of the schools said that the guidance department at their schools did not see special education students, rather the special education teachers took care of the guidance needs for identified students. In those cases, the guidance department may only have helped with the IPRC paperwork. At three of these schools, the special education teacher also had training in guidance. One respondent said guidance would work only with the special education students that were preparing for University. When asked why guidance personnel did not spend more time with special education students one special education teacher said,

... the counselors have so many on their case loads, they don't have time to spend. Where in special education we have more time to spend with a student like that. If we see that student every day for 70 minutes, we develop a really strong bond.

At schools where special education students could access the services of all three departments - co-op, special education, and guidance - one respondent believed special education students were better off because they had more help than the other students who were not in special education.

The amount of contact that the guidance department had with the students had a lot to do with the number of students in the school and the number of guidance staff. Some guidance departments could not see every student every year. Generally, guidance

departments saw students twice during their high school careers²⁶. One respondent said the guidance department met with identified students three times per year. Another school saw each student at least once a year. One school assigned 20 students to each teacher and it was the teacher's responsibility to advise students to the best of his/her ability²⁷. The challenge of this approach was that the majority of teachers did not have any training in guidance. Some guidance counselors had contact with students when they went into classrooms throughout the year to make presentations. At that time, they invited students to come into the guidance office or to make an appointment. In these cases, the student had to take the initiative to make the appointment and self-refer themselves to guidance. Teachers, parents, or guidance counselors could refer students to guidance when they felt it was necessary.

For university bound students in special education, a guidance counselor may have been the person who contacted universities to inquire about special services for students with disabilities. At some schools it was the guidance department that filled out the special section for identified students on the university application form and helped students complete applications, while at other schools the special education teachers did that.

Thirty-nine percent of respondents believed that the guidance department was overwhelmed by the social-emotional problems of the students robbing guidance

²⁶ One school made appointments with all grade 9 and 10 students. Another school made appointments with students in grades 9 and 11. Another made appointments with students in grades 9 and 12 only. And another school was not that specific and said they just try to see students once every two years.

²⁷ Since this research was conducted, the Ontario provincial government has mandated that a teacher advisor be assigned to every student in Grade 8 and up.

personnel of the time to do career planning with students. One respondent said that guidance personnel were managing a tremendous overload, which she blamed on social cutbacks.

People don't have anywhere to turn to now. We are not dealing any longer with just the students. We are dealing with whole families. The family comes into the school and starts discussing their situation and why the kids are acting the way they are, and it is getting way beyond the realm of education. A lot of counselors feel they are running a treatment center as opposed to helping kids choose courses and get an education.

I mean guidance is incredibly pressed these days ... probably the initial idea was that they were suppose to be career oriented and helping the students look that way, or to post-secondary... they are in fact spending most of their time doing counselling around major social issues. They are being swamped by very serious issues such as eating disorders and sexual issues and date rape, and all of those things, behavioural stuff, family breakdown... which is eating up the time that they would normally be giving to these other things.

Some respondents believed dealing with the social-emotional issues of the students should not be a role of guidance or the school system.

I don't think [dealing with the social-emotional issues of students] is part of the school's role. I think they should be bringing in social workers to work with these kids, and possibly a psychologist. A lot of the problems are heavy-duty problems and the guidance department can deal with them to some extent, and then they have to send them outside.

Our board says they don't have money to provide social workers in the school. Their job is education not social work. ... If social services want to provide the social worker we would gladly find them accommodation and an office and a phone, but it is not our job to pay for them.

Assistance from psychologists or social workers helped the guidance departments but few schools were fortunate enough to have such services readily available. Only 28% of respondents said their school had access to specialized professionals in their schools like social workers, adolescent care workers or psychologists.

We have one board psychologist who is available to [16 schools]. Now you can do the math of how much time this guy would be able to spend in any particular place. He comes in and shows the flag, and he's a great guy but all he can do is basically give advice.

Many schools had no social support services in their school and if students needed more support than the school could provide, it meant looking outside of the school. For students in rural or remote areas, help was out of reach.

Kids can only access counselors outside of the school if they can make it to the [big city]. And if you are 14 and you live 60 miles outside from the [big city], odds are pretty good that you are not going to get there - especially if you don't want your parents to know.

Only 5% of respondents did not agree that guidance was overwhelmed, instead they believed guidance was just overworked, like everyone else.

Role of special education.

The role of the special education department differed from school to school. When special education teachers and department heads were asked what their role was in the school the following answers were given: to teach the kids social skills; to make the child feel successful; to encourage students to complete their work; to give students strategies to cope with their disability; and to help students understand their disability so they could become advocates for themselves.

Basically what I am is a combination policeman, lawyer, finding creative answers to situations and to be able to intervene on behalf of either the kids or to be able to advocate on their behalf with respect to teachers, giving teachers suggestive ways of dealing with situations or giving them ways out.

To facilitate the transition from elementary to secondary school some special education teachers visited feeder schools, usually for IPRC meetings, to meet students with severe disabilities and their parents. Once students were attending high school, special education teachers were in contact with the parents of students with more severe disabilities regularly through telephone calls and communication books. Six respondents mentioned that contact between the school and the parents increased with the severity of the disability.

Each and every student and the needs that they have will determine the degree of involvement that I will have. I prefer to have very little [involvement] because I prefer that each and every person in the school feel that they are autonomous and they can do what they can do.

The special education teacher might have given strategies to teachers for helping special education students in integrated settings.

We will send out a, we call it, a confidential student recommendation sheet, on all of the kids that are identified. We send them to each of their teachers with strategies that will help the student in classrooms. So that is our job to tick off all of the strategies that will help each teacher.

Some schools differentiated between resource teachers and special needs teachers.

Resource teachers worked with students with learning disabilities while special needs teachers worked with students with a diagnosed syndrome. One respondent believed that the role of the special education department depended on the characteristics of the people in that role.

At some schools it was believed that the special education department dealt mostly with grade 9 and 10 students. By grade 11, students had either acquired the necessary skills allowing them to be phased out of special education, dropped out, or had

the co-op and/or guidance department meet their needs. In other schools, special education took over the guidance role for special education students from day one.

We do our own [special education kids] because we are more in tune with the kid's needs. ... We, in our special education department, do a lot of guidance roles, like we do their timetables with them before they go to guidance. We match teachers, teaching styles, and learning styles, personalities, and all kinds of things.

Based on these findings, it was clear that the role of the special education department differed from school to school.

Role of the transition coordinator.

Three schools had a person or group of people dealing specifically with transition. One specialized school had a person who dealt with the transition of students only once they turned 21. Another school board in a large urban area had a group of work experience coordinators. A third board had a transition coordinator in the true sense of the word. Her role will be explained in more detail in the phase four findings section of this research.

The role of transition coordinator was very political.

A lot of it has to do with how quickly and easily you can politic, and you put the right people in place.

One person who did some transition coordinating as part of her position within the high school spoke about the politicking she experienced.

It takes you a while to figure [everything] out. But to figure out why this is happening and that is happening. All it needs is one word from someone who is perceived as being knowledgeable or powerful ... so you really have to hob-knob and suck-up basically. ... you have to be verbal, and you have to be perceived as

knowing something. And if you don't, you are going to be left out of the mix for sure.

The role of transition coordinator was a specialized one that involved making and keeping valuable relationships in the community with agencies and employers. A problem with such a job is that when people in this position left, the relationships established end and a different person needed to forge new relationships. When asked what would happen when the transition coordinator had to leave, one respondent said the following:

I think the hardest thing to transfer to somebody else is that knowledge that comes from the experience of having done it for so long. You can't think to write everything down for them. ... A lot of it is people stuff. I mean you have to know how to play people and how to relate to people. You get to know which buttons to push with certain people and how you kind of get them to see things your way. That takes a long time before you kind of get that sense of who these people are and how you have to deal with them.

The role of transition coordinator was a new one in Ontario, and was being born out of necessity.

Role of the co-op department

The main role of the co-op department was to find work opportunities for students. This required contact with employers in the community. Employers were asked to take a student and to put them to work, allowing the student to gain work experience. The student was not paid for this work, nor did the school or employer earn any money. In most cases, students were placed in an area of the workforce that interested them. Each school set up their co-op department differently. At some schools the co-op

department was incorporated into student services, while at other schools there was a separate co-op department.

At the present, we have three teachers running the co-op program. One does sort of a technical orientation, the other one does the retail areas, [and the other does] day care programs.

The co-op department settled workers' compensation forms and claims, and wrote job plans which stated what the student would be doing, what skills would be learned, and what the employer's role would be. An evaluation of the student's experience was done. The student's placement was monitored regularly by talking to the student or employer in person or by telephone. Some co-op departments ran a job fair for students, inviting employers and people from various professions into the school to help students determine what type of job they may like to have one day.

Finding employers who were willing to accept the added responsibility of giving work experience was difficult. Finding employers who were willing to give students with disabilities work experience was even more difficult. The more support a student required to perform a job because of a disability, the harder it was to find work placements for this student. Employers did not have the time or the staff available to coach a student at the work placement often. This placed extra stress on the co-op department's role. Looking for work experience opportunities in small communities that did not have many available job placements, the level of difficulty further increased. Some schools did not bother to offer work experience to special education students. While 86% of schools interviewed talked about their co-op department as part of preparation for transition for students, only 59% spoke about a work experience program

for special education students. Once a willing employer was found, the school did not want to jeopardize that placement.

[Co-op teachers] secure a co-op placement and they are happy as heck to get it. And they don't make any waves. And they don't make any demands [on the employer]. Now, some [students] are lucky because they get a co-op placement where the [employer] on the other end is very interested in helping them acquire some real skills, and that is a good match, and that is positive. ... But what I see really as the missing link is [the students] are just at the mercy of the placement. ... [The co-op teachers] should be negotiating with the employer around the skill level of the student and what and how they would like to see that move along. ... I see that there has to be an improvement made in the way that co-op is operated so that it is really truly beneficial. And it is not just a paper exercise. ... And the reason is that placements are hard to secure. And they don't want to make too many demands on these people because they want to keep the placement.

Job placements were difficult to find, and therefore schools wanted to hold on to the placements they had.

Was it the co-op department's job to find placements for students with disabilities? This differed at every school. At some schools the co-op department found jobs for special education students. At other schools it was the special education department who found the jobs. One school left this job up to a private company. Another school had a job coach finding the placements. Two schools in one city hired a retired teacher to find co-op placements for all students including special education students. At another school it was the vocational teacher's job. Finally, one school board had a board level person find job placements for students with disabilities. Often the special education teacher had to be very skilled in convincing the co-op department that a student with a disability would benefit from gaining work experience.

The co-op person in our school is a little on the anal retentive side, gradually coming to grips with the fact that the basis for a lot of these co-op placements are

for kids who traditionally do not function too terribly well in the academic settings that a regular high school provides. ... I [the special education department head] provide the time and the personnel to be able to run a life skills co-op situation. Because it's more intensive... I provide the EA time, and I also provide in some cases the actual person to work that particular co-op section, or if I cannot do that, at least I provide for the EA to accompany the co-op supervisor.

The degree of success of co-op placement programs for learning disabled students really in most part, and this sounds very egotistical, depends upon the ability of the person who is involved in Special Education: to be able to advocate for those kids and to be able to find creative ways around a fairly rigid school system.

Whether a school offered work experience to special education students was dependent on the co-op program established at that school.

If it is a very busy active co-op program that is going on in the school, then it will generally encompass more of our [special education] students too. If it is a small kind of narrow co-op then it may not impact on our students very much.

At some schools the co-op department was not involved with special education students at all. In these schools, the special education department totally took care of co-op/job placement/work experience for special education students. Every school handled it differently.

There appeared to be three levels of work experience offered at high schools across Ontario: co-op, job placement, and work experience. The three terms were used interchangeably at schools across the province. It became a matter of semantics, schools using the same title for different types of programs. Not all three types were offered at every school (see Table 4.16). The main differentiating feature was the level of

Table 4.16

Three Levels of Work Opportunities

	Co-op	Job entry or Job Placement	Work experience
Type of student	academic students (may be advanced, general, or basic level students)	for basic/general level students or students with mild disabilities	for students in special education with more severe disabilities
Level of assistance in the workplace	none - student is able to work independently	some support is needed	a lot of support is needed
Purpose	to teach students about a particular area in the workforce	designed to teach students about the work force	designed to teach students about the work force
Length of work experience	lasts the entire term	usually lasts less than a term because of the nature of the student, may last only two weeks	the length of the experience is determined on an individual basis
Who finds placements?	co-op teacher	- special education teacher, although co-op may be involved - in smaller locations, parents may assist	- special education teacher, although co-op may be involved - in smaller locations, parents may assist
Availability of spaces	- students must apply and be accepted into the co-op program - Rural & remote communities have limited job opportunities	- limited space is available due to the amount of supervision that is required - may use in-school work opportunities	- very limited space is available due to the high level of supervision that is required - may use in-school work opportunities
Level of supervision	- minimal - co-op teacher may phone employer once per week to see how things are going	more support required than in regular co-op	- the most support - most likely full-time support but not in all cases

supervision required by the student. Whether a school could offer a specific type of work experience program depended on the availability of staff to find work placements and support students while they were in the work place (i.e., job coaches).

Regular co-op was most often for academic students who were able to work independently and looking to gain experience in one specific area of the workforce. Academic students should not be confused with advanced level students. Advanced level students who were preparing for University often did not take co-op because they were concerned with obtaining required credits for university entrance. Some advanced students might have participated in job shadowing if their school offered it.

For an advanced level student that wants that co-op experience, we do job shadowing. You know when they might go off to the city for a week to job shadow or do work experience for a week at a specific thing they are interested in or we will send them to [a nearby city] if they are interested in sciences to tour the energy plant there. Or we've sent them off to [a nearby city], there is a lab there, so depending on what they want. So they can have more specific training. They wouldn't be earning like a co-op credit.

Certainly, there may have been advanced level students that took co-op as well. Of the special education students, the higher functioning students worked directly through co-op.

A job placement program was for students with a mild disability requiring more monitoring and support in the workplace than those students in co-op. The special education teacher usually provided that additional support. Fewer spaces were available in this program because of the more intensive supervision required. A job placement was

tailor made to the student's needs and abilities and may have lasted only two weeks or may have lasted longer than one semester.

The work experience program tended to be for students with severe disabilities requiring the highest level of supervision a school could offer. The level of supervision available depended on the school. While some schools could send a job coach out with a student every time the student went to the work place, other schools could only send a job coach out for some of the time the student was at work.

It should be noted that many schools utilized in-school work experiences, for example working in the canteen, the office, or with the janitorial staff. Some parents were opposed to in-school placements because they were conscience of the message that might have been sent out to other students in the school.

We have one or two [parents] who find if my child is doing dishes or waiting tables at the caf., that is menial labour and it is not appropriate. So we are very careful and cautious about what work experience this student would get and what the parent's... goals are for the kid.

After an in-school placement, students might have been moved to placements within the local community and finally, in senior years, students might have had a placement farther away from the school but perhaps closer to their place of residence.

Role of the principal and vice-principal.

Respondents at 48% of the schools interviewed said the principal and vice-principal had little involvement with special education students. Contact was limited unless principals or vice-principals were involved with the IPRC process, handling a

behaviour problem, or giving an award or some form of recognition. In one school interviewed, the principal was more involved in special education because that particular principal had a background in special education. In another very small school, the vice-principal was also the whole guidance department, a result of having a background in guidance and having such a small staff. One respondent said the principal might have helped to order/request special equipment and assistive devices. Male administrators were sometimes used to counsel male students in schools where all special education staff were women. At 33% of the schools, the vice-principal tended to be the administrator in charge of discipline and behavioural issues. The involvement of the principal or vice-principal in special education and the transition process was a decision about role made by the acting administrators.

I think it comes down to personality, not mandate.

I don't think that spec. ed. and all of those things are as common to him. So he leans on his staff and me to make some decisions a bit more. ... You kind of have to sell it to him because he doesn't quite understand everything all the time. And that has to do with what his other roles are and where he came from.

Respondents said that the principal and vice principal trusted that the members of the special education department were the experts when it came to helping identified students and therefore did not feel it is necessary to become too involved.

Barriers**Transportation.**

A significant component of a transition program for many students was the co-op and work experience program. In many schools across Ontario, however, whether or not a student participated in a co-op or work experience program was dependent on whether the student had transportation to and from the work place. Forty-four percent of the schools interviewed reported that transportation was a problem for their students. Rural schools experienced the most difficulty with transportation. It was less of a problem in urban settings, especially large urban settings, like the Greater Toronto area, that have a well developed public transportation network.

In many urban centers, public transit was not always efficient enough to accommodate co-op students. Most co-op and work experience programs ran for only half a day. As a result, in some urban locations students were unable to get back to school for afternoon classes if they had an hour of transportation time on public transit. This factor might have limited the number of hours a student had in the workplace. Some of the less urban settings had limited public transit or none at all. At one school, the city bus system had recently been cancelled due to municipal budget cuts. Even if public transportation was available it was often inaccessible by students with more severe disabilities.

The kids have to walk a good half a kilometre to get [to the bus route]. And that is impossible, so often our kids are having to take taxis which really doesn't foster independence at all and doesn't give them any good transit training.

Public transit did not always provide for the needs of co-op students.

At some rural schools, 90-100% of the students were bused to and from school. This limited the number of after-school programs the school was able to run and it affected the number of students who were able to participate in work experience or co-op placements. Unless students drove, had access to a car, or made arrangements for someone to drop them off and pick them up, their placements were limited to those within walking distance of the school. Often there were not many job opportunities located within walking distance in a rural area. Again time to walk to the placement must be factored in. One person interviewed said that one placement was 35 km away from the school, which limited which students could take that job.

Parents were frustrated with the problems associated with transportation as well.

I know a parent... who's got a son with down syndrome, who is very high functioning and very good socially, but she says, 'it is too much of a pain for me because they want him for two hours here and two hours there and I've got to drive in from the country and bring him there and then two hours later I have to go and pick him up'.

Whether or not a student participated in activities or work placement opportunities was often dependent on the parent's willingness to provide transportation.

The cost of public transportation was also an issue. It was not the school's responsibility to provide transportation for students to and from the work place, however at three schools interviewed, Educational Assistants (EAs) or school staff members drove students to and from work placements.

Now in [this city] there's no city transit at all. So if you want to get a student to the other side of [this city] for a job, then you pretty much have to rely on a staff member being willing to drive them there.

A big challenge is trying to figure out how we get the kids to placements. So we have to have an EA that has to be available to drive them there.

One school's co-op department provided co-op students with special limited-time bus passes. The school made the necessary arrangements with the transit authority and purchased the passes at a fair rate. Two schools were able to provide a special bus and van to take students to co-op. At one of these schools, the students had to pay a fee to use the co-op bus. Four respondents reported that their students had to rely on taxis, which were expensive and did not teach transit skills. At one rural and remote location, the Ministry of Community and Social Services provided transportation for their clients because the need was so great. At other schools, students had to make their own arrangements which might have meant that parents drove them to and from placements or that the students had to drive themselves. One respondent said students with developmental disabilities who would not normally drive were trying to get their license. The transportation problem limited some schools to having a majority of in-school work placements for their students or to finding jobs located only within the student's own small community which may be located far from the school.

Two schools bent the rules a bit. One respondent allowed students full day placements for one whole semester eliminating the problem of students having to get back to school in the afternoon. Another person interviewed who's school was in a rural but seasonal tourist setting allowed students to earn co-op credits during the summer months when the small community was busier. Employers received free summer time help and students earned co-op credits. When asked if this arrangement was taking paid

summer employment away from students, the response was no, because employers could not afford to pay for summertime help anyway. If employers had to pay someone, they would simply have done without the extra pair of hands.

The distance to a workplace was also a concern to school staff who traveled to the workplace to monitor or assist students.

Mileage is a big thing. We used to go up and monitor them, and job coach more kids... but we have to drive them up, we have to monitor them, we have to tread back, and then we have to pay mileage for all of that, and it takes a lot of money out of our budget... and it does cut into your day for sure.

Availability of transportation was a major factor in transition planning.

Location and size of the school.

Personnel in eleven schools interviewed classified themselves as urban. Six individuals identified their schools' location as suburban. Personnel in sixteen schools said their schools were in rural areas (which may have also been remote and northern). Three people interviewed worked for school boards serving schools in urban, suburban, and rural areas.

When location was examined with other variables, relationships were noticed between school location and the co-op, job placement, and work experience available. It was most difficult to find placements in rural settings and least difficult in urban settings. Guidance departments received support from social workers and psychologists most often in urban settings, while rural schools had a 50% chance of receiving such help.

Schools in all locations mentioned that having a sufficient number of staff to serve students was a problem and that there was not enough time to do everything they wanted.

Approximately 30% of respondents represented small schools, 38% represented medium sized schools and 32% were from large schools. Respondents in large schools reported the least amount of involvement of principals and vice-principals in the transition process. Principals and vice-principals were most involved in medium sized schools.

Members of schools in rural communities spoke about a lack of support from the central office and Educational Centers largely due to the great distance separating the central board office from the school. Their location meant that they were too far from resources, unable to easily pick up materials from the Resource Centre. Recent school board amalgamations have compounded this problem since school districts spanned greater distances than before.

The board amalgamations complicated matters in other ways as well. Some respondents believed that special education had become less of a priority since special education became a “smaller fish in a larger sea”. Board services now covered a larger area spreading thinner an already small number of board level specialized staff.

Personnel in schools located in small communities faced many challenges. The number and type of job placements were limited in small rural, remote, and northern communities. The distance necessary to travel in order to get to work placements in surrounding communities was a deterrent to gaining work or work experience. Poor local economies also had an effect on availability of work placements. If a placement was not

working out for a student, there were no other job placements to go to in many cases.

One respondent confirmed that parents of children with severe disabilities often move out of small rural areas into larger cities so that they can have better services and more opportunities.

Respondents in small schools that were often located in small communities also faced many challenges. They were unable to offer the same variety of courses or levels that larger schools could offer.

The GLD (General Learning Disabled) in a small community aren't getting the proper service because we don't have separate courses for them. We don't have separate vocational courses for them like they do in the city. So they are mixed in with our general level classes. In the same room doing science with our general levels for a basic level credit.

Small schools simply did not have the staffing hours to teach a large variety of courses in all levels.

Conversely there were many advantages to small towns. Respondents from small towns believed people were more receptive to helping each other out in small communities.

[Employers] are more receptive to taking a person with special needs when they know the family and they know the background. They know that if there is a problem they can just phone the family up or they could phone the school or whatever.

Respondents also believed that people in small communities were more conscious of how they treated each other because news traveled quickly and many eyes were constantly watching.

We've not had that kind of a situation where people treat [our students] badly or take advantage of them. So I think a small town to some extent has that advantage

because it's pretty hard to do something without somebody knowing what you're doing and reporting you, whereas it might be easier in a larger town.

Unfortunately, people tended to get an image in a small town that was often hard to shake.

It is barrier for some people in that they are afraid that they are already pigeon holed because everybody knows everybody.

According to respondents, people in small communities were more receptive to taking co-op and work experience students and to treating students fairly.

Since students lived so far away from each other in rural settings, school was the main place to socialize with friends. Often students did not want to leave school to take a co-op, job placement, or work experience position because it meant being away from their friends for half of the school day. Compounded with the problems of transportation and travel time, there are few incentives that encouraged students to do co-op or graduate and leave high school in rural/remote settings.

Students that came from a small town and went to a university in a big, bustling city often experienced culture shock. One small town co-op head said that their students may go to college or university but after the first week of school some of them came back because they were so overwhelmed with the pace, setting, and procedures.

In large populated cities, people reported having little difficulty finding placements. In cities that had more than one secondary school, however, competition for job placements occurred between the schools and sometimes between the schools and the community agencies. In one city, the co-op heads from all high schools had a planning meeting at the beginning of the school year to determine what day they would start to call

potential placements and to which employers each of them would call to eliminate any unfair advantages.

In more remote locations, separated from major centers by long distances, the school staff often lived within the school's boundaries. In small communities, this had its advantages and disadvantages.

About 75% of the staff are from the community so they know exactly what is going on at [students'] homes... they've lived with these students, perhaps, you know, since [the students'] were born, the next door neighbour type thing. So they really know what is going on.

Knowing everyone could be beneficial as people tended to help each other out, but it could also be intrusive at times, as few things remained private. Respondents from small schools said they believed their staff worked together more often and were more closely knit than a staff in larger schools, often out of necessity. Fewer staff members meant teachers tended to take on a greater variety of roles within the school.

Lack of staff.

Seventy-two percent of respondents mentioned that having a lack of staff was a major barrier to providing better preparation to students for the transition from high school to adult life.

It goes back to personnel. It's numbers. We just don't have enough people.

The key to transition programming is the staff.

We lost a lot of people because our enrollment has been declining. We lost a lot of staff and many of the staff we lost were the younger teachers who were trained, so to speak, at teachers' college in faculties of education in modifying and

adapting programs for kids. They had no problem with it what so ever. Unfortunately they were all declared surpluses and had to move on.

Only one respondent felt that his school had a sufficient number of staff.

We are fortunate... we have a large school... our funding for special education support was based on the number of teachers in your school teaching regular classes... consequently we have a high success rate because we have the manpower to be able to work one-on-one with all of those kids---we could provide a very good program.

The number of staff was believed by most respondents to be a major factor in the success of programs, however, the number of staff was not the only factor. It was more a matter of finding the right people for the work.

If you have good people who are working with the kids, who have got ideas, who are creative or supportive, who are willing to get out there and keep at it every day and give the kids the basic training and resources that they need in order to be successful, that's the key to the whole thing. If you don't have staff that is committed and hard working, it'll fail every time.

Respondents believed that for transition programs to work, a sufficient number of staff was needed. These staff members had to be hard working and dedicated, as well as possess an understanding of how to program for students with special needs.

If given additional staff members, respondents would have staff looking for job placements, providing supervision, being job coaches, and transporting kids to jobs. At the time of interviewing, the system offered three or more levels of courses: remedial, basic, general, and advanced. Respondents spoke about needing staff to teach life skills courses, basic level courses, and vocational courses like shop, cooking, and hairdressing. Some schools simply did not offer any basic level courses, while other schools put their basic and general students together in the same class.

For students who needed guidance and assistance in the work place, job coaches were an integral part of successful transition programs.

You are chancing it putting [students] out there unassisted when some of them still need a lot of assistance initially.

One third of respondents did not have access to any job coaches at their school. A few schools had access to job coaches from the central board office or local Community Living Association. Unfortunately, in these cases there were too few job coaches for the number of students who needed the assistance, they were spread very thinly across a large area, often having long distances to travel to assist students. In 44% of the cases, schools used Educational Assistants (EAs), peer tutors, co-op students from their own school, local college students studying in a related field, or regular teachers as job coaches. Most often EAs were used as job coaches, but not in all cases.

Because of the high number of needy kids that we have, no educational assistants can be freed up to go out to work all day. I asked for job coach funding, and I was told that the job coach's job is to set up the work place and monitor it, not be there all the time. So basically, the co-op teacher and we, the resource teachers, are doing the job of the job coach.

Unfortunately, EAs and others taking on this role received little or no training for the job.

[EAs] haven't been trained in a long time [to be job coaches]. We had a job coach, we actually had money for a job coach quite a few years ago, and so one person that is here would have received some of that in-service training, and has that experience. And our teacher has it. But our new ones, we haven't had any job coach training, in, I would say 7 years.

Only three people interviewed said their school or school system had a manual that could be read and studied independently to learn about becoming a job coach. Respondents said they needed job coaches. Even schools that had job coaches needed more.

EAs were in short supply at most schools. They were needed in the schools and could not be sent out of the school as job coaches. One person said that the only students that got an EA were students with severe behavioural problems, students needing attendant care (i.e., toileting), and a few students with autism. Regarding the insufficient number of EAs, one respondent commented,

You practically have to kill someone to get an EA!

Another school spoke in opposition of having too many EAs.

If there is just too many [EAs], I feel like a manager. It becomes a bigger part of my job to keep these people organized and going on with them and making sure everything is a joy.

Most schools needed more EAs.

Attitude.

Attitudes were difficult to measure quantitatively. They had to be interpreted from people's comments. It was evident, however, that attitude played a role in the transition process. The attitudes of the student with disabilities, the other students in the school, the staff, the agencies, and the community, all played a role in the success of a transition program.

The student's attitude was crucial to successful transition planning. One frustrated teacher noted that adolescents did not want to set long-term goals, they just wanted to get through the day or through the year. High school students wanted to hide their disability. Coping with their disability became more difficult as they got older and were expected to be self-starters and initiators, especially after grade 11. It became difficult to keep a

student with disabilities like Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) in school past the age of 16, they simply dropped out. Part of the reason was because teenagers often base their self-worth on what others think about them. As one respondent put it, it is the...

... actual student's perception of how everybody else sees them. That is always a big hurdle here since everybody knows everybody else. Quite a few of them don't want to be perceived as being different from anybody else.

When asked what helps one school's transition program to work, the reply was,

It would be the attitude of the students towards getting help. Basically that is it. The main thing is the student wanting to get help and accepting the help.

And if the student did not want the help, the people in the same school would...

... try to coax them, we try to get different personnel involved. If that didn't help, then we would throw up our hands. ... Many times we phone up parents and they just throw up their hands, they say we can't do anything with them... you can take them so far, and beyond that they have to do it [themselves].

The student's attitude was crucial to a successful transition.

The attitude of the larger student body toward identified students was important as well. Some respondents felt the student body was quite comfortable and supportive of students with disabilities.

... students have been integrated right from kindergarten, so they are used to having [students with disabilities] in their class.

Another respondent believed that there was a real community feeling among the school's students forming a network of helpers.

Students with special needs benefited from learning how to be self-advocates (people who speak up for and defend their own rights and needs). Ten respondents said

their school taught special education students self-advocacy skills. Three schools taught them as part of a course in a formal and structured way to students that opted to take that course. The remainder of schools taught these skills informally whenever the opportunity arose during regular contact with the resource teacher, guidance personnel, psychologist, or school chaplain. Development of those skills might have been mentioned on the IEP and discussed at the IPRC meeting. Only one board had developed a resource for teachers regarding self-advocacy skills.

Actually, our board has, about 4 years ago, we actually headed a task force that looked at the whole issue of strategies to teach our students to become self advocates. So we actually have a document for our teachers on how to teach self-advocacy skills.

The same can be said about self-esteem: it is taught informally at most schools although at one school, an outside agency came into the school and taught an after-school workshop to willing participants.

At some schools there was a stigma attached to anything related to special education or resource assistance, while at other schools there seemed to be no stigma whatsoever. Six people interviewed mentioned there was a stigma attached to being in special education or taking certain courses like entry level co-op (for basic students) or Independent Living. Eight people mentioned that there was no stigma attached to being a special education student at their schools. The reason for the difference of opinion may have been the result of respondents' differing perceptions or differences in school culture. The remaining people interviewed did not address this topic.

Six people interviewed commented that for students who needed to carry an assistive device like a tape recorder or wear an FM device, it was like wearing a label that says 'I'm different but not in a cool way'.

They don't want to look different - especially girls don't like using [FM systems]... the number of excuses they can use - like I left it at home, the batteries are dead. It's quite obvious they don't wish to be wearing those things.

One respondent mentioned that it might be more difficult to wear assistive devices in grade nine but gets easier in the senior years because students become more comfortable with who they are as they get older

Teachers said that at times they had to use tricks to be successful with special education students. Understanding the needs and fears of special education students was crucial. Sometimes resource teachers needed to do their job without the special education students knowing.

Once you have kids who don't want me [the resource teacher] to work with them, like in grade 9, I go into the classroom and work and they don't even know. Like I may not work with the special ed. kids until the third week of school. I may be sitting with the smartest kids in class, hanging out and doing my work... and they want the support, even the bright kids want to get better marks...I start off working with the class and the team teacher and then the special needs kids start to become my focus as the term wears on.

Sometimes something as simple as changing the name to the resource room or resource period helped the special education student feel less different from the other students, even if the name did not have any meaning as in the following example.

We don't call it a resource period cause those kids are resource withdrawal'd to death and they view that as being something they're pulled out of something else for and there's a resistance based upon what happened in elementary school. All I'm doing is saying, 'hey, you want to take French or do you want to take NMT, and if you take NMT you get a credit instead of French.

Keeping students interested in school helped to prevent them from becoming dropouts.

The attitude different departments in the school had toward each other also had a bearing on the transition process. One school was very territorial and said “that’s not our job, that’s guidance’s job” which made transition someone else’s problem. These teachers were only concerned with getting the students through high school, never talking about what would happen after high school.

At quite a few schools there was reluctance by some teachers to accommodate students. For example some teachers felt that using assistive devices or making too many modifications to the program compromised the integrity of the program.

There have been some very malicious comments that have been thrown out at times, such as why are we getting all of these special needs kids. Is this place becoming a hospital? Why are they all coming to us?

A lot of it is public relations - showbiz - and to establish a comfort level among people, because even today in the nineties they’re still, even with as much of the public advertisements regarding you know, ‘Don’t focus on the disability, focus on the ability’ there’s still a degree of fear involved with teachers when you get a student like that coming into the classroom.

Sometimes, one incident had a significant affect on people’s attitudes. At one school, a potentially harmful incident occurred when a student with a behavioural disability got out of control and almost hurt a pregnant teacher. Since this incident, there was reluctance on staff members’ part to have certain students in their classroom. The reluctance of teachers to teach students with disabilities made it difficult to even address the topic of transition.

The attitude of the community also played a role in the transition process.

The service station was quite a difficult one to get [a male student] into because of his looks I think. People were very much afraid that his looks would be detrimental to customers... not that he looks bad, but he just has the look of a Downs type boy.

Since work experience in the community was such a crucial part of the transition process, the attitude of the community played an important role in the transition process.

Parents.

Fifty percent of respondents viewed parents as both a barrier and facilitator to the transition process. Some parents were supportive of school efforts every step of the way. To the other extreme were parents who were totally uninvolved in their child's life and not supportive of school efforts. There were also parents who believed that since they had a child with disabilities, the school and community should do everything for them. Also there were parents that were angry and opposed to everything anyone tried to do for them.

We had a really supportive parent last year that even came to the school and helped out a couple of days a week. While another student this year, the parent doesn't really care you know. Just as long as school is keeping him out of trouble. So you get a real range.

Respondents were more likely to talk about parents who were not supportive and not involved. Table 4.17 demonstrates the relationship between parent involvement and support for transition programs.

Table 4.17**Involvement of parents and the support parents give to the school**

	Support	
	a little support	a lot of support
	parents are uninvolved for various reasons or are lackadaisical	parents expect that the school and society will do everything for their child
Involvement	little involvement	
	a lot of involvement	parents are involved and active, supporting the school's efforts

The level of parental involvement often depended on the needs of the child. For students with mild disabilities, a lot was left up to the parents. Information about community resources was provided to the parents on parent nights or during meetings, but ultimately it was the parents' and students' responsibility to make the most of this information and any opportunities. In these cases the parents had as little or as much involvement as they wanted.

Six people interviewed said that contact between the school and parents increased with the severity of disability. This meant the more severe the disability, the more contact the school had with parents. The school may have contacted the parents of students with mild disabilities if there was a concern, or if parental permission to go on a co-op, job placement, or work experience placement was needed. While with students who had a more severe disability, a communication book might have gone back and forth between the school and the parents every day and the number of telephone calls to parents might

have increased. For students with more severe disabilities, the schools and other outside agencies were more involved. Often case conferences were organized where the parents, school members and perhaps outside agencies along with the student (but not always) would discuss a plan of action and implementation strategies.

Some parents were not involved with transition plans for a variety of reasons. Parents could find approaching schools and teachers intimidating, especially if they did not have a good experience while they were at school. Some parents were simply too busy working and/or could not afford to take the time off of work to attend meetings or give input regarding their child's education. In some cases, the parents were non-existent, or simply not interested. It was difficult in some cases to get the parents to come to the school.

A lot of parents do not make much of an effort, to find out what is out there for their children.

Some parents gave no support or input.

If parents were not supportive, some schools were not able to do any more for those students. While at other schools, the school picked up the slack, compensating as much as possible for the lack of parental support. As two respondents put it,

If [the parents] are just kind of lackadaisical then you just do what you think is best with the other professionals and the student's input. Cause we are still, I mean, [the parents] are sending them to school, so the responsibility for their education is largely ours, as long as they have chosen to send them here.

We are kind of left to deal with it.

One woman interviewed who had been a special education resource person at her board for over 10 years said that in general she had seen a decline in the amount of parent involvement and interest in their children. Another respondent shared her sentiments.

What really disappoints me is that I find that, I feel that sometimes I care more about what goes on than [the families] do. And I'm sure they wouldn't see it that way but that is the way that I feel.

In most cases, parents were unaware of what services were available for their children and they were not willing or able to work to find that information out. Children were often very much like their parents. Seven respondents used the phrase 'the apple does not fall far off the tree' or other very similar phrases. Some parents did not stress academics, often because they were not educated themselves.

[Students] have a lot of social problems, like family situation problems. And I think that plays a big part in their inability to cope... what I have seen over the years is that the family situation is as detrimental or more detrimental than their actual disability.

I have parents who I think are more, have more developmental disabilities than their son or daughter. So in those instances I really have to take an active role in helping out.

When parents were uninvolved and not supportive, the schools either picked up the slack or raised their hands and said there was nothing they could do about it.

Some parents were supportive of school efforts but did not get involved themselves. Teachers found it frustrating when parents did not follow-up on suggested contacts. As two respondents put it, "You can lead a horse to water but you can't make it drink."

[The parents] were not aware of the lack of services for adults as compared to the kids. Because these kids are kids that we've probably supported with

educational assistants from the day they hit the school door until they graduated. And there was a parent expectation that that was just going to continue.

Respondents believed some parents did not feel it was their responsibility to be involved with their child's future.

Some parents were involved in their child's future but not in a supportive way, especially when the school and the parents had opposing views. As two respondents put it, however,

In most cases, unless the parents make a big stink about it, nothing is going to get done.

I think parents who are much more vocal get service.

One person interviewed confessed that he would rather have a parent fighting with the school than to be working with a parent that did not seem to care about their child. Fortunately there were always parents who were supportive and involved in a positive way.

Difficulty finding placements.

Thirty-nine percent of respondents reported having difficulty finding work placements for their students. Location of the school was significantly related to this difficulty. Schools in rural/remote areas had the most difficult time finding jobs for students while schools in urban areas had the least difficult time.

Job opportunities were limited in small towns. If a placement was not suitable for a student, often times there were no other jobs for that student.

We don't have a lot of job placements in the local community. It's not the kinds of jobs the kids want to try out. I mean you can work on the farm shoveling the barn or something, but in terms of actual businesses and industrial stuff, we have nothing here.

To compensate for this shortage, eight schools created in-school placements for students, however, they were not always ideal.

We do what we can in terms of even a little placement within the school. But it is different for them in a placement within the school, they don't see it as a job placement. They need that experience of getting out, taking the city bus.

If there were not many jobs available in the community, work placements were hard to find.

Some schools in larger cities did not have a difficult time finding placements but they did have difficulty finding placements first!

When a new guy pulls up in town we would often look at that as an opportunity. Oh, here is somebody else, let's go in and see if we can nab them before another school does.

There was competition to secure placements between high schools in the same city, and between schools and community agencies. This type of competition could be found in both large and small cities.

Part of the problem is the competition when you are in a smaller community, somebody will say, well you know we already have a co-op student or we have an association that has just approached us.

To alleviate some of the competition, personnel from co-op departments from the different schools in one city would get together to discuss and set co-op policies.

[Our city has] a lot of schools to support co-op. We have all of the separate schools and all of the regular schools. And we all kind of work together. I know I sat on the board of a bunch of co-op teachers, and there was separate as well as

public all together, and we made agreements about when we start interviews and what not so one did not have a leg up on the other.

Competition for placements within one region made finding placements difficult.

The unemployment rate and the economy affected work placement availability.

Unemployment is a big factor in our area, not as much so as it was a couple of years ago but when unemployment is high then people are reluctant to have unpaid people in there working on jobs with no work experience. And having to lay off their own people. It doesn't send a really good message. And they don't want to be perceived as keeping unpaid employees and letting people who need jobs go. ...I mean if the economics are good, then we have more job opportunities for our kids too.

It used to be we could guarantee 100% [job placement after graduation], but now because of the economy of the past few years, it is much more difficult. It just kind of goes up and down with the economy. Right now it is starting to look better again.

The availability of placements was directly linked to the economy and the unemployment rate.

The difficulty in finding placements increased as students required an increasing amount of supervision while at the workplace. That was because this requirement demanded too much time and supervision from the employer since the school could not often supply full-time supervision.

Where it might take a co-op teacher two phone calls to find a job for any other student, for one of our challenged kids, it might take up to 15 phone calls.

If the school doesn't have staff to send out to the workplace to support the student and the workplace doesn't have staff available, that can be a real problem. It relates to the fact that there are no job coaches.

If job coach support was not available to students who needed it, finding a placement was almost impossible.

A limited number of placements meant that not all students were able to gain work experience at school.

With the regular co-op program we do have a very limited number of places that will take students. Those students sort of get put through first and then we look at the life skills (special education) program. ... We are concerned when you look at the secondary reform where the students need to have forty hours of work experience, we don't know how we are going to find that for all of our students.

Unfortunately, the special education students seemed to be the lowest priority for job placements at many schools.

Unions and safety concerns were also a barrier to finding placements. Work places that were members of unions were often off limits to students. As one respondent put it, "you can't get work placements in union shop places." Concern for the student's safety was also an issue.

[Employers] hide behind the issue of safety and say I am not sure I can provide a safe environment for the students.

To overcome the safety issue, schools had to provide a tremendous amount of support for the students with disabilities while they were in their placements in the form of job coaches.

Thirteen schools reported having no difficulty finding placements. Some schools had informal agreements with large local corporations to take students on a regular basis. Other schools developed a bank of employers.

We have a job bank of over 100 businesses that we draw from.

To help find placements, connections that parents or friends had may have been used.

Four schools said they ask parents to help find job placements.

Because the kids live in small villages and things, we'll ask the parents, 'can you please write a list of what job placements there are that maybe your son or daughter wants to participate in?' So the onus is kind of a shared onus.

Family members are the most instrumental in finding the placements through connections.

The personality of the person securing jobs for students played a role in the school's ability to find work experience.

The co-op teacher has developed such a good rapport that he's had very little difficulty trying to get kids into places.

Creating banks of employers, asking parents and friends to assist in the search for jobs, and the personality of the person looking for jobs, all played a role in finding placements.

Lack of appropriate college and university programs.

Respondents spoke more often about the frustration and the problems they perceived with existing college and university programs than the good work done at the special service offices at colleges and universities. Three respondents simply said the college and university programs and assistance were not good. Five people voiced their opinion that colleges did not offer appropriate courses for identified students.

Respondents believed staff reductions at post-secondary institutions have effected the types and amount of services available. According to respondents many colleges and universities were just in the process of developing programs for special education students.

The local college has started a vocational program. It hasn't really gotten off of the ground for our students yet because it is a bit too academic yet. ... They call it a vocational program, therefore it kind of closes the door for some students who

don't want to be in a vocational program, but it is too difficult a program for some of our special needs. It seems there is still a need there that needs to be met.

The college programs that were available did not fit all students with special needs. Often they did not offer vocational courses in areas that students liked.

I've kind of forgotten about [the college programs] because they started a few years ago and we never seem to have a student that would fit into it.

I had a young man graduate this year, I thought for sure he would be able to go into the food preparation type program at college. He is a very hard worker, it takes him a long time, but very hard working, very capable of learning hands on... And I was so disappointed for him when he went to go [to college], they basically said no, you wouldn't be able to handle this course. And there doesn't seem to be, unless he can get in and find someone sympathetic enough to take him in and apprentice him in a kitchen area, which is very difficult.

Students with specific needs like deaf students had a difficult time finding a program to suit their needs in Canada.

There is no university in Canada for deaf students and the college programs have funding for special needs, but very few are able to adequately handle for deaf students.

One respondent said that colleges and universities did very little for special education students. One respondent was very frustrated with the college and university systems because they all required different documentation and prerequisites that made the application procedure complicated and cumbersome. Some felt the colleges and universities were demanding too much from the high school with respect to identified students.

To get into [one particular] college here, they now are insisting that all students that leave high school have a psycho-educational test. ... That's hard on us to get all of those kids tested. ... [Student Services] are overwhelmed by the number of testing they do.

Another person said colleges needed more basic level courses.

There are very little programs for them to get into college. If you look at a community college application, 99.9% of the courses, if not 100% of the courses, are minimum general level programs to get in. They don't offer general level programs.

One respondent believed that post-secondary institutions improved during the past five years.

Almost all universities have support services, some are better than others are - some were just a facade. Now they've gotten a lot better the last five years.

Only two respondents believed the colleges and universities had good and useful programs for identified students.

From my experience, I have been just overwhelmed with these offices. They've been wonderful. And students that come back on career day say we couldn't go to school without those offices. They provide incredible support. They will liaise between a professor and a student for example that might need an extra hour for an exam or be in another room for a talking computer to an exam.

Eight respondents mentioned that the various Universities and Colleges came to their high schools to do presentations for the students.

Agency constraints.

Forty-two percent of respondents commented that agencies experienced high turnover rates of employees and that this fact made it more difficult to work with agencies. From the school's perspective, constantly having to create connections with new people was very time consuming and energy draining.

When it comes to the individual workers, they change like you change your socks. It's really high burnout. A lot of times it's an entry level position for a lot of people, and then they get to a point and move to something else.

Once you are in this business for a while you realize that [agency] workers don't stay very long. ... They shift around and move or go to a different department. And all of that time that was spent to link up, and they don't seem to hand the file off to someone else. So it was really frustrating.

Their staff is constantly turning over. They stay for six months and they're gone. So by the time you have little Johnny signed up to be tested by so-and-so, so-and-so has left and there is somebody else, and now there is another waiting list, and you don't know the person that is coming in. You get a phone call from somebody that says I'm from the [special] services and I'm doing this, and you don't know, you loose track of who is doing what, and where things were with somebody.

It is so nice when you work with a person for a few years and they get to know you and what you provided for them and the relationship really works well. Then you get a new person who just doesn't know what it is all about.

One respondent believed developing a relationship with agency personnel simply took time. Time that did not exist if agency employees were not in their position for very long.

I can remember when the relationship between the associations for community living and the school boards was more confrontational and certainly less collaborative than it has evolved into being. But I think that's because there was, for awhile, now this is going back 10 or 12 years ago, it was almost like they were going to ask for more than they thought they were going to get. It was almost like they were going to counter with less, it was almost like a union/management negotiations thing. And so over the years I think we've come to respect each other's positions and a lot of trust has developed. But it's been a hard fight. It's taken a long time to establish those lines of communication, lines of trust and come to the conclusion that the only way we are going to do good for the kids is to come together. So it has been a long hard battle, but we've won it here. There is not any agency that I deal with now that we don't have an excellent relationship with.

The high turnover rate was frustrating to people working with agencies.

Forty-four percent of people interviewed spoke about the long waiting lists students and families experienced to get services from agencies.

We had no idea what the post-21 programs were like. Once we began investigating them we realized they already had a waiting list of three hundred and up.

One respondent said there were no waiting lists because there were no services available to wait for!

There are no waiting lists, they don't exist anymore because they only take so many people. The services aren't there. If you get a service you are lucky. ... Like we had two students of ours that are 19 and developmental, but house capable. An independent living [spot] became open, and only because the Association was aware of these students did they say 'hey do you guys want this house?' If you don't take it now, to their parents, if they don't take it now, and get their independent living home, with the support staff from us, we are going to fill it up with someone from the institution outside of our community. ... There was no waiting list because no one knew that the house was going to come open.

Some services like housing were required for the lifetime of the individual with disabilities. Spaces in group homes did not become available until an existing resident moved or died. Waiting lists moved slowly.

Let's say for supported independent living arrangements or a group home or whatever, because the individuals, when they do go into these specific homes or living situations, don't leave until they have gone (died). So they may be waiting a long time. And I am finding that even with day programming ... you know individuals are in these programs forever, for a very long time, until they retire. So the movement is very slow.

If a school was lucky enough to have access to the services of community agencies, they usually experienced long waiting lists to access those services.

If it was not long waiting lists that were the problem, it was a slow response time, very limited services, or complicated application procedures.

So you might make a phone call and wait five days before you get a return call because the person was just overwhelmed with work. [With one particular agency] it can take two weeks before the worker gets back to you.

Rural areas often only received limited services.

One of the biggest problems we have with an agency, some of our agencies, is that if they become overtaxed, we are the first people who don't get service ... because it takes them an hour to drive here and an hour to drive back. So ..., say it is an hour long meeting, in that three hour period they could have dealt with three other people while they deal with one issue with us.

Simply applying for services was very time consuming and complicated. One respondent spoke of an agency that required the applicant to make out a formal application for each separate service within the agency that the person wanted to access. There were some people interviewed who did not experience any problems with agencies but that was due to their remote location – there were no agencies with which to have a problem!

Ironically, one respondent who did have access to services from various agencies would not call them because he thought the school would have to pay for them, and the school did not have funds for that.

Many respondents believed those long waiting lists and lack of services were due to government cutbacks in funding for the agencies.

Everybody that I deal with is saying that they are finding an economic crunch here and they're trying to do as much as possible with less money and with fewer people than they did with before, and yunno, that certainly impacts on the success of any program.

Just as early as this morning, I was checking through our repertoire of services and a lot of these places have shut down, have been cut back themselves and are not as helpful as they used to be in the past. So it is really hard.

Cutting back on services did not diminish the need for such services. As a result, private companies were beginning to appear across the province.

We are seeing a lot of private agencies springing up, like a fee for service type of thing.

Cutbacks were causing agencies to re-organize, restructure, and change. Transition coordinators needed to keep abreast of all the changes that were occurring. They needed to know what services were available so that they could determine which services best suited the student.

And so just keeping abreast of all of them ... You have to actively go out to the community and keep trying to stay current, which is a job in itself.

Another consequence of cutbacks has been the competition of agencies for government funds. This has created tension between the agencies.

Number one, agencies don't trust one another and secondly they are in competition for the same dollars. So right now that is a major, major issue with all of the restructuring because we know that the good are going to survive and the poor are going to disappear.

Cut backs in funding did not mean there were cutbacks in people's needs.

To compensate for the lack of services, long waiting lists, and slow response times, people in the role of transition coordinator used a number of strategies.

I may put an individual's name on two or three lists and then we'll see who has got an opening for an individual when they leave school.

At some schools, various community agency personnel came into the school to teach certain programs. One school explained that it just made more sense for the agency to come to the school rather than the students go to the agency.

Instead of sending kids out and going to a waiting list to be served, they tapped into an agency and said I'll send you out a worker. So then the worker came out to the school and worked in the school, which is ideal. ... If you can get agencies to send you a contact person, and come into the school, whether it is once a week or once a month, to deal with these kinds of problems or to help counselors or other people in the service department, and you know, give them ideas and avenues to resort to. That is the ideal, to get them on your campus. Not sending people out to them.

In one small town, the Association for Community Living hired a person to specifically help students make the transition from school to work a few years ago. This person attended IPRC meetings, monitors job placements, and even provides transportation. Unfortunately this person only served two to three students. There was the constant fear that this assistance would be cut, while at the same time schools still needed more contact with this person. Sometimes, however, having agency personnel come into the school was not always well received.

We don't want [the agencies] in our schools all the time because they tend to direct things. We want to be in control of what is happening in the schools but we want their assistance... we found that they will come in and try to take control of what the school is doing and kind of tell the school what to do, and we don't want that.

Putting students on multiple waiting lists while knowing the student would never access all of those services, and inviting agency people into the school to deliver services were two strategies used to cope with the problems of service delivery.

Working with community agencies became quite political at times. Often it was a result of the schools and agencies not understanding each other's limitations.

Sometimes community agencies don't realize that school boards, I mean, that there is the economic reality sometimes that there might not be the perfect amount of support in place for the kids because of money. And that is just the bottom line. With government changes, provincial government funding, and that kind of thing. So, I mean, I think we all have the same interests but sometimes schools just aren't able to do what they'd like to do the most. So they have to do the best that they can with what they have. [An agency worker] wouldn't be doling out money, they just work as an advocate, so it is easy for them to say that the student needs to have a full time job coach or a full-time Educational Assistant without really understanding that maybe the student doesn't fit into the criteria of having that support within our system. And so it is creating problems in terms of setting parents up with high expectations and not really understanding that maybe that is not going to happen.

Sometimes the jargon used by the agencies or their organizational system was confusing.

I find their jargon and their whole way of thinking is different. Now I shouldn't say whole way of thinking, but the system they work within is different than the education system, so I have a really good understanding of the education system and they wouldn't, and I don't have a good understanding of what their system is really all about.

Not understanding each other's limitations, jargon, and systems was a barrier to transition programming.

Working with agencies, however, could be positive and beneficial for all people involved.

[Agencies] fulfill a need for us. They're willing to work with students and help formulate a program, a curriculum. We work quite closely with them and they help us to deliver that program.

There were merits to school-community agency collaborations, however respondents tended to focus on the challenges of such relationships.

Career inventories.

Fifty-eight percent of people interviewed had a computer career/interest inventory available for students to use to find out what jobs suited their personalities and preferences. Inventories mentioned were Options, Career Explorer, the Holland Test, Career Cruising, Discover, and Choices. For work experience students, one school used a Reading Free Vocational Assessment. At some schools the Reading Free test was administered by the guidance department for all students including identified students. At other schools the special education department or student services department assumed

this role for the identified students. One school said they did not use the career test they had very often any more because it was outdated. Another school said they did not like special education students to do career inventories because it set students up with unrealistic expectations and dreams. Some schools did not do a career inventory at all.

Time and money.

The majority of respondents said a lack of time and money was a barrier to transition programs. Eighty-one percent of people interviewed said lack of money was a problem to developing and maintaining transition programs. Sixty-one percent said they lacked the time to do transition programming the way they thought it needed to be done. To many respondents, a lack of money meant fewer staff members and no reduction in workload. In most cases it meant an increase in workload. With more work, less time, and less money, school boards could no longer afford to send or allow teachers to attend professional development conferences. It also meant people working with community agencies could no longer sit on committees and advisory councils.

Sitting on various committees was a good way for teachers to make important connections with people working in community agencies. These connections often facilitated the transition process since the informal relationship that was fostered during the meetings was translated into more personalized service for students.

Oh it was wonderful. I mean [sitting on committees] sounds like a lot of time and it sounds kind of like a luxury but it really wasn't. Initially it was really a crucial part of the job because you build up that network. That's important. People that you know you can tap into and it's kind of like, you do this for me and I'll do this for you later on. You get that give and take and that's what it's all about. ...I used

to sit on far more community agencies than I do now. Because the number of employees with the board in the area of resource [special education] has diminished considerably in the last few years because of funding - there used to be 3 people doing this job or actually four people doing this job, now there's just me.

People who did sit on committees spoke about the benefits and importance of being involved.

The fact that I am involved with the Association [for Community Living] has really been a good thing because that was a learning experience for me. And I can transfer my knowledge and my understanding, and all of the ins and outs of that to the parents and the students. So they can benefit from it.

We sit on committees, so we all know each other. And so you make your connections and that is a large part of my role too. ... If I'm not there, we are kind of left out of the mix. So it is important to keep those networks.

When a school or school board was lucky enough to have more than one person dealing with transitions, staff could take turns sitting on the various committees. Unfortunately very few locations in Ontario had this luxury.

When staff numbers were being reduced, it seemed the first people to lose their positions were those in specialized roles, like consultants. In some instances, caseloads continued to increase but no additional staff was hired. One person spoke of his frustration trying to have a child assessed by the school psychologist. The particular board used to have three psychologists and now they had only one.

I put a name in for one of my higher needs students in June 1997 for an assessment, and they made him a number one priority, well very top of the priority list, and he was just seen a week ago - almost a year later.

Losing staff in key roles meant waiting longer for assessments and not having easy or fast access to resources and resource people.

Respondents felt overloaded. Three people said there were not enough hours in the day to do everything.

We do a lot of case conferences, but there just doesn't seem to be enough time to see everyone as you would like to or get things done as quickly as you would like to.

Three other respondents spoke about wearing a thousand hats. The number of students in their caseloads overwhelmed them. Seven people commented that the amount of paper work was unbelievable, and a lot of it was unnecessary. One teacher explained,

... it seems that because of [special education student's] individual programming it is just an endless job. It requires an immense amount of work. And things change, the situation changes daily, and their needs change daily. We are always changing timetables and looking for better situations for them, always putting effort into integrating them into the best situation possible. There is a lot of interaction, and teamwork between paraprofessionals and parents and so on. It is very time consuming, but worth it of course.

Increased workload meant less time to discuss the students' needs with other staff members.

When we first went into the full inclusion model we were able to call these meetings during the school day and our department would provide coverage for those teachers coming out of classes to meet with us. Since then, it has been increasingly more difficult because we are now teaching one or two courses each. ... So then what happens is you don't have enough people to cover the teachers coming to those meetings during the day. So a couple of years ago we had no other alternative but to start having those meetings before or after school. And I'll tell you one thing, it is not being successful because we are never getting full attendance at those meetings the way we used to when people were being covered in classes.

Being already overloaded with work meant that respondents were less likely to take on more work.

When the respondents were asked what they would do with money if they were given it to improve transition programs, a variety of answers were given. Ten respondents said they would hire more staff and Educational Assistants. Five people said they would hire job coaches. Six people needed more computers and newer technology. Nine respondents would use the money in various ways to support the students like creating smaller classes, buying more resources, having more work experience opportunities, taking the students on more field trips, providing transportation to and from work placements, and hiring someone to find more work placements for students.

When schools needed money, they could be quite resourceful proving that when there was a need there was a way. For example, one school held a successful fund-raiser to buy computers for the special education department. On the other hand, there were people who believed money was not the problem, rather the problem was attitude.

The superintendent that inspired this said we don't need money, we need people, we need mentality. And no, we didn't use a lot of money. ... The only money that it took was for EAs. ... You need EAs for different programs to work. The teachers can't do it alone. You need the manpower there. But that is the only place where it costs money. But for programs we had to be very creative.

Creativity and resourcefulness aided the development of transition programs. There were a lot of demands on people's time and lack of money contributed to this problem. As resources continued to be cut back, school personnel were finding it more difficult to meet the needs of the students.

Gaps in services.

During the interviews, 25% of respondents identified groups of students they felt were not receiving the help they needed to make a successful transition. Three people identified students with mild disabilities. Five people said slow learners. One person identified students at risk of dropping out. Another person said intelligent students who have a learning disability. Two respondents commented on the challenges of being a slow learner.

Of all the different populations that we work with, the ones that end up not finding work, or finding work and not able to keep it are the slow learners. ... A lot of agencies out there service the developmentally challenged, the learning disabled, but the slow learners are not helped by anyone. ... They are not street wise, and they really don't know the hows and whatnot of being able to find employment for themselves. Even though we teach them how to do application forms and so on, they don't seem to be able to transfer the knowledge. ... Once they start losing jobs, their self-esteem plummets even lower than it was before. And then it is even harder, doubly, triply hard for them to find other employment. We have a lot of kids calling back, families or the kids themselves saying, you know I had that job, do you remember after high school, I had the co-op placement, and then they offered me a full-time job, well I had that job, and now I've been laid off. And then I had another job, I was laid off with that. And now I don't know what else to do. I'm just at a loss what to do. Where else can I look for work? They don't know where to begin.

[Slow learners] can't seem to fit with people that are disabled, and they can't fit with people that are non-disabled, and friendships become a problem and there are all kinds of other issues.

Respondents believed getting help and services for people with obvious disabilities was easier than getting support for someone with a learning disability. Money and staffing were factors.

Learning disabled and mild disabled kids do not get very much funding at all. All of the money is really poured into students with special needs.

It would be nice if we could have ... a teacher that would be able to focus on these kids that are not necessarily university or college bound, or maybe a little more undecided, and focus on developing programs with them.

Respondents believed students with learning disabilities and mild disabilities who could be classified as slow learners and who may be at risk of dropping out were falling through the cracks of our current system.

There is a lot of kids that are so capable of more and aren't going to ever get there because there is nobody to advocate for them or speak on their behalf or help them. And that is really sad.

Respondents sited slow learners as falling through the gaps most often.

Strategies

Individual transition plans.

In the winter of 1998, there was no legislation requiring that a transition plan be written for any student in Ontario. Most of the respondents interviewed (75%) did not do any type of transition planning for their special education students. A school that had a high transition rating did not necessarily write a formal transition plan for its students. Only one respondent did a separate Individualized Transition Plan for students with developmental disabilities with an IQ less than 70. This respondent found transition planning to be very useful.

I believe our transition plan will be of great benefit to both the families and the agencies because by the time [the students leave school], we will have a clear indication of what their needs are going to be.

In one location, the local Community Living Association did a transition plan for students that met their eligibility criteria. At some schools, informal notes regarding

transition plans were made. At one school these notes were kept in the Ontario Student Record²⁸ (OSR) file. At another school, these notes were kept in a separate file, not the OSR. In both of these cases, transition planning notes were only kept for students with developmental disabilities. Another school had parents complete an interview form on which they asked parents about their wishes and dreams for their child's future. During meetings, school personnel made notes on these sheets and kept them in a separate personal file. Another school said they discussed plans for the future with parents during various meetings prior to the IPRC meeting. At these meetings, parents, outside agencies, and the student might have been involved, had input, and had an opportunity to express their wishes. Other schools did a written plan of action laying out a four or five year plan when the student first entered the school. It was not clear to what extent these types of plans included preparation for transition and life after high school or merely a plan for courses during high school. At two schools, transition plans were included in the IEP but only looked one year beyond high school. Few schools were doing transition planning in the winter of 1998. The schools that were doing transition planning were focusing on students with more severe disabilities, mostly developmental disabilities.

Personnel in three schools did "mapping" with students. Mapping was a verbal and visual technique that allowed students to set long-range goals and identify potential barriers and helpful supports. Most often mapping was done with students with severe

²⁸ An Ontario Student Record (OSR) file is kept and maintained for every registered student in the province of Ontario. It contains copies of a student's report cards, results from tests performed by resource teachers or psychomotrists, and any other information that is pertinent to the student's education. They are kept for 50 years.

disabilities. A respondent in one school did mapping only for the following year and did not look long term into the future. A person from the Community Living Association in one community did mapping with students who met their eligibility requirements.

When did transition planning begin at schools where transition planning is done? This varied from school to school. At some schools planning began only a couple of years before the transition would occur. At other schools, planning started as early as the first or second year of high school, approximately at the age of 15. The parent's attitude often had an influence on when transition planning began.

A smaller amount of parents are really pro-active and interested in talking about [transition] from grade 9 on. But most parents think it is too early and don't want to deal with it, because they know there may not be anything available for a lot of kids with severe developmental disabilities. There's not a lot out there.

Most schools did not do any type of transition planning. Schools that did do transition planning varied greatly in how they handled the planning and when the planning began. There was little commonality between schools.

Offering a variety of learning environments.

During the interviews the type of learning environment offered to special education students at each school was revealed. There were three types of learning environments: inclusive, integrated, and segregated, as well as combinations of the three. Only one respondent said her school was an inclusive school. Seventy-seven percent of the schools had a combination of both integrated and segregated learning environments. A trend toward increased integration was evident.

There is a real thrust to really look at integration at the secondary level.

The frustration being felt by people wrestling with the idea of integration was clear.

People did not feel they had the support to properly integrate students.

We tried to live with the mandate of spreading the learning disabled kids around and integrating CL [Community Living] kids and so on into the classes and it was just a nightmare. And kids failed routinely, and they [the board] don't give you enough support. That was the main problem.

Many respondents felt integration was not working and did not promote inclusion.

What you do have is isolation in an integrated setting.

Sure [students with disabilities have] been integrated in secondary school, but... the reality is they are isolated. I mean they are not going to be the ones that are going to be invited out on a Friday night to the party with everybody else... we all gravitate toward our own.

Teachers were struggling to make the curriculum relevant for all students.

As that gap widens, it is harder and harder to make the classroom relevant. And most of this stuff is going right over their heads. ... It is just ridiculous to think that a teacher with a class of kids, which are challenging in and of themselves, can handle that plus meet the needs of these individuals with moderate to severe disabilities.

Often, with good intentions but unfavorable outcomes, EAs were doing too much for students with disabilities.

If the students couldn't do the work, the EAs basically did it for them. And that is what integration is doing for our secondary kids.

Parents were demanding things that some respondents felt were impossible for the teacher to do.

[Parents] want totally appropriate programming for [their children] for the entire school day, and I'm saying that is impossible for a teacher.

Some schools allowed the parents of students with severe disabilities to choose the learning environment they would like for their child. A parent's selection of learning environments often had to do with location of the school or class in relationship to their home because of the transportation issue. Parents may have selected an entirely segregated setting, an entirely integrated program, or a combination of the two. Often during a period where students with disabilities were integrated, if the student did not have a full-time EA, an EA or resource support person would be strategically scheduled to that class to help students, especially assisting the identified students. Some schools offered withdrawal periods where the student would be segregated along with other students who had disabilities and where more need specific things would be taught. One person said that a student might be pulled out of a subject like Phys. Ed. to get additional help in subjects like Math or English. During the periods in a segregated classroom, students learned things like life skills and functional Math and English. Students with severe disabilities would most likely be integrated for subjects like Phys. Ed., science, art, drama, and/or religion. As students with severe disabilities progressed through the school years, less integration occurred and more focus was given to life skills based academics. If students were integrated and they needed one-on-one assistance, some schools allowed students to leave the classroom and go to the resource room for help - this is usually called drop-in. Students that did not have a withdrawal period were responsible for going to the resource room when they needed help.

Students who were deaf or blind were eligible for special itinerant teachers.

School boards could apply for "in-lieu" funding to provide resources for deaf or blind

students. This money was used to hire an itinerant teacher who would spend half of each day with the deaf or blind student. The provincial schools also had teachers who go out to the regular high schools to see deaf or blind students.

Interestingly, in integrated and inclusive settings, the principal's role was cited as being mostly for giving recognition to students for achievements while in a segregated environment the principal was cited as being mostly involved in behaviour and discipline problems. It was also interesting to note that more transition planning occurred in schools that had segregated settings, likely due to the more severe disabilities of the students.

Follow-up.

Seventy-two percent of respondents who were asked if they collected any type of follow-up data on their special education students simply said no, they did not. When asked why they did not do any type of follow-up they said: they did not have the time, they did not have anyone available to follow-up on former students, or it was unnecessary since the school was located in a small community where everyone knows what everyone is doing. Although many said that this type of information would be useful to determine how to improve programs, their time could be better spent elsewhere.

It is an interesting concept but there is just no time for that research. We often wonder what happens.

Personnel at eight of the respondent's schools did some form of follow-up. Four schools conducted formal follow-up studies: two did so because it was required by the Ministry of Education because of special programs their board was running; one school conducted

a 5 year study for their own purposes and interest; and the fourth school asked a volunteer to conduct the follow-up. The remainder of schools collected follow-up data only on an informal basis. Small schools and schools in small communities said it was easy for them to do an informal type of follow-up since they were more likely to run into former students in the community's grocery store or bank. As one respondent put it, follow-up was "just grape-vine type of stuff." To facilitate this informal follow-up, one school held an annual event, a barbecue or bowling tournament for students who had graduated. Respondents that did either a formal or informal type of follow-up found it useful.

We'd use it to see where our efforts should be channeled and what things we are doing right and what things we are doing wrong. To help them as they go out of our particular school system.

Although most respondents noted the value of doing some type of follow-up, few had the time or people-power to conduct a thorough follow-up every year.

Cooperation/coordination/collaboration.

A school's transition rating was related to whether or not staff believed they worked together in their school. As the transition rating increased so did the percentage of respondents that said their staff worked together.

No one person can do this and make this successful, believe me, you need a team, and a team that is on-board.

The degree to which the special education department worked with other departments in the school depended on the student's type of disability and goal after leaving school. At

many smaller and some medium sized schools, respondents mentioned that staff members often had dual roles because of the limited number of staff members. Respondents believed that dual roles promote coordination, cooperation, and collaboration naturally.

Some respondents saw the value of working together.

... [Working together] is worth the effort because it means that a team has come up with this plan, so it has a better chance of it working, and more commitment to it.

We work together. We talk. Guidance, student services, and the office, we are sort of a team of three, and we meet regularly to talk about students and their progress. So we know who in the school is in difficulty. And all of us should be aware because we are the three groups in the school who deal with conflict, so we want to make sure that we are all of the same thinking or that we are not going to make a mistake because we didn't know about a situation or whatever.

Others preferred to work alone.

We all like and respect one another. We all understand that we have the best interests of people, and I hate to sound really political, but we leave each other alone, and it works rather well.

There also existed the appearance that people were working together but they really were not.

I think what happens often is that people meet together but they don't really collaborate... you can go to a lot of meetings and everyone will be saying oh yeah, that's a good idea, that's a good idea, but then when you say okay now, okay, are you throwing in or are you out? And they scatter like rats to the hole! They are there to protect their interest, very competitive climate... and they don't want you starting anything that is going to infringe on their territory.

Forty-seven percent of schools said that they worked together. The degree to which they worked together was difficult to ascertain.

Personnel at one of the large school boards interviewed had a team of work experience coordinators for students with developmental disabilities. They worked well together and strongly believed that as a team they were able to help students effectively.

We are a terrific department in terms of our abilities to work together really well. And we share the same kind of vision ... certainly in terms of work experience and transitional programming ... Because we work as a department together, we can provide more consistency in terms of how we deliver our program. And there is a lot more consistency within our region around work experience and transition planning. ... I think in a lot of the other boards that we have seen, sometimes it is up to an individual teacher to organize work experience placements and sometimes teachers, they may not have the time to do that or they aren't as committed to that as say we are. So I think from a coordinated approach it is really nice to have people like us. ... I think having some autonomy and flexibility has allowed us to look at things like promoting travel and transit training, having an impact on educational assistants, job descriptions, writing [various] documents.

After listening to this team talk about their success, it is clear that having a group of people or at least one person devoted to dealing only with work experience and transition was ideal.

Schools increasingly had to work with community agencies and were finding that such work could be beneficial and challenging at the same time. Trust was an important part of the relationship between school and agency.

[The agencies] have to be able to count on you. They have to trust you and you have to be honest I think. I don't think you can promise anything that you're not prepared to deliver. And I think that it's a relationship that develops over the years with trust and they have to believe that you genuinely want to do what's best for those kids.

There were always times when conflict and criticism arose.

Sometimes there is a conflict. We usually can get around it but usually where the conflict arises is in the fact that [the agency's] philosophy is really nice in an ideal perfect world but we don't live in an ideal perfect world and so you can't,

you can say that we are going to provide all these opportunities to every child in every situation but you can't do it. You just can't do it and you have to be willing to compromise and sometimes they're not willing to compromise what they believe is their philosophies.

You have some members that are very supportive and willing to work with schools and then I've met other members that are more interested in criticizing school and what's not being done.

Communicating with agencies could be very frustrating, although the relationship could be beneficial to both parties.

I've spoken to the answering machine more than actually seen the group.

I think we all know we need each other. ... And it is a big help to [the agencies] to know about these kids before they leave school... so they are already very aware of the student's needs and quirks and behaviours and whatever.

A few schools shared resources with different community agencies.

We share resources. [Some of the agencies] were doing some safety programs through the community living recently and they phoned me up and said do you have anything on safety and I just sent everything I had with the kids and said use it, and what you don't use send back. And vise versa, I've borrowed things from them.

When schools and agencies worked together they avoided an overlap of services.

We would be doing some things here and they were trying to get the same thing started, so we kind of said what we can do at the school level, and what they can do at the community level.

Some schools and agencies worked together by gradually transferring students from the school system to the social agency system. They coordinated or linked their services.

It's almost like a relay race whereby I pass the baton over to them and become less and less involved and they take over.

The special education department found the special education students a work placement and once the student left school, the association for community living helped the student.

Networking was a very important part of transition planning for the transition coordinator or person primarily in charge of transitions.

I'm smart enough to know that the best thing to do is involve yourself with people who know more than you do about certain things, make the connection and let them go to work and because I know a little bit about B. Ed. biz but when it comes down to what happens outside, I prefer to find people who really know what they are doing.

Our school board has a whole system set up. There is a committee which all of the outside agencies meet with someone from our school board and all of that information is filtered down to us, of who is available and what services there are and how we could contact them and stuff.

You've got to make contacts. ... The reality of life is that who you know helps you out when you have to do things. ... I pride myself on the fact that I try to get to know people in different capacities. It makes my job a lot easier. And when you need something you can put a name to a face and bingo it gets done.

When respondents were asked what stopped them from working with more and different agencies, they replied that time was a factor.

Public relations played a large role when people collaborated, coordinated services, and cooperated with each other.

Like we hold breakfasts for people - they all come. We have a big co-op display day - I think most schools do that - where you bring the community in and show them what you are doing. And they're all given certificates of recognition, it doesn't matter how trivial it seems, whether it's a work placement two times a week or whether its a full co-op placement for someone that's becoming a computer programmer.

There is an awful lot, if you will, psychology in dealing with the public. And getting our kids foot in the door. I can't go out the expert, I go out very much the humble person saying I need your help. If you are interested in this, let's work together, it is really big team work. ... That is probably the biggest thing that I've learned in co-op.

Dealing with people and the public was part of transition planning and preparation for life after high school.

Most special education departments made an effort to establish open lines of communication with parents. Meetings, communication books, and regular telephone calls were some of the ways the school tried to keep in touch with parents. The more severe a student's disabilities were, the more contact the school seemed to have with the parents. At one school a man who worked primarily in a segregated classroom with students who had the most severe disabilities said, "I probably talked to every parent every week." Seven respondents said that for students with mild disabilities, the school would simply make recommendations to the parents and it was up to the parent to make contacts. Four respondents commented that the parents who were like 'squeaky wheels' get the most assistance and attention.

If the parents are pushing, they are going to get. I mean, that is what I am finding. You spend a lot of your time with a few of the parents because they are the ones making you.

An integral part of the relationship was honesty and trust.

I'm involved socially in the community with the parents of some of the students we're referring to right now. So it's a matter of there's a trust level base and there's also an honesty level in place.

The relationship between parents and the school had to be one of open and frequent communication.

In at least one city in Ontario the separate and public school boards were working together to provide transition services. In at least two locations in the province the

separate and public school boards were sharing a school-to-community teacher. These unions were born of necessity and cost effectiveness.

Schools were also working with people in the community who were not necessarily associated with an agency. In one city, a retired gentleman came into the school to set up telephone networks within the school so students had an opportunity to develop telephone and communication skills. This man went from school to school within the city and had consequently helped to develop a relationship between schools as they shared resources.

The following two tables summarize the different levels of interaction that occurred between different stakeholders for students with mild and severe disabilities. The first, Table 4.18 compares the levels of cooperation/coordination/collaboration that occurred within the school between agencies, parents, and students for students with mild and severe disabilities. The second, Table 4.19 compares how school involvement differed for students with mild and severe disabilities who were headed to work or to post-secondary education.

Table 4.18

Levels of Cooperation/Coordination/Collaboration for Students with Mild and Severe Disabilities

Cooperation/ coordination/ collaboration	Mild Disability	Severe Disability
intra-agency (within schools)	• more in-school collaboration than interagency collaboration	• both in-school collaboration and interagency collaboration
interagency (with agencies)	• none to little interagency collaboration because students are more self-sufficient and capable	• there is a greater need to coordinate interagency services for students with severe disabilities • large team of people from many organizations which makes it more difficult to coordinate services
with parents	• school personnel provide information during meetings but action is left up to the parents	• parents are members of a team involving school and agency personnel and accept a role and responsibility in the transition
with student	• more is expected to be done independently by the student	• there is more direct contact with the student • what is expected of the student with regards to his/her role in the transition process is dependent on the student's type of disability

Table 4.19

Comparison of School Involvement for Students Heading to Work or Post-Secondary
School Who Have a Mild or Severe Disability

	Mild Disability	Severe Disability
Heading to work	• encouraged to take co-op and spend more time in co-op • more time spent on career/interest inventories • there is most likely no support for this person once they are in the work force • once these students leave school they are on their own to find work	• employers are not able to support students all the time at work therefore options for employment are limited • students often require supports (i.e., job coaches) on the job • once these students leave school they are on their own to find work
Heading to college or University	• students heading to college or university tend to be more independent and therefore require less intra and inter-agency collaboration to occur • would have more time with guidance • supports are in place at colleges and universities for these people	• very few students with severe disabilities go to University or college at this time

Supports to teachers.

A variety of supports were available to teachers (a) within the school, (b) from the board office, (c) from post-secondary institutions, and (d) from the community. Not all people interviewed were aware of all of the supports available to them. Many did not have access to all of them. Some people interviewed believed teachers lacked the necessary supports in schools.

A good working relationship and support from the school's administration was essential.

If the principal is into special education amazing things happen. If [the principal] is not, things don't happen. So it depends on the support systems within the school. And so if it is just up to a special needs teacher to be implementing all of these things, it doesn't work, it has to be a team approach. And that is what we are really trying to promote.

[The principal] knows I won't bullshit him. Because he knows my numbers are accurate. And you see that is a big thing in special ed.. Who are you seeing and who are you really seeing? And how much time are you really spending with these kids. So those are the things that are of concern.

One special education head needed a computer at school but could not convince the administration of its necessity, so she brought in her own computer from home.

You have to start with your own and then show them how you use it and after that they buy into it.

A principal's influence either helped or hindered efforts for transition planning.

Many schools had peer mentors, peer tutors, and/or peer helpers who supported special education departments. Two schools had peer mentors, two had peer helpers, three had peer tutors, and three had peer helpers and tutors. Students in grades 11, 12, or OAC earned a credit for helping another student for one period a term and meeting the

requirements of an in-class portion to this program. Although its name varied from school to school, a peer helper was most often a student who was not necessarily academically inclined and helped students with more severe disabilities.

[The People Program] is a gym program where we have the OAC students, the advanced students, who are paired up with one of our classes in a gym class, and they are teaching our students specific skills, maybe volleyball, or whatever.

We organize what we call Circle of Friends, and we get peers from throughout the school and they do certain activities with them, but you have to pull them out of class to do it.

Peer tutors were more often academic students that help students with disabilities in academic ways.

Peer tutors earn credits and they report to a peer tutor teacher who helps them modify curriculum. So they are responsible for modifying and delivering that curriculum.

Peer mentors helped develop things like social skills or better self-esteem. Often students that took on these roles were seeking a related type of work in the future.

Peer helping attracts a lot of students who want to go on to be teachers or teaching assistants, or nurses, or physiotherapists... but it also attracts people who are looking for a class that doesn't have a huge academic component.

Some students worked through a social skills program with their mentor that promoted self-esteem. Peer mentors, helpers, and tutors were seen as an important part of the transition process for students but were not always successful.

A vital part to our program's success is the peer helpers. [Without them] we would not have the flexibility. We could not provide the programming.

We use a lot of peers too. And that is really successful, sometimes not so. It just depends, some kids want to do it all for them [the students with disabilities], or sometimes the kids feel embarrassed, and sometimes they are perfectly fine with it.

Sufficient training for peer helpers was necessary and some respondents complained that their peer helpers lacked this training.

Support from the board office was important to program implementation. One respondent spoke of his frustration. For five years he tried to get a phone in his special education room. Approval from the board office was required. He finally got one a year before the interview.

I find that it is a big battle for me to get things into my classroom. For instance, after 5 years of trying to get a phone, I got one this year.

Some high school personnel did not think people working at the board office level understood what it was like in the high schools.

The board really doesn't understand what is going on. None of the superintendents or the director has taught in a high school so they don't know what we are talking about.

Turnover of personnel at the board office made gaining support even more difficult.

You see, we've had some, like in the three years that I've been here, I've had four different superintendents in the role ... the person that is normally in the role is sick, so we've had people in and out. So it depends on the person of course.

Board offices supported teachers by providing teacher assistants and specialists that came out to the schools on an as needed or more regular basis. Some respondents reported the board's administrative departments were very cooperative while others believed differently.

Three schools reported that students from local colleges or universities came into the high school to volunteer as mentors, job coaches, or helpers.

Students from the community college in the developmental service workers program come and do co-op placements with us. They are 2nd year students and maybe would like to look at job coaching as a possible career or whatever.

We also have mentorships from [a nearby] University coming in to talk to our senior students. ... They come out here and they mentor kids with learning disabilities and show them how to get ready as far as courses, writing resumes, writing application forms, researching, doing bibliographies. [They] take them down to [the] University and show them what it is like in a residence. They do budgeting with them... so they get oriented to the university, the library facilities...

Volunteers from appropriate college and university programs offered additional support to teaching staff and greatly aided the transition process.

Some respondents spoke about getting support from community organizations.

Support from the community is very important since the community is the source of job placements. Organizations within the community like the Lion's Club and the Rotary Club may provide money for field trips and other things.

In the threat of one school losing its special needs program, employers and parents demonstrated great support.

We used to have to go before the board and do presentations to ask them to see in the wisdom of budgeting for the next year, would there be enough money to keep the special needs program going... employers would write letters, beautiful letters and parents would write, and parents would come and speak to the board, not lengthy speeches, but just saying what a difference this program has made in their child's life. We had employers come and do the same and to show that it is not just what we are imposing on them, that they really do embrace this idea of inclusion and welcome a young person with a disability in their workforce.

Support was available to teachers who were doing transition planning from the school's administration, peer mentors/tutors/helpers, the board office, and local colleges and universities.

Breaking the rules.

Respondents talked about the necessity of breaking or bending a few rules to get students the services they needed. Teachers tried to get students who just fell out of the range of disabilities to qualify for services.

I tried a few years ago to slip some of my kids in, some of my slow learners, who I knew would have problems locating employment, and basically they called me back and said just tell the family to take them back to a psychologist and have them reassessed, and have them re-labeled developmentally challenged and then they will qualify for our services. But don't try to slip them through because our mandate from the government is we help kids with developmental challenges and not the others. They are too high functioning for our services.

We all know our roles and our boundaries. And they are pretty much outlines. So it is already outlined by what are laws and Ministries tell us we are allowed to do. We often exceed those boundaries because it has to be done just to make sure the kid gets service. Or just to make sure they get the service they need.

Respondents did not seem to regret their actions.

You'd be surprised how many times making sense doesn't have anything to do with the education business. ... The world isn't going to fall apart because we bend the rules.

When students needed help or services, some of the people interviewed were willing to do what was necessary to help the students be successful.

Summary of Findings from Phase 3 – Telephone Interviews

Phase three of the data collection identified a number of themes, problems, and issues associated with transition planning. It was clear that the way people across the province handled transition planning varied greatly from school to school. The role

principals, vice-principals, guidance counselors, special education teachers, and co-op teachers took with regards to transition planning also varied.

Many problems were encountered while trying to help students prepare for the transition out of high school. Finding work placements and having appropriate transportation to those work placements were two of the most frequently cited problems. Finding dedicated, hard working people who understood how to design and implement programs for students with special needs was cited as a challenge. The attitude of students, teachers, parents, and community members was a factor in the success of transition planning efforts. Respondents shared the frustrations and problems they perceived with college and university programs that did not accommodate the needs of their special education students. Working with agencies that experienced high turnover rates, long waiting lists, and were difficult to contact also posed challenges to respondents. Lack of time, money, and sufficient resources meant less networking could occur, people in specialized roles were losing their positions, and people felt overwhelmed. Few schools had the time or available people to conduct follow-up studies. On the other hand, these deficiencies caused people to be a bit more creative and resourceful.

The location and size of a school was a factor in the level of transition planning. Respondents from schools with a student population between 500 and 1000 in smaller cities said they had a sufficient number of staff members to do transition planning, experienced fewer transportation problems, and had access to a variety of work

placements. Board amalgamations meant increased distances between some schools and resources located at or near board offices.

A surprising finding was that many guidance departments did not see special education students, rather the special education teachers took care of the guidance needs for identified students. The data showed that more transition planning was occurring in schools that had segregated classrooms. Students with severe disabilities were receiving the most services at the time, while students with mild disabilities, or those who are sometimes called slow learners were identified as not receiving the help they needed. What this meant was that sometimes respondents resorted to breaking or bending the rules to accommodate students who did not meet the necessary requirements to receive services.

The amount of coordination, cooperation, or collaboration that occurred was influenced by the location of offices within a school, the school setting, whether the student was mildly or severely disabled, and the attitude of the people involved. Assistance was available to teachers, parents, and students in the form of cooperation from peer helpers, board resource people, and people in the community. Many respondents were not aware of all of the supports available to them.

The case study in the next phase examines how one area in the province was dealing with some of these problems and issues. Information gained from the case study confirms and clarifies some of the issues and themes identified in the first three phases of this research. The case study provides a model for transition planning which can be used to further implement transition planning in schools across the province.

Phase 4 – Case Study

A case study was conducted in an area of Ontario that had a highly collaborative, unique and exemplary transition process in place for students with disabilities. The area was unique because it had a transition coordinator whose salary was jointly paid by both the public and separate school boards as well as a local agency. It was exemplary because the transition coordinator had excellent working relationships with the local agencies. She ensured that a detailed transition plan was created and maintained for each student on her caseload. The area also encompassed urban, suburban and rural/remote regions and offered parents a selection of learning environments for their children. The case study was conducted the week of April 27 to May 1, 1998, lasting 5 days. A total of 25 interviews were conducted with individuals or groups of people from both rural and urban locations: 12 interviews with people from agencies, 1 private company, 3 families, and 9 school personnel. The interviews generated 14 - 90 minute tapes. The main contact person in the area, the transition coordinator, was invaluable to gaining access to key people.

Some of the most interesting information that emerged from the case study was obtained from the interviews with parents of students with disabilities. The first interview was conducted with the parents of a girl who was just beginning the transition process. The second interview tells the story of a young man with Down syndrome who, with the guidance of the transition coordinator and a supportive family, made a successful although not perfectly smooth transition. These interviews revealed the very real fears,

challenges, and successes of transition planning as it was being experienced at the beginning and end of the transition process. They also highlight the important role parents play in the transition process.

Two Students' Stories

Mary.²⁹

At the time of the case study, Mary was 17 years old and just starting the transition planning process. She had a severe developmental disability. For the most part, Mary was non-verbal and her parents spoke on her behalf. She was one of the first students with disabilities in her city to enter the school system in kindergarten and move through the grades with her age group. At the time of the interview, she had already begun her first job experience in the community working in the dining room at a retirement home. Mary would help set the tables for meals and clear the tables after meals. Her full-time aide from school was her job coach and stayed with Mary at all times. They took a taxi to and from the work place. She also worked in the school's tuck shop for one half hour per day.

Mary was totally integrated into her high school setting.

We are trying to make sure that she is in things like art. Mary is not going to learn Math. We are under no illusion that she is going to, so let's not put her into a grade 12 Math.... So we tried gym, drama, art, things like that. She also goes into science. She likes that because they are doing experiments. Classes that are not overly structured. It is better for her and it is better for the other students.

²⁹ Mary is a pseudonym.

When the other students were not doing experiments in Science, Mary worked on her own projects and lessons that were in progress with the help of her aide. If her teacher had something that needed to be taken to the office, often it was Mary and her aide that would deliver it. Mary did not have a long attention span and enjoyed moving around. Many of Mary's teachers questioned why Mary was in their class. The English teacher wondered why Mary was studying English if she could not even speak. Mary's parents preferred that she did not learn life skills like food preparation at school. They preferred to see her learn those things in her home environment where she would be utilizing those skills.

At the time of the interview, Mary and her family had already met with the transition coordinator to begin planning for life after high school. Mary's parents did not feel positive about the process. Unlike most parents of students with disabilities, this family was aware that there would be little to no services available for their child when school was finished.

We can do all the planning we want but unless the government comes through with funding, unfortunately we are not in a financial position... I can not hire someone to take her to a day program. There are no organized day programs. So we are going to do all of this planning and we are going to say, she really enjoys doing this, and she really enjoys going to the food bank or the [retirement home] or whatever, but are we going to have the dollars to provide that? I think anyone can do the planning.

Mary's parents cautioned people who were doing planning for higher functioning students not to raise false hopes in students.

And if you are working with someone who is fairly high functioning... then you've built up their expectations of what are they going to do when they are 21 years

old and go out? And they are finished school and they are adults and, you know, you built up that dream and how are you going to fulfill it for them?

Mary's parents believed that planning for transition was good but planning alone provided no guarantees that services would be available when needed.

Mary needed continuous supervision on a work placement. This made a full day placement difficult since an EA or job coach required regular breaks and a lunch hour at which time Mary would be unsupervised. A possible solution to this problem would be to have two students with EAs at the same placement and while one EA was taking a break, the other EA could supervise the two students.

Transportation was a major problem for Mary. Mary's family lived in the suburbs. A taxi ride into the center of town was \$15 one way, which was expensive for her family. Putting Mary into a taxi with a strange driver was an unpleasant thought for Mary's parents since Mary had the physical body of a 17 year old girl but the mental capabilities of a toddler.

Even putting [Mary] into a taxi is a scary thing with a driver you don't know... and you put a child who can't tell you what goes on, and you don't know when they actually arrive there...

Bus transportation was not possible on her own since Mary could not take the bus independently. Para-transportation³⁰ would not take Mary because she was not physically disabled. Mary's parents had to drive her or they had to rely and trust others to safely take her where she needed to go.

³⁰ Para-transportation is transportation specifically for people with physical disabilities.

Mary's parents had legitimate concerns about people controlling and manipulating Mary. Once they left Mary at a day program, they could never be certain that the people running the program were not too controlling or on a power trip. Mary's parents exercised caution when selecting programs for their daughter.

Mary's mother believed that integration had segregated the parents of children with disabilities.

With integrating our kids, we've segregated ourselves from the other parents of children with disabilities because we are not congregating anywhere. So we are not supporting each other which is a major problem. And we are too darn busy for all of these meetings. You know it's okay to say we are going to setup a support group, well terrific (sarcastically), now I've got to hire a baby sitter again. And I really want to use my parent relief hours to go and listen to a bunch of people complain.

Mary's parents believed the only people the government listened to were those people who were very desperate.

I really think that the only thing this government listens to is the real desperate... it is so frustrating... so you keep writing letters, you keep going to meetings, and you become involved, but not everyone can do that. And unfortunately with this system, quite often it is these people who do who get the financing. I think if you look around and you look at the [family group] and the people in there who are very, very active, real activists, very bright people, very aggressive, who can afford to quit their jobs and devote their lives to this. They are the ones getting \$60,000 a year to support their offspring. The guy who can't do that has this 25 year old or 40 year old sitting in front of the television all day. Or you know the parents are 80 or 90 years old, and they are saying we can't do this anymore. No one is listening because there is no dollars.

Although Mary's parents had written letters to government officials, they had not received a response. This was very frustrating to them. They were very involved in the local human care system. They sat on the board of directors for various agencies.

When Mary was born, Mary's parents were told that services were going to be there to help them take care of Mary.

We were told there were going to be services there. There were going to be day programs. We were told [Mary] would probably move into a group home setting and then from there on at the age of 18...We weren't told we were going to have to be 90 years old and still wondering what is going to happen to Mary.

One of the most difficult things for Mary's family was that they did not know what services were going to be available in the future. Planning was impossible. They felt they had little control.

You are still going to be at someone's mercy, what they think is best for you. If you are not aggressive and you don't feel you know what is best for you, then it is going to be what they think is best for you.

Often to receive services, families had to reveal everything about themselves including full financial status. Little remained private.

Mary's mother explained what was available to Mary at the present time in the region. There was a day program available but it had a waiting list of 80 people and the movement from the list was slow because people who had a place in the day program rarely left because there was no other service available to them. One agency offered volunteer help but volunteers were not reliable. If a volunteer called one morning and said she could not come in, Mary's mother could not phone work as easily and say she could not come in because the volunteer did not show up. Also, since the volunteers were often college and university students they were not available year round.

Mary had an associate family where she went to live for two weeks at a time. Her parents were amazed at how differently Mary behaved in her associate family's home.

Things that she refused to do on her own at home, she did without argument at her associate family's home. The change in setting was helping Mary to develop independent living skills and provided a needed break for her parents.

An important consideration in the transition of Mary, and indeed all students with disabilities was friends and interpersonal relationships. Mary's friends were her family and her agency support workers. She had no friends her own age and her parents believed they understood why.

I don't see how people can think...that teenagers should consider [Mary] an actual peer, because to me a peer is someone who has interests the same as you, you know, who you can talk to, you can share things with. A peer isn't just someone who happens to be your age. I think they handle it pretty well though. They always say hi to her.... She doesn't have friends. She has us [her family].

A support worker spoke of his knowledge that he provided friendship to his clients with disabilities.

I mean we are paid people in everybody's lives but I think if you talk to a lot of people who we support, they refer to us as their friends.

Friendship was one of the issues that needed to be considered when planning the transition of any student with disabilities.

Mary needed full-time support, which was very expensive. While she was in school, those supports were mostly available to her and paid for by the education and social service systems. When she left high school there was no guarantee that those types of supports would continue. What was certain was that the services currently provided by the educational system would cease and the financial responsibility would be shifted from the education system to social services and the parents.

Peter.³¹

Peter had already made a successful transition from high school at the time of the interview. Peter had Down's Syndrome. He and his family worked with the transition coordinator and transition class teacher to set up activities while Peter was in high school. He began work experience when he was 18. He required a job coach only at the beginning of most of his placements although at one placement he required a full-time job coach. He could work independently most of the time. He finished school when he was 21.

Peter made a concerted effort to speak and be understood but it was still difficult to understand him. He required further speech training. Unfortunately, he was not considered a high priority for speech training by the agencies. Other than private speech lessons, there was nothing available to him. Private lessons were too expensive.

The job placements that were set up for Peter in high school were not guaranteed placements after graduation. Peter's parents found themselves having to approach people at each of the placements when he left school to ask if Peter could continue working there after high school. The parents now pay for a support worker to accompany Peter at one of his job placements at a local hotel. They also pay for a support worker to take Peter out once a week for recreational activities, like going out to eat or to play a game of pool. Peter had regular scheduled activities and jobs every day of the week.

Peter was able to take the city bus on his own after being coached. His parents

³¹ Peter is a pseudonym.

spoke of how they had to take some risks with Peter and put trust in the bus drivers and other people. Peter's parents traditionally lived in a detached home. When they moved to this region they chose to live in an apartment condominium in the downtown area of the city so that public transportation could be easily accessed and so many services would be within walking distance. Their condominium was also located close to the high school Peter attended. When job placements were being sought, the parents requested that Peter's work be located as close to home as possible.

Our big push was to have the work program in the same community or approximate to it...so that when the schooling is completed, the work program can just continue.

The proximity of work, school, and public transportation were important considerations during the transition planning process.

Peter did not always have good experiences with his job coaches while in school. At the hotel placement where Peter required a full-time job coach, some of the job coaches were not doing their job properly.

[The job coach would] go down to the coffee room and stay there for the rest of the time, and he would go and read the newspaper or something, and then come back, observe him, write observations of what he saw, which probably he didn't see... it wasn't always the same job coach which was a good thing.

Peter's parents brought this to the attention of the teachers and the problem was corrected.

Peter's other experiences were very positive. One of his volunteer jobs was working at a cafeteria. He was very well liked there. The employees gave Peter a Christmas present and always gave him cookies at the end of every workday.

Peter's parents were elderly and this was an additional concern for the family. They had to consider where Peter would live when they no longer could care for him or when they died. Fortunately, Peter comes from a very supportive family. His sister would gladly take him in or watch over him if he were ever to live independently. Peter's parents had the foresight to write a will with their lawyer to make certain that Peter would be taken care of in any event.

Peter's parents spoke about the amount of support they received throughout Peter's life. They felt the medical community, parents of other children with disabilities, the church, and their immediate and extended families had lent them much support throughout the years. At one point Peter's parents started a monthly gathering of parents and their children with disabilities in the basement of a local church. Eventually the gathering led to barbecues and picnics. Peter's parents stressed the importance of networking, getting out and meeting people in similar situations.

Peter's parents also stressed the importance of parents being a bit pushy and persistent. They said parents have to follow-up on things and make sure things are being done correctly. This has to be balanced with taking risks.

You just can't put them in a cage and leave them there. That is what we used to do. It is not right. You have to take risks.

Peter's parents never felt they should get anything for free. They were willing to work and pay for any services they received.

Peter's parents felt the transition planning meetings were good. They felt having the agencies involved was very important. Also they felt they were at an advantage

because they were fortunate enough to have the same social worker from the local Community Living Agency throughout Peter's life.

Overall, Peter's transition to life after high school was a success. His success could be largely attributed to his parent's cooperative attitude, disposition, and persistence as well as Peter's own characteristics. Peter's parents approached employers, hired support workers, relocated so that Peter would have a central and safe place to live, contacted the school when they knew something was wrong, and were pushy and persistent when they felt it was necessary. His success could also be attributed to the planning done while Peter was still in high school, the involvement of the agencies early in the process, and the skills Peter learned while in the school system.

The History

The two students' stories revealed real life examples of transition planning from the perspective of parents at both the beginning and the end of the transition process as it was in the spring of 1998. The development of this process as it was during the case study took years to evolve and has continued to develop since the case study was done. The process began over 15 years before.

In 1984, a study was conducted on the graduates of the public school board in this region. One of the problems this study revealed was that there were approximately 10-15 students leaving the education system every year with no work, further education, or independent living activities available to them. Members of the community got together for a meeting to discuss the report.

It was the first time that all of the service providers in town got together to talk about something.

As a result of the report, a group was formed to begin discussing the school-to-work transition. The group explored a transition model being practiced in Wisconsin.

Unfortunately the group did not make much progress. In retrospect it seems the concept of school-to-work transition for students with disabilities was before its time in the region in 1984.

At that meeting, however, there were key people who continued to push along the idea of integration and planning for transition. The director of education of the public board was focused on special education students. A mother of a single child who had her Ph.D. in Education was committed to special education issues and was a strong advocate for special needs students. A number of families who were associated with the local Community Living Association fostered and gave support to the idea of mainstreaming and preparing students for life after high school. The school board and community had a positive attitude toward changes in the area of special education. Contrary to other school boards at the time, the board of this region was willing to experiment with new ideas.

In 1996 the region held a two-day workshop addressing transition issues. Representatives from the community got together to talk about the transition of all people with special needs. The community, the Ministry, the school administration, the agencies, the parents, everyone was very supportive.

The committee was brought together to actually troubleshoot for youth who were falling through the cracks...to try to address some of the systemic problems and to introduce some of the positive sort of approaches around the province.

The time for implementing transition planning had come and people were willing to start making changes.

The Role of the Transition Coordinator

The key person to the transition process in the region was clearly the Transition Coordinator. She viewed her job as having two separate roles. The first was *supportive work coordinator* - coordinating job placements in the community for students who are developmentally and/or physically challenged. The second was *transition planner* - helping students and their families make the transition from elementary to secondary school and, more often, helping students make the transition from high school to adult life. She worked collaboratively with the student, families, school staff and community agencies. The two roles complimented each other since an integral part of transition planning is finding supported work experiences for students.

The transition coordinator had a background in behavioural science technology. Before beginning her role as transition coordinator, she was a behavioural resource consultant, which gave her 15 years experience in the area of special education from the agency's perspective. She was not a teacher: she did not hold a teacher's certificate. In her role as consultant, she began working with local human service agencies.

I worked well over a decade and a half with area agencies and community people, and [becoming transition coordinator] was like a natural progression. I kind of blended into this very naturally because this is what you do [as coordinator], you do a lot of connections with area agencies and being the team member working with staff.

Her experience in special education and working with agencies gave her an excellent foundation on which to develop the role of transition coordinator and build the transition process. At the time of the interview she had been in her role for six years.

The role of transition coordinator began in the mid-eighties at about the same time the study was conducted on graduates of the public school board in the region. School personnel realized that students with disabilities left their school system and were not being productive, were not working, and were spending too much time watching television. A concerned teacher took it upon himself to obtain job placements for students with disabilities in order to prepare them better for life after high school. The community and the school board realizing the importance and the need for this initiative were very supportive. From this beginning, the role evolved into what it is today.

The current transition coordinator described herself as being a resource person and an advocate. She believed that many parents are not prepared for the changes in services that occur when their children leave the education system and many parents are not aware of the services available to them. She gave parents pamphlets about available services, explained what services are available, and referred families to the appropriate agencies. She made it her job to be very aware of all the services available in the community and their entrance requirements. She also had resources that she gave to parents, for example a *Planning Guide for Parents and Promoting Successful Transition for Students with Special Needs* put out by Human Resources Development Canada.

To facilitate her role as work coordinator, she created a job bank of over 100 businesses in the community that would be willing to take students with disabilities.

Students would tell the transition coordinator their work preferences and their suitability for these jobs were explored. Students were given three choices of places that would interest them from the job bank. If the student's preference was not in the job bank, new opportunities were sought and added to the bank.

Being transition coordinator meant working with a flexible schedule. The needs of students and families determined when the workday began and finished. Generally the transition coordinator worked seven hours a day but that may involve starting at 10 a.m. on some days and starting at 7 a.m. on others. It was sometimes necessary for the transition coordinator to work on transition plans at home, although she tried to avoid taking work home with her unless necessary.

Her role involved meeting with students and perhaps the parents to learn the student's dreams, wishes, and goals for the future. She determined whom in the school and community would best help the student reach these goals. If the family agreed, appropriate agency people were invited to a transition meeting so that parents and agency personnel get to know each other.

The transition coordinator organized the transition planning meeting. She lead the meeting, and sent a follow-up memo to participants after the meeting. Each individual took on responsibilities, but the transition coordinator was the one that coordinated everything and checks to see that responsibilities were carried out.

At the meeting a transition plan was developed with the student and parents. A variety of questions were asked.

Everything from whether they would like to work when they leave school, post-secondary education, where they are going to live, what they do in their leisure time, if there are any concerns or issues around transportation, what agencies they have already been referred to, who we should refer them to, we talk about income and budgeting money, personal life management skills, social skills, and even to the point of touching on long-range planning of estate and will planning for the family, whether that has been done. So there is quite an array of things that we talk about.

As a transition group, the student, parents, coordinator, and agencies began to determine what the student needs to meet the goals set out in the transition plan. The goal was to have a timetable of what students would do once they finished high school; that might include work, supported work, or volunteer work, as well as recreational/leisure activities. During the last semester in high school the goal was to have them doing the same activities they would be doing when school was finished - having them integrated into the community. Once the initial transition plan was developed, it was reviewed and updated annually.

Being one of the first transition planners in the province meant creating her own role and resources. She began with some information and a couple of sheets on how to get started with transition planning that she had received from somewhere in the United States. She used this information, revising and adapting it, to develop her own forms and procedures.

She developed a sheet to indicate to parents some of the areas they would be addressing in the transition planning process. On it was listed 10 transition planning areas: vocational training, post-secondary education, living arrangements, leisure/recreation, personal management, personal-family relationships, medical services

and resources, financial income, transportation, and advocacy and legal skills. She talked to parents about these areas and wrote down what is important to the student and the family.

At the time of the case study, the transition coordinator was beginning to teach other people how to implement the transition process. More than one person interviewed said they needed two transition coordinators in their system, one to do the transition and the other to do the work placements. Many people complimented the transition planner.

What she does really well is get information to parents in a way they can understand the system because it is very confusing for parents who are trying to work out who does what.

The transition coordinator was highly respected by the people interviewed and her role was seen as being an integral part of the successful transition of the students she worked with.

To make her job more manageable, the transition coordinator said she could use secretarial support. A laptop computer would help in the creation of the transition plan while at the various school sites. Also more job coaches were needed so the students could obtain more work experience.

When asked what characteristics a transition coordinator needed for the role, she noted: The person must be a people person, very flexible, organized, able to make a plan and follow-it through but also know when to take another path, and not get easily discouraged. The person must be willing to be in the role for a long period of time because a large part of the role is establishing relationships with the business community

and agencies. Also the transition coordinator has to keep abreast of the changes in all of the agencies and with government regulations.

At the time of the case study the transition coordinator was generally working with students who had an IQ below 60. They may have had multiple disabilities as well. At the time the coordinator's caseload was 70 students.³²

The Transition Process

A supported job placement was sought for the student as early as possible, sometimes before the first transition meeting. The student met with the transition coordinator and together they determined possible work placements based on the student's interests. Job placement was not credited or paid, it was purely job training. The availability of a job coach was often the determining factor as to when a placement began.

Agencies would have liked students to be out 15 hours per week for three hours a day. For students that are able to work independently, that was not a problem but for individuals, who needed the support of a job coach, it became very difficult. Job coaches were secondary school staff, educational assistants³³, university or college students, or peer tutors. There was a job coach manual that they were to follow.

³² Interestingly, the year following this research, the transition coordinator's caseload tripled to over 200 students because of Regulation 181/98!

³³ At some schools EAs were assigned to a classroom or to the whole school in general rather than a specific student unless there was a student who had severe behavioural problems or posed a risk to him/herself or others.

Transition planning began when the student reached the age of 16 or 17, a few years before leaving high school. A meeting with the student, the student's family, teacher (if in a segregated classroom³⁴) and the transition coordinator took place. The purpose of the initial meeting was to begin life planning and transition planning: to get the student and parents to begin thinking about life after high school. The transition coordinator found that many students and their families had not considered what life would be like after high school was finished.

[Parents] tend to look at the short term because the problems tend to be in the short term. When they were young we were looking at the type of things they were dealing with, and first in high school, uncertain about inclusion... It is scary to think long term. So it is often, we who bring up the ideas, well what about, and have you got plans for, and where do you think your son or daughter is going to be in ten years from now.

The transition coordinator assessed the student's capabilities and determined how independent the student could be on a job site. She determined which supportive work program in the community would best suit the student's needs.

As a team, the student, parents, teacher, and coordinator decided what agencies should be involved. The transition coordinator had a list of all the local agencies and kept a file on each one. Since many agencies were in a state of transition, the transition coordinator had to keep up to date as to which agencies were closing, which new ones were starting up, and what new requirements and procedures each agency had. In the case

³⁴ Both school boards in this region had segregated classrooms available in some of their high schools. The classes were called School-to-Community Services and Personal Life Management Class. Whether the student would be in that classroom full-time, for part of the day while being integrated the remainder of the day (most likely with the assistance of an Educational Assistant or peer tutor), or integrated 100% would depend on the student's needs and the wishes of the family.

study, the transition coordinator was in a unique position of being one of the only people in the community that knew all of the different services available. Most likely the local Community Living agency would be involved from the initial stages of the transition process, allowing the family and the student to become familiar with the agency.

[The transition coordinator] includes me in the initial stages so that the individual can get familiar with myself and Community Living... We participate jointly in the transition meetings... as the transition is getting very close... we are starting to get more involved with [the student]. We are visiting her weekly or every couple of weeks. We are actively taking on responsibilities for goal action and implementation and stuff. We are actually now trying to get some planning started for when high school ends.

The family was referred to any other appropriate agency or agencies. Caution was taken not to involve too many agencies in the transition planning process because inviting too many agencies was confusing and chaotic.

The student was placed on many waiting lists at more than one agency. This increased the chances of services being available when the student needed them. Also since the student may change plans, being on multiple lists allowed the student more options in selecting appropriate services when the time comes. Waiting lists were longest for things like supported living arrangements or group homes because once an individual went into these environments they tended to stay there their whole life. Another example was day-programs. Since individuals had no where else to go they tended to stay in the day program once they were admitted. Since placements were limited, movement was slow. The practice of putting students on multiple waiting lists was not condoned since it created extra paperwork and longer waiting lists.

If the parents gave their permission, information about the student was shared with the agencies. Caution was exercised. Information was only shared with agencies to whom the student had been referred.

The transition coordinator met or contacted the student and the student's parents 2-3 times a year. She did this to ensure that "we are all on board and that we are moving in the right direction". She also contacted transition team members regularly to ensure that people were following through on things they said they would do.

We meet. We make a plan. We make some goals as to what to do over the next couple of months kind of thing, and sometimes months go by and then we have the meeting and then somebody who has committed to something says "oh, I forgot I was suppose to do that." And it would be better if there was something that happened in between to sort of jog people's memory.

As the transition got closer and as the student neared leaving high school, Community Living got more involved. An agency representative visited the student weekly or every couple of weeks. At this time Community Living was actively taking on responsibility for goal action and implementation.

This transition coordinator made a commitment to herself to keep in touch with students up to one year after leaving school. She phoned students or saw them in the community. Individual students called her years later, some because they were lost and in need of services and did not know where to turn. The transition coordinator did not see follow-up as an invasion of the student's privacy since her purpose was to determine how to improve her own service delivery and to continue to help the student. She would have liked to keep in touch with students and collect follow-up data on her students beyond

one year to assess the success of her work, however, the time, energy, and resources needed to do that were not available.

Special Schools and Classes

The region had special schools and classes that prepared students with disabilities for life after school. One was an alternative high school that any student in the region could attend. This high school's main focus was preparing students for the world of work. Approximately half of the students that attended this school were identified as special education students and the majority were considered to be at-risk youth. Another setting was a segregated class in a high school that taught life skills to students with severe disabilities. Students were integrated into the regular high school program as much as possible and agency personnel came in to the school to work with students in the classroom and aid in integration. Another segregated class in a high school primarily took students with developmental and multiple disabilities that had finished four or five years in their neighbourhood high school and began to set up work and leisure activities that would continue on into adult life. These schools and classes accompanied by the transition planning process were preparing students for the transition from high school to adult life.

An alternative high school.

The region had an alternative high school for at-risk youth. It was a small school with under 100 students. The school enrolled students who had very basic skills, for

example low work skills and low social skills, but could work independently with the proper training and guidance. The person interviewed said that many of the students came from families who were on welfare or unemployment insurance. Many students needed to develop life skills and social skills.

The school operated in a very flexible manner. There was continuous enrollment, meaning students could begin school at any time. Work placements could last anywhere from four weeks to an entire semester. When there was work, the students would go out for full days for a number of weeks and then return to class.

Whatever works for the students... It is getting more and more flexible... Anything that helps the student now is fair game.

The school had support from the board office.

I think this board has supported this school quite a lot. This school has been given a fair bit of freedom to do what is necessary. So I haven't felt at all, by the school administration or the board administration, that our hands have been tied in doing anything that would be of benefit to the students.

Flexibility in programming allowed the school to accommodate students' needs.

The school offered many programs to prepare young adults for life after high school, for example a masonry program and a marine technology program. The school ran a Breakaway Company and a storefront called Envirohelp³⁵. The Breakaway Company³⁶ allowed students to earn money for work they did on school time. Any job

³⁵ Envirohelp is a pseudonym.

³⁶ In the early 90s, the Canada Employment Commission, which is now called Human Resources Development Canada, tendered about 40 projects across the country intended to make ready for work, people that would otherwise not be able to get or keep a job. One program that was created was the Breakaway Company. It combines the idea of cognitive therapy with behavioural modification and pre-employment counselling.

they completed meant the students who were in full attendance during the time it took to complete the job, would take home a portion of the profit. The school modified the original concept and instead decided that students would earn a certain amount every week not altered by lack of attendance.

At the storefront called Envirohelp, students helped to demolish unwanted buildings, take the unwanted items, recycle them, and sell them to the public. The school also had a program called Crossroads especially for girls at risk of dropping out of school.

A lot of the guys at risk go into the auto program, go into the masonry program, they go into wood shop. There aren't as many hands on programs for girls at risk. So if the student is in a place in their life where they cannot do Math, Science, English, and they need some hands-on strictly self-esteem kinds of things, there wasn't a lot of places that girls would go naturally. So they started the crossroads program... we work in the family studies room and we have sewing machines at our disposal and the kitchens, and a lot of craft stuff, and it is basically a retention and self-esteem program.

By offering a variety of programming and work opportunities students were able to explore many career areas.

Five teachers looked for co-op placements for the students. Each teacher looked for jobs in different segments of the marketplace, for example retail sales, building and construction, or automotive. The co-op teachers worked in the same office with a lot of informal communication going on continuously. Teachers visited the students at placements as often as needed, up to once a week. Students and parents also helped find placements occasionally.

The school experienced many of the cutbacks and challenges that other high schools experience. Closures, difficulty finding jobs, the loss of young teachers with the latest training, lack of time, and transportation problems were some of the challenges the school faced.

We've had a lot of shops closed too. It is getting more limited. There are less resources. We still have wood shop, but we don't have welding anymore, we don't have auto mechanics. So things have closed.

Jobs are not always easily found. The region had many high schools and there was a competition for some placements.

It is more an issue between schools, where [the employer] would say, well, three schools have already called me.

The school tended to have a high proportion of young teachers who were first to be cut if enrollment declined. At times parents impeded the programming.

I have students that have done spectacularly at their placements and their parents pull them out because they think they shouldn't be working free anywhere. Because they don't have the understanding of the fact that you need a reference to get a real job.

Transportation was an issue. The school helped students by providing some of the transportation.

We provide transportation at least one way. If we can do it, and if the kid really requires it, two ways.... For the most part we try to keep them close to home, but that doesn't work all the time.

The school did not have the time or people to collect follow-up information about their graduates to determine the success of their programs.

The transition class.

One high school in the region had a transition class of students who were generally 18-21 years of age with some below the age of 18. The class had two teachers and two EAs. Students from a local college who were studying to become Child Youth Workers and Behavioural Science Technologists did their work placements in the class.

Students in high schools across the region transferred to this school after they spend four to five years in their neighbourhood high school. When their age peers at their neighbourhood high school were graduating, the student with disabilities would transfer into the transition class. Ideally, the teachers of the class would like to see the transition class located in a local college where students could be with other students their own age, but at the time this was not possible.

The goal of the class was to integrate the student into the community.

We are focusing all on the community so that we are going to try and get the students more comfortable or totally independent, whatever level of independence they might be able to reach in the community with those last two or three years.

Arranging schedules for the students that they would continue to follow once they left school did this. Their schedule included work (most likely volunteer work at one or more places) leisure and recreational activities. Regular physical activity at a local fitness club was an important part of the scheduling. In class, the students learned life skills. They listened to the news every day, counted change and worked in the storefront and tuck shop. The program was very community focused.

It is all community oriented so that when they leave they are going to be familiar with flyers and how to use them, and how to get their groceries... money management and budgeting, and coin recognition and those types of things.

Everything done in the class prepared the student for independent life after high school.

Transition planning usually began two years before the student left their high school. Enrolment in the transition class was part of that transition plan. The transition coordinator played an important role in the programming. She was able to make connections that the teachers did not have the time to do.

Just in my everyday regular teaching, I wouldn't have time to be going out and contacting agencies and finding out what is appropriate for each individual student.

The transition coordinator found work placements and acted as a liaison with the employer.

The EAs acted as job coaches in the work placements. They made known any concerns the employer had or problems the student was having to the teachers on a daily and weekly basis.

Despite the teachers and transition coordinator's efforts, few students had been able to maintain their entire schedule of daily activities once they left the transition class. While they were in school, there were sufficient human supports to accompany the student in the community. Once the student left school, the student had to rely on community supports, and unfortunately agencies did not have those types of supports available.

There is hardly any of our students that have been able to maintain full day activities Monday through Friday once they leave... there are some students that need people to be with them all of the time.

Most of these students required job coaches for their entire lives. Unfortunately, job coaches were difficult to find after leaving high school. A program called Community Options offered volunteer job coaches but there were problems with maintaining year-round volunteers who were reliable. In some cases the onus was left on the families to find money to hire a job coach.

This class was also faced with many barriers to providing appropriate programming. Transportation was a problem. The board no longer provided transportation to work placements, and taxis were expensive. The public transit system was suitable in some cases. When asked, respondents said other barriers were limited time and resources.

More than anything else, time, just the fact that we have so many different things to do, number one. The second is of course that in terms of community support and resources, there is an ever increasing number of people drawing on them and probably a decline in the pool of good heartedness.

The teachers needed to be persistent with agencies, repeatedly contacting them if they needed something. One of the biggest problems they saw was a lack of places for students with disabilities to go once they finished high school.

“School-to-community-life” class.

One of the high schools in the region contained a separate classroom for students with severe disabilities. Students in the class were a variety of ages and abilities. Classroom activities focused on life skills. Students were integrated into the regular high school program as much as possible.

What we will be doing is taking kids who are getting close to leaving, trying to get them into work placements and job placements as much as we can, if we've got manpower. The other thing I do is I will be recommending to families if kids need to be moving on to the transition program at [another high school] ... to develop further work skills and further social skills out in the community... If it is not appropriate for the kids to be getting out into that program, then we just try to work with [the transition coordinator] and the parents to set up some sort of program so it is in place when they are finished.

Many adults were present in the class during the interview. One teacher, three EAs, and two students from the local college were working with the students. Many people came into the classroom on a regular basis to work with students in the classroom or to take students out of the classroom for integration or work experience. These people included a speech pathologist, occupational therapist, physiotherapist, personnel from the child development center, people from community access, and/or a child and youth care worker. The teachers interviewed said that since their resources were being cut, they had to be very creative and innovative, using any available resources in the community.

Gaining work experience was inhibited by a number of factors. Scheduling was a problem since school started at 8:30 a.m. but most work experiences didn't start until 9 or 9:30 in the morning. Since students had to be back at the school by 11 a.m. this meant that with travel time students had only approximately one hour in the workplace. Transportation was expensive. Even though the city had a public transit system, the bus scheduling was difficult to coordinate with school and work schedules. There was an access bus and a special taxi that was used, but funds for this were taken out of the school budget. Sometimes the EAs drove students to work placements. People available

who could be job coaches were limited. Sometimes EAs, college students, or peer tutors would act as job coaches.

I am not comfortable having my [college] students or my co-op students or my peer tutors, going out and doing the job coaching... I worry about their liability. I worry about their inexperience....they are coming in new to our placement... they don't know what the students are capable of and what they are not.

The school-to-community life class was flexible and accommodating, but much less so than the other two examples, the alternative high school and the transition class.

Agencies

The region had a number of agencies that supported people with disabilities. They differed in services provided, eligibility requirements, and philosophies. The Ministry of Community and Social Services funded all but two of the agencies interviewed. Some agencies, even though they were funded, still required a fee from clients.

The agencies entered the transition process after the transition coordinator, student, or family had contacted them. An agency may have already been involved with the family in some capacity, but they would still be invited to be a member of the transition planning team. The agencies selected to be part of the team would depend on the student's needs. Each agency was concerned with a different aspect of the transition, for example, housing, supported work, competitive employment, supporting the student, family or school, or providing day programs. Each agency had its own criteria as to when and how they would become involved in the transition process.

Involving the agencies early on in the transition process was beneficial to the agencies and the student. Most agencies benefited from involvement with students before they left school since they could better prepare for needed services.

We're able to get involved during their last year of high school. Not to provide services but to be involved as a participant in the planning process. So when they finish high school, the counselor would already have some sense of what they are all about and what their plans are.

The student benefited from beginning the process to access services by being put on waiting lists before leaving school since it could take over a year to access services with some agencies. Although the practice is not highly recommended, students who were placed on numerous lists appeared to have a slight advantage.

Lots of things can happen while people are on these waiting lists. So some times it's to the client's benefit that [the transition coordinator] has referred them everywhere.

Some students would not be able to access services because they did not meet the agency's eligibility criteria. From the agency's perspective, the agency must be concerned with maintaining its funding and that often has stipulations.

We are really concerned about our funding source down the road. If it is outcomes based funding and I am putting on my business hat, I am going to be very cautious about who I bring into the program. If that outcome demand is a part-time job, 15 hours a week at minimum wage, well then my business sense tells me only bring in the people that can do that. I don't feel that is very fair...and I feel people are going to fall through cracks.

People that did not have a clear cut disability sometimes could not access the services at the different agencies because they did not meet the eligibility criteria and fell through the cracks.

Agencies with different philosophies provided services in different ways. Some agencies were solely information providers, not providing any supports, while others 'served' clients.

We assist people to live their lives in the community. Other organizations serve people. There is a big difference....If you move more to the 'we'll assist and walk with you and help you get what you need' approach, we'll be able to support more people than if we say we are going to serve everybody.

Some people argued that the way the current funding system is set up gives too much power to the agencies and not enough power to the individual with disabilities.

The provincial government, the way that they fund programs, they fund agencies, right, to take care of individuals. The responsibility then lies with the agency to make sure that this person's needs are serviced, rather than the individual to learn how to take care of themselves. That is why we like sort of the direct funding approach, even to various degrees, because if you give some of the money to the individual, and they have the opportunity to go out and pick and choose which agency they want to use, the accountability the agency has is also to the individual.

Some agencies had recently shifted from an institutional model to a community placement model, which caused those agencies some growing pains.

Agencies were faced with many barriers to providing services. They lacked knowledge about each other.

I think a barrier is a lack of knowledge amongst the services about what other services do. Because it is easy to have a narrow focus on what you do. But if you don't have an understanding of what the other services do, that creates a barrier for everybody looking at the person in the situation in the same way.

They were supporting more clients with less human and financial resources.

You know 50 people to one support coordinator when we used to say the ideal number was 20.

A lot of the people providing service to families are trying to provide the same quality of service with fewer and fewer people resources.

Cutbacks were forcing agencies to amalgamate. When agencies amalgamated, there were major difficulties in negotiating collective agreements. There were issues over work hours, working conditions, the types of services being delivered, changes in job descriptions, downsizing, and contracting services out which means job loss. When agencies went on strike, it resulted in a temporary loss of services to students with disabilities and/or permanent alterations to service delivery.

One agency interviewed provided support to clients by recruiting volunteers from the community, mostly college and university students. The problem with volunteers was that they were not always reliable. Also college and university students were usually only in the region for 8 out of 12 months a year.

The way the agencies were currently organized caused problems for the students and their families. An overlap in services created confusion.

We have major agencies in our area that offer similar supported work programs, supported independent living arrangements, group homes - there is an overlap. It is confusing for families to know where to go. What I may do is put an individual's name on 2 or 3 [waiting] lists and then we'll see who has got an opening for an individual when they leave school and if that particular service is going to be more suited to their needs... there's lots of overlap.

High turnover rates in agencies meant students were sometimes lost in the shuffle. When the person dealing with the student's case left the agency there was no guarantee that agreed upon services will continue or be put into place unless there was a signed agreement. The transition coordinator did say that even though formal agreements were not part of the transition process at the time, agencies generally did keep their promises.

We are getting this better, each year it gets better... people are becoming a lot more diligent about when they say they are going to work with a family, they are. We don't have a formal contract.

Some people believed that formal contracts would facilitate in ensuring promised services.

Power struggles and turf wars existed between the agencies. The cause of most of the tension was money. Agencies competed for the same money. Having money meant having power.

If we have an organization worth [millions of dollars] and other organizations [only worth thousands of dollars] the smaller one is saying what have we got to say about this, I am so small, I could be bought and sold tomorrow by the big guy.

The agencies with less funding felt that the agency that received the most funding should do more of the work since they got more money.

The opportunities fund for example. The government announces \$30 million dollars for each of the next three years to support people with disabilities to find employment, and so now you have all of these rehab agencies, disability agencies, and employment agencies, all competing for this money... instead of working together, or those agencies wanting to be in the lead, or in control. Because actually, having the money or administering the money, you apparently have control. So partnerships, we haven't as communities and agencies, we haven't, we've talked partnership, we haven't really implemented meaningful projects.

The philosophy of the agency with the most money tended to dominate.

Creating change in a system like this took time and convincing. The executive directors of the agencies controlled the money. This fact made them an important group of people when change was desired.

If we ignore them it ain't going to happen. We need their cooperation. We need some of those guys to say we need to put more money into [transition coordinators].

Change became political.

For the most part, schools and agencies seemed to have a good relationship.

Schools are excellent. They see a real need [to have agency workers in the classes]. ... The teachers also recognize that these children need the special help. ... They welcome the support being in the class, and they don't find it intrusive. And you'd have to have that kind of working relationship with the school that you are with for this to be successful.... We make them [the teachers] part of the team... we keep everybody involved, and all hands on people, so that everybody knows what everybody is doing. And that seems to work the best. ... I have to say in the 9 years that I've been in day treatment, I've never experienced a school reacting negatively to us.

Yet there seemed to be a question of who was in charge. There was a power struggle between agency personnel and the school personnel.

I think sometimes there is an ownership issue with students and teachers or teacher's aids or somebody else feels they are my student, I'll find for them, I'll be this for them, there is that 'you stay away' kind of attitude.... If the teacher doesn't want me in there doing stuff, if I'm going to do stuff, I'm going to have to take them out of the classroom.

There was a delicate balance between pushing for what was needed and jeopardizing future relations.

You have to establish a rapport with the people you are working. And you have to work collaboratively which means you don't always get exactly what you want... But if I can get something of what the kid needs then I am going to leave it at that because if you punch too hard and make bad feelings, you may not get anything for the next one.

Mutual respect and understanding that the agencies and the schools need each other is essential.

I respect that they are classroom teachers and that they know more about teaching and what the student needs academically than I do. And there seems to be a mutual respect that they know that I know... what the child needs socially, emotionally, developmentally.

Schools and agencies needed to communicate more and open an on-going line of communication. They needed to make it known to the other what their limitations were, what services they offered and to whom, what information they were able to share with each other, what constraints they experienced. To accommodate each other, some changes were necessary. Agencies were willing to work with the schools and schools recognized the ever-increasing need for help from community agencies. As one person said, "the whole process has to be tuned and toned a bit."

A criticism that one of the agencies had was that the current transition process was limited to people with a certain type of disability and it did not empower the student enough.

One of the concerns that I had with the transition process in this community is it is very focused on young people with developmental disabilities, therefore it is very limiting in its approach. ... there is not a lot of empowerment encouraged in the process. A lot of assessment and evaluation, and my take on the service system for people with disabilities in general, is it is set up in a very sort of protective way, very case management oriented, the control doesn't lie with the individual consumer, therefore the natural processes of access to information, right to choose, right to take responsibility, right to make mistakes, doesn't happen for people with disabilities in general. ... because [young people with disabilities] are being vulnerable and not being able to make those effective decisions.

Other agency personnel also voiced the opinion that students needed to be more involved in the transition process.

I get very frustrated when it is a situation where either the teacher or the parent does all of the talking. Or we have a meeting about this person and they are not present. I find that's totally unacceptable. This person is an equal partner if not more important in this relationship. And they should be involved in every aspect.

Many agency personnel would like to see the student at the center of the transition process.

Private Companies

In the past 5-10 years, private companies began to offer services for clients who were willing and able to pay. Some people believed that private companies were good because they offered additional options to people. Others believed that private companies created a two-tiered system, a level for those who could pay and another level for those who could not.

A lot of these services are going private now... the thing I don't like about that is it becomes a two-tiered system.... I have some reservations around accountability... maybe the clients want the service so much that they don't see the other things... or if there are no other options, or fewer options.

People who were starting private companies were generally people who worked in the human care system for people with disabilities and who saw a need for something that was not being adequately provided. Private companies providing services for people with disabilities were not quick moneymaking ventures. People with disabilities generally live off of their Family Benefit Allowance, which is meager.

People who started their own company were under scrutiny. Observers were skeptical of the company owner's motivation and intent. Regulations did not yet exist to control private companies. Even the private company owner interviewed was wary of other private companies.

I've met a lot of competitors I would not send my daughter to.

The person interviewed believed some people were threatened by what he did, while others were simply jealous.

The person interviewed got into the business because he could offer the services cheaper and because he did not like the way the agency he had worked for often had power over the client.

I could do it for a fraction of the cost ... I really struggled with power concepts... when it is Ministry or provincially run, the staff have the power. I wanted something where we were the guests.

He believed that provincial staff never looked at how intrusive their supports were, and that probably created most of the frustration, hostility and nonsense.

It is very easy to control and manipulate people with developmental disabilities. And that's where you've really got to make a conscience effort not to. And to provide choice. And to respect their choices even if they are not the same as you. It is not your life.

Allowing people to make their own decisions and mistakes shifted the power back to the client.

Running a private company was exhausting and stressful.

Long hours, tiring job, seven days a week ... And this is the first year that I have had days off. When it is your own, you find the energy for it... I work long hard hours by choice, no one has forced me.... I have many sleepless nights wondering financially if I am going to make it.

At the present time there were less restrictions on private companies than on provincially run supports for people with disabilities. If the government were to impose too many rules and restrictions on private companies, many companies would not be able to survive. At the same time the person interviewed said that there needed to be laws to

protect people. An obvious contradiction existed between what was needed and what could be provided.

The Rural Perspective

I travelled to a high school in the jurisdiction of two school boards that was located in a small community, approximately one hour from the nearest urban center. The school boundaries encompassed approximately 2,200 square kilometers (approximately 1000 square miles). To drive from the school to the farthest point of the school boundaries would take over one hour.

The transition coordinator found that there were not many students with severe disabilities outside of the urban area. She believed families with children with disabilities often moved to the urban area or at least closer to the urban area to have better access to services.

Services were more readily available in the urban areas. Resources were centrally based in the city, which was an hour away by car. Services were not as easily accessible in rural areas.

There are so many resources when I worked in the city that I could access, that I just can't access up here.

It was difficult to book guests to visit from the universities, private schools, and apprenticeship programs. The school board ran county-wide programs, which were courses for general level students specifically designed to prepare students for the world of work, were held in the city. Students from rural areas would have to travel almost two

hours on the bus each way or find a place to stay in the city if they wanted to have this opportunity. Meetings with the transition coordinator were more difficult due to the distance needed to travel to the school and the time it took.

Co-op and work experience placements were scarce in this rural area.

There is not a whole lot of jobs around here. There is no real industry besides from tourism and stuff like that.

This fact meant students did not have the same opportunities as city youth while at the same time it made obtaining work experience more important.

Students don't have the same opportunities. There are very few jobs that they can get after school so they don't understand necessarily what work is all about... They don't have the opportunities to see the different factories and businesses and the economy that is going on around them.

The co-op program could accept only a small number of students because of the limited number of jobs. Half of the placements were in-school jobs. The school personnel did not know how students were going to meet the 40 hours of community service in this region as required by the new secondary school reform.

We have about 20 students in the co-op program... We are about 50-50, 50% being placed in the community, and 50% being placed in the school.... Some of the challenges would be then to find placements for all of those students when you have limited resources.

The co-op teacher stressed the need for the school-to-community students to gain any type of work experience and said they often take priority. As a result the co-op program had to be flexible and accommodating to student needs and community cycles. Students were allowed to start a co-op placement half way through the semester if a job became available. The school allowed students to obtain co-op credits during the summer months

because that was when many jobs were available in the tourism, restaurant, or cottage industries.

Not only were many students not able to participate in co-op, many students did not want to participate. A co-op placement might take a student away from the school and since students lived far away from each other, school was the only place they could see their friends. The reality that school was the only social ground where students met on a regular basis provided little incentive for students to graduate or move on to university or college programs. The head of student services said that parents in general do not want their children to leave the area. Students that did make an effort to study in nearby cities often must undergo admission tests in that city. Taking the tests involved two days, a long Greyhound bus ride, finding a place to stay, and the expenses associated with travel. Many parents in the region could not afford such excursions. Some students left to attend college or university and returned home after a week because of the culture shock and the fact that they lacked life experiences that many people take for granted, like simply ordering a pizza.

When you take a child who has lived out a back road an hour from school, who this is his or her own social system, and to put them in the city, they wouldn't function there. You're putting them at greater risk.

Students leaving rural high schools in the rural areas were dealing with many issues as well as vocational issues, like moving away from home, the culture shock of living in an urban area, financial stress, and social changes.

Transportation was a major issue in rural areas. At one time the school had a vehicle especially for transporting students to co-op placements, however with funding restrictions, the vehicle was no longer an option. Travelling to the city to participate in county programs took two hours on the bus in each direction because it had to stop often and travel down side roads to pick up and drop off students. For co-op placements, some students had their own vehicles, while others had to walk, if that was feasible.

To transport a student anywhere for traditional co-op would take half the day so they are missing their other curriculum.

[Lack of transportation] is a big stumbling block because we have kids who could really use some co-op experience but just don't have the access to transportation.

Lack of transportation made gaining work experience more difficult.

There was only one agency that was located in this region. It has been there for over 20 years. The agency had participated in its first transition planning meeting only six months before the interview. Being on a transition planning team suited the philosophical direction that the agency was moving toward. Ever since ARC industries closed in the early 90's, the agency had been doing more to link children and youth to services while they were still in school. When asked what types of things the agency did, the reply was that employees of this agency spent a lot of their time on the road.

It is kind of like a taxi service. But if you don't do that for people, then they end up sitting out there in the boonies really isolated, they don't have contact with their local communities.

The agency drove students with disabilities to and from their work placements.

[The agency] actually drives to the school and picks up the student and takes her to the placement and drops her off. Which is wonderful and that is a rarity.

The agency tried to do person centered planning rather than simply running a group home. They did regular fund-raising in conjunction with other charities in the area to raise money to pay the rent, help people out, and attend conferences.

An inter-agency council met once a month. The school made sure there was always a staff member at those meetings. The principal of the school believed the agency and school needed each other. He believed both the school and the agency had the same purpose, and that was to help the kids.

As revealed in the telephone interviews, the staff of the rural school said that it is advantageous to locate the co-op, guidance, and spec. ed. departments close to each other.

Sometimes we overhear one another's conversations, and sometimes you need to vent, or sometimes you need to cry, or sometimes you need to laugh. You need that support.

In this rural school the three departments worked out of the same area of the school. The staff preferred this arrangement.

There were advantages to service provision in rural areas.

Here in [this region], the service providers know each other very well. We are much more accessible and it is much easier to know who should be sitting at the table and to get them there. It is not quite that easy down in [the big city].

Another advantage of living in a rural area was shorter waiting lists since there were fewer people needing to access services.

There were advantages and disadvantages to living in a rural area. To the student's benefit, school personnel claimed the smaller rural school meant more teacher attention. Teachers were able to become familiar with all of the students in the school.

Often, staff members had dual roles. For example, one of the EAs was also the librarian. Everyone knows each other in small rural communities. News travels fast. People tended to help each other, but a disadvantage was that little remained private. Almost all people had some type of connection to the school.

Everybody does know everybody's business and what is going on. Which means when someone needs help it is easy to find out that someone needs help, which is good. But at the same time when it gets into some personal things, it's different because people do know.

Unfortunately, being in a rural area did not shelter the school or agency from the cutbacks that were being experienced across the province. On the day of the interview, all EAs received a pink slip. Overall, living in a rural area posed more challenges to the transition process.

Disincentives and Barriers

During the case study people talked about disincentives and barriers to the transition process. They included the Family Benefit Allowance, gaining competitive employment, not having money for the needed personnel and resources, and not having the time to do transition planning. Each of these things was revealed in the responses to the questionnaire and again during the telephone interviews. Data from the case study confirmed these findings and provided more detailed explanations of how these things were disincentives and barriers.

The Family Benefit Allowance³⁷ (FBA) was given to those people who were not competitively employable. Although the allowance was not generous, once a person received FBA there was little incentive to try to gain employment. Since work was very difficult to find and part-time minimum wage was the norm for many people with disabilities, even if a person were to find some type of employment, the FBA is still needed.

The FBA, disability benefits, is not always appropriate for these clients because it gives them a false sense of, well, there is money coming in every month, and they don't really have to do anything, because many of them are employable with supports, or you know it might not be full-time, but certainly they can work.... I think there are a lot of folk who are either not getting the support they need or getting support which is kind of hampering their overall move towards independence.

One respondent believed that the FBA was an easy solution for the government. The government could simply give people money and not deal with the real problems like training and supports.

Many people with disabilities wanted to, and were able to work, however employment options were few. Competitive employment, sheltered employment, wage subsidies, and supported employment were some of the options. Although competitive employment was an option, it was not a viable alternative for many people with disabilities.

If you look at that job placement from the hard adult view of whether this person is competitively employable, they are just not... [the employer] is very happy to have them around for a limited time during the week, but as soon as [they have to] pay for that service, they can't do it... in a different economic time... like we

³⁷ Since data collection occurred the Family Benefit Allowance (FBA) has been replaced by Ontario Disability Support Program and the Ontario Works Act.

used to have wage subsidy here, so it wasn't very expensive to employ somebody like that. Employers would twist themselves inside out in order to do that but now they can't afford to. So the student ... starts getting incredibly different messages about their performance, from being 'Wow, you're terrific' to 'You are totally inadequate'.

Supported employment was most often a short term option.

There are good supported employment programs around but they are not seen as long term programs which would... give the supports that a person needs in an extended period of time and then they'll be competitively employable. But if they are never going to be competitively employable, it is not set up to give really long term supports.

Most sheltered workshops like ARC industries have been closed. Unfortunately when sheltered workshops were closed, little was set-up to replace them.

[Sheltered Workshops] weren't as good as competitive employment or true integration into the community... but I think it was better than nothing to do.

The employment options were few and difficult to obtain, especially for long term employment.

Not having the money to implement transition planning was mentioned repeatedly as a barrier. Money was needed for personnel and resources. Mentioned frequently was the fact that agencies were now working with more people than they did years ago but with the same amount of money. One of the people interviewed from an agency provided the following insights.

It isn't that there isn't enough money. It is that the money is not in the right places. The question is how abruptly do we want to change our investments. ... We need to look at where our money is currently invested, and say, is that the best place to have it? Could we service the needs of those four to five people just as well but differently and less expensively?

The Ministry of Community and Social Services could simply tell the agencies what to do with their money, but then the agencies would not take ownership of the process and would feel they have no control over the system.

Even if I had a big package of money, I am not sure I would move too fast. My worry would be that if you engineer the thing too quickly, [the people involved] don't own it, they are not part of it, they don't invest in it emotionally. They don't accept it.

The people in the agencies were aware of the value of working with the schools to create transition plans so that they were committed to the process.

When the respondents spoke about insufficient money to implement transition planning, often they were referring to money for personnel. They believed transition planning would require additional people. In the current atmosphere of budget cuts, additional personnel were not seen as a possibility. Rather, the people interviewed would be satisfied simply not to lose any more personnel, at least keeping the personnel they had.

One respondent believed strongly that one of the greatest barriers to collaboration was agencies having differing values and beliefs.

If there is a barrier that keeps people from working together, it is different value base or different belief system in place. There is still people who believe that individuals with challenges need to be in group homes or institutions.

This person believed that people in organizations have spent many years serving people rather than supporting them. Even some families preferred service rather than support because it offered more security.

As revealed in the findings from the survey and the telephone interviews, parents could be an aid or a barrier to the transition process. In some cases parents did not have the skills to help their child.

Very often the parents don't have those resources of those skills either... I'll say to myself, God, how come this mom doesn't know that you don't do that with the kid. And then I'll meet the mom and... she is just a kid herself. So a lot of the parents have missed a lot of the normal adolescent development, got married before that development took place... These women are doing the best that they can but they just don't have the skills and the resources to bring up kids and help them make good decisions... they don't value school, and they don't respect authority.

Not only did the children need to be prepared for transition, but the parents needed to be prepared as well. Many parents were overwhelmed by the transition. They found it difficult to believe that there would be fewer services available to them when their child left high school.

Everything has been taken care of by children's services for families... that is going to be a real shock to the system. They are not informed when they go into adult services that all of a sudden the Occupational Therapist, the Physio Therapist, is not automatic. You have to go yourself and make an appointment.

You see, parents up until now thought there is going to be a program, it is going to be there. And there isn't.

Having a transition process in place did not mean guaranteed services for the person with disabilities when they finished high school. No matter how much planning was done, if the services were not there, they were not there.

For everybody that is participating, it's becoming a very frustrating exercise because there are no resources. So you are going through three years of planning depending on the individual, maybe two or three meetings a year, maybe one a year, and kids are still graduating to nothing. So there it seems to be a bit of everybody feeling that they are spinning their wheels. Families certainly feeling very, very stressed.

Parents sometimes had high expectations for the social system. Some parents did not recognize their child's ability for independence, or at least some independence, and just wanted to protect their child.

Families want to see their kids in 24 hour (supported living) models. They won't even look at the abilities of their son or daughter. They just want the protection there.

We've had experiences in the past where people have become involved with the association and they've lived at home with their family. After they become involved with us, they learn more about their rights and dependence and things like that. And suddenly they want to move out. Parents blame the association cause children grow a little after they get a little more independent.

Parents could be a barrier to the transition process. Families had needs as well.

Time was another barrier. The current social systems that were in place were slow to change and were accused of slowing down the change process. Even though there may be some agreement about what needed to be done, it takes time for things to change.

What we do today and tomorrow will have an effect five years from now. ... [In 1984] that was the first time that everyone sat down and said, My God, we've got 10 to 15 kids a year coming out of high schools and nothing to do - they are sitting at home watching TV. ... Many of those people are still in that environment. We never got it done for them. But for some kids today, we are getting things done. And when a parent comes to me and says my daughter is at [a specific school] and she is in grade 11, what are you going to do for me, I said well, I am going to help you work with [the transition coordinator] to pressure the system to make commitments so that when you're daughter graduates she'll have more than kids did five years ago. She won't have as much as kids who are going to have 5 years from now. ... So we are changing but we are not changing - we just can't change fast enough.... My experience is if you bring the right people together and you have the process going, you get good results. But it takes time. And the one thing that we don't feel like we have is time.

Change takes time.

Summary of Findings from Phase 4 – Case Study

The case study provided excellent insights into the transition process. It described how one area in the province realized and addressed the need for transition planning. Other areas in the province can learn from this region's experiences.

The realization of the need for transition planning in this region occurred with the publication of a report in 1984 that revealed that there were special education students leaving the education system every year with no work, further education, or independent living activities available to them. A few key people in the community, and especially one concerned teacher, who sought job placements for students with disabilities, took it upon themselves to begin to advocate for the needs of special education students. They continued to do this for the next 12 years. Eventually others, who were also concerned, joined them in their efforts. In 1996, a workshop was held that brought together people from agencies, schools, the government and community. It was at this point that people began working together more.

The key person in the case study was the transition coordinator. She had 15 years experience in social services, so she understood that system well. She acted as a resource person and advocate. She met with students and parents to learn the student's dreams, wishes, and goals for the future. She knew who in the community would be best able to help a student with the transition. Together with the student and family, she would develop a transition plan. The transition coordinator was a people person, very flexible, organized, able to make plans and follow them through, but also knew when to do things differently, and not get discouraged.

A major focus of the transition process was gaining job experience. For students who needed continuous supervision or assistance, the biggest problem was finding and keeping a job coach. An individualized transition plan was developed when the student was 16 or 17 and job experience would be made part of that plan.

Students were placed on the waiting lists for services at more than one agency. Community Living got more involved with students with developmental delays as they neared leaving high school. The transition coordinator followed-up on the students she helped for a year after they left high school.

One of the reasons why this area is a good model is because it offered many special schools and classes for students and parents to choose from. There was an alternative high school for students with basic skills whose main purpose is to provide work experience for students. There was a transition class that prepared students with severe disabilities for work and activities that would continue past school leaving. A school-to-community life class for severely disabled students focused on life skills. Having different options for parents to choose from meant greater parent and student satisfaction.

The agencies that would be involved with the transition process depended on the student's needs. Most agencies had strict eligibility requirements and long waiting lists which meant services were not easy to access. Agencies lacked knowledge about the other agencies and therefore did not coordinate their services. Overlapping of services occurred. Cutbacks forced some agencies to amalgamate. Power struggles and turf wars existed between agencies, usually over money, which was a constant concern. There was

a high turnover rate of staff in agencies as well. Many places relied on volunteers to run their programs, and they found volunteers were not always reliable. Although formal contracts between the student and agencies did not exist, agencies were usually able to provide the services they promised. Sometimes power struggles occurred between school and agency personnel. They lacked understanding of each other's limitations and available services. Any one or more of these things could inhibit an agency's involvement with a student's transition.

Private companies were beginning to appear. They offered services that were not readily available from the social service system. They provided another option for people but there was also fear that they created a two-tiered system for those who could pay and those who could not.

Students in rural schools were faced with more challenges to the transition process than students in urban centers. Services were more readily available in urban areas. It was harder to find co-op, job placements, and work experience in rural areas. Students preferred to stay in school with their friends than gain work experience. Students that did move away to the city where opportunities were greater, often found it difficult to adjust to urban life. Transportation was a major issue. The closeness of the community was both helpful in times of need and intrusive when privacy was preferred.

This region experienced a number of disincentives and barriers to the transition process. They felt the Family Benefit Allowance was a disincentive for people to gain employment. For those people who sought employment, options were few. Lack of money for personnel and resources was cited as a problem. Differing values and beliefs

were sometimes seen as a barrier to collaboration. Parent's attitudes sometimes got in the way of transition planning. Time was another barrier since change happened slowly.

Phase 4 confirmed many of the findings made in the preceding three phases. It provided more detail about some of those findings. Combined, all four phases provide a snapshot of the transition planning process in the province of Ontario in 1997 and 1998 as will be summarized in the following section.

Summary of Combined Findings from All Four Phases

Up to this point, the findings from each phase has been presented in isolation. The following paragraphs bring the findings from all four phases together under topics that appeared in more than one phase. The information learned in one phase, confirmed, elaborated, and sometimes contradicted what was learned in the other phases. Only a comparison of findings is done here. A discussion of these findings can be found in the next chapter.

Phase one showed that not many school boards in Ontario had policies or documents dealing with the transition of special education students from high school to adult life in 1997/98. Of the few boards in the province that had any type of documentation, it was clear that the majority of transition planning that was occurring was done with students with developmental disabilities and most often with the help of the Association of Community Living. According to respondents of the questionnaire however, just because a board did not have any documentation about the transition process did not mean that there was not any transition planning happening in their

schools. Respondents indicated that 42.7% of schools had a school-to-work transition program for students with disabilities and approximately 30% of those schools said that their program was for all special education students. The telephone interviews revealed that many schools may do some of the transition and collaboration best practices but they did not always have the time, personnel, or resources to do them for all special education students all of the time. Most transition programs have been informal using the resources that were available at the school and reliant on the available energy and concern of individual teachers. One of the few schools that had a formal transition planning program in the province was where the case study took place. There, a transition coordinator worked directly with students, parents, and outside agencies to create and follow-through a formal individualized transition plan. At the time the transition coordinator was only working with 70 students with an IQ less than 60. Therefore, whether a board had policies or documents regarding transition was not directly related to what was actually occurring in their schools.

The respondents agreed or strongly agreed with almost all of the best practices for transition and collaboration except the practice that suggested schools collect follow-up data on the post-school outcomes of former special education student. Respondents said they almost never collect follow-up data. The telephone interviews revealed that people felt they did not have the time or the people-power to collect such information although they thought it would be useful and would help them further develop their programs. If any type of follow-up occurred, it was done informally at social events or by chance meeting. The transition coordinator in the case study was obligated to collect follow-up

data as proof that transition planning was worthwhile to continue to receive financial support for her program.

Almost all respondents, 98.5%, believed transition programs should include service coordination with community service agencies. Of the 42.7% of schools that had a transition program, 87.8% said their transition program included service coordination. However, only 28.5% of all the schools that answered the questionnaire had a collaboration rating greater than 3.1 which meant less than 30% were carrying-out the best practices for collaboration as outlined in the literature, some of those with, and others without, transition programs. The telephone interviews revealed that the more severe a student's disabilities are, the more outside agencies that are involved with the school.

Working with agencies could be difficult. Relationships would be established between a person at the school and an agency, only to be over turned by the agency person leaving for a different job: high turnover rates in agencies are common. It was difficult to contact people who worked in agencies and they were often slow to respond to messages. School personnel do not always understand the limitations agencies work under, and agency personnel do not always understand the limitations school personnel work under. Services were not easily accessible, often having complicated application procedures and long waiting lists. The practice of putting students on multiple waiting lists to improve their chances of receiving at least some services when needed made the lists even longer. The jargon used by one organization may be different than the same word used by a different organization, so communication was sometimes hindered. Both

during the case study and telephone interviews, personnel from both agencies and schools said that they had to bend the rules occasionally so that students who did not meet all of the eligibility requirements would still receive services.

The transition coordinator had a good understanding of how to work with the community service agencies because she had worked in such an agency for 15 years prior to becoming coordinator. She knew the services offered by the various agencies and could recommend to families which agencies they should contact for services. She involved agencies in the transition planning process and had representatives from appropriate agencies attend meetings when necessary. Her experiences were not immune to the amalgamation of agencies, high turnover rates, and turf wars between agencies. She found it challenging to keep herself up to date with all of the changes that were occurring in the community service sector.

Rural schools seemed to have the least available services from which to access. Services were most available in urban centers. In fact, some participants in this study believed parents of children with severe disabilities would often re-locate from rural locations to urban centers to be better able to access services. People in rural schools felt isolated from central board offices and resource centers. The board amalgamations that occurred in the middle of this research, in January 1998, made people feel even more isolated because board office personnel were spread even thinner over a larger number of schools and in some cases the distance to board offices increased. Regular visits to rural schools by board consultants or agency workers were often cancelled due to bad weather or unexpected circumstances. Rural schools had the additional challenge of finding work

placements for students in areas where work was not readily available. Suburban schools had the highest percentage of high transition ratings.

Transportation was one of the major barriers to securing work experience for students with disabilities. In urban centers where there was a network of public transportation options, transportation was less of a problem. In small cities or in suburban areas where city buses ran less frequently, although transportation was available it did not match with school schedules and did not permit students sufficient hours at work while still allowing them to maintain required course attendance. In rural areas, where there was no public transit, students had to rely on their own means of transportation or the kindness of others. In some cases, in both rural and suburban settings, EAs drove students to their work placements. Parents were often left to drive their child to work placements. If there was no available transportation, students could not get to a work placement and no work experience was gained. The level of disability affected transportation as well. As was learned in the story of Mary during the case study, some students are not capable of taking public transportation independently, even if it is available, but do not qualify for para-transportation. These students are left to take taxis, which are very expensive and where the parents must trust someone they do not know, or friends or family must drive them where they need to go. If both parents are working or a vehicle is not available, transportation becomes a major barrier to receiving services and gaining work experience.

Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with 12 indicators of implementation capacity on the questionnaire. These indicators were correlated to the

transition rating at each school. The strongest indicator of a high transition rating was when a respondent had the skills to implement transition practices. The majority of respondents had little to no training in transition or collaboration practices. Almost 90% of respondents said they would be willing to have training in these areas. During the telephone interviews respondents confirmed their desire for more training but wondered when they would find the time for such training and who would pay for it. During the case study, the transition coordinator said most of her training was through experience while on the job.

Time was also one of the greatest barriers to transition planning. Respondents did not believe they had the time to implement the best practices for transition or collaboration. Time was one of the top five indicators of both a high transition and a high collaboration rating. Sixty-one percent of people interviewed over the telephone said they lacked the time to do transition planning the way it needed to be done. They spoke about wearing too many hats and having too much work to do. With budget cuts and the resulting loss of staff, but no reduction in workload, they felt their workload was getting heavier. They no longer had time to sit on committees and advisory councils, partaking in important networking that made collaborating with agencies and others easier. From another angle, as revealed during the case study, from the parents of children with disabilities' perspective, schools and governments were taking too much time to make things happen for their children: it was taking too long to change the system to improve the transition for students with disabilities. Time played an important role in transition planning.

How important transition planning was to the principal also played a role in transition process. The majority of respondents to the questionnaire agreed that their principals had the skills necessary and they agreed their principals thought transition planning was important. The telephone interviews revealed that support from the principal was needed, but their involvement in the actual transition planning was not. The principal's role in the process was sometimes to be present at IPRC meetings, to deal with a behavioural problem, or to give recognition for an achievement. Principals, who did not have a background or interest in special education, guidance, or co-op, would often trust transition planning to their department heads. Although not always directly involved in the process, the principal's support was one of the top five indicators of a high transition and collaboration rating.

Board level support was also an issue in transition planning. Respondents agreed that members of the school board had the skills to support transition practices and they somewhat agreed that transition planning was important to board members. During the telephone interviews, the school board was not mentioned often, and when it was mentioned it was usually in a negative comment. One respondent blamed the school board for not supplying him with the resources he needed to do his job for years. People in rural schools said that the board offices and resource centers were located too far away to be overly useful. During the case study, the transition coordinator felt that both boards were supportive of her work. If the board did not seem to support the efforts of teachers to do transition planning, the teachers became angry or frustrated. If the respondent felt the board was supportive, it empowered the person.

A high level of collaboration between the staff of a school was also one of the top five indicators of a high transition rating. Most respondents agreed that their schools had a high level of collaboration among staff members. During the telephone interviews it was noted that as the transition rating for a school increased, so did the amount respondents said their staff worked together. During the case study, the level at which a staff worked together varied. It was noted in both the telephone interviews and case study, that much of the collaboration that occurs within a staff is done informally. Locating the special education, co-op, and guidance departments in the same area of the school facilitated that informal communication that in turn facilitated transition planning.

Lack of money was cited as a major barrier to transition planning. Respondents did not believe they had the financial or physical resources (i.e., personnel and supplies) to adapt the best practices for transition and collaboration. Having sufficient financial resources was one of the top five indicators of a high collaboration rating. Over 80% of respondents said a lack of money - to hire more teachers, EAs, and job coaches, to buy new computers and assistive technologies, or to help students with transportation needs - was a problem in developing and maintaining programs. When lack of money is related to job experience, a poor local economy meant greater difficulty finding work placements for students. Lack of money affected agencies by causing them to compete against each other for the same government dollars instead of working together. Without sufficient money, respondents said agencies could not provide the services that were needed. As a result, private companies were starting to appear, filling some of the gaps the social service agencies were not able to supply. Along with the private companies

came the fear that a two-tiered system would be established, allowing only those with money to access needed services. Even participants in the case study said they did not have enough money for all of the personnel and resources that were needed. Only a small minority of respondents of the telephone interviews believed that transition planning did not require money: it only required the right people with the right attitude to make things work.

At many schools in the province, the guidance, co-op, and special education departments have been put together and renamed student services. The telephone interviews revealed that even though the name may have changed at some schools, there were still three divisions to the group. Respondents to the questionnaire agreed that special education students should receive career guidance services, however, this was not being done at all schools across the province. It was revealed during the telephone interviews that many guidance and co-op departments do not see special education students. The guidance and work experience needs of the special education students was met by the special education teachers who may not have had training or experience in guidance or co-op. According to almost 40% of the people interviewed by telephone, the guidance department was overwhelmed by the social-emotional problems of the students not allowing them the time to do career planning with students. Not all schools had access to Youth Care Workers, social workers, psychologists, and counsellors to support students' social and emotional needs. In rural, northern, and remote schools, the school was the only place students could go for this kind of advice and support. In the region

where the case study occurred, at least one of the boards had Youth Care Workers available at all of the high schools to meet this need.

Lack of trained job coaches was another issue. Documents received during phase one of this research revealed three of the eight schools that returned documentation said that job coaches were available to support students while gaining work experience. Respondents to the questionnaire agreed that students should receive on-going job support but they actually only do some of the time. During the telephone interviews it was learned that one-third of the respondents did not have access to job coaches. At schools where there were job coaches, job coaches came from the Association for Community Living, the board office, were sometimes EAs, co-op students, college or university students, or peer tutors. The person acting as job coach did not always have any training to perform the role. Only a few schools had a training manual for people in the role to read. In the case study, the transition coordinator found people to act as job coaches, sometimes from within the school and sometimes from agencies. They were one of the regions to have a manual for people in the role of job coach. It was clear that even when job coaches were available, there were never enough to satisfy the needs of all students.

Parents did one of the four things with regard to transition planning: they facilitated the transition process, were not helpful, were intrusive, or were a barrier to the planning process. The importance of transition planning to parents was one of the top five indicators of a high transition rating. Respondents agreed that parents should be part of the transition planning process and then said that they usually are. Respondents agreed

that parents receive training to prepare them to help their child make the transition from high school to adult life would be useful, but they also said this almost never happens. They did agree that transition planning is important to the parents of special education students. The telephone interviews revealed more telling information. The easiest parents to work with were those that were involved in the transition process and supported efforts for transition. There were other parents who supported the process but were not involved. The most difficult parents to work with were those that did not support efforts but were very involved. Parents who were not involved and were not supportive were often of little help to the transition process, leaving the schools to pick up the slack and do the best they could in the interest of the student. More of the transition process was left up to the parents of students with mild disabilities. As the severity of the disability increased the greater the amount of communication between the teachers and parents that occurred. Some parents were intimidated by the school, especially if they had negative experiences during their school careers. The transition coordinator confirmed these findings, indicating that in her experience, parents were either a facilitator or a barrier to the transition process. In the case study, both Peter and Mary's parents provided an example of supportive parents who facilitated the transition process.

Approximately half of the respondents to the questionnaire said they had a transition program in place at their school. One fifth of those respondents did not have a high transition rating and therefore may have had a transition program in place but were not doing all of the best practices. Some schools had a high transition rating but did not claim to have a transition program, which meant they were doing many of the best

practices but did not have a formal program in place. Suburban schools rather than urban and rural schools, as well as separate schools, more so than public schools had a higher percentage of high schools with a high transition rating. The special education teacher was thought to be the best person to initiate the transition process, and a team of people was believed to be the best to implement the process. The telephone interviews revealed that most often when transition planning was occurring, it was the result of one teacher's efforts and concern. If that teacher were to move to a different school or change position, transition planning may not continue. The transition coordinator in the case study initiated and led a team of people including the student to implement the transition plan. She worried about the fate of the transition program in the region if she were ever to leave her position since she had established one-on-one relationships with school and agency personnel that would need to be re-established if a new person came into the position. It was clear that having one person or a group of people in charge of transition planning at an individual school or for a school board was the most successful model in place at the time of interviews.

The data collected from all four phases of this research painted a picture of the state of transition planning in the province during the 1997/98 school year. The data collected also offered some explanations why best practices, although recognized and accepted across the province, are not currently being followed. The discussion in the next chapter evaluates and interprets the findings from all four phases of this research. It examines the implications of this research to the study of transition planning. It also

discusses the contribution this research makes to the implementation and understanding of transition planning.

CHAPTER 5

Discussion

This research was the first effort to examine transition planning practices across the province of Ontario. Although numerous studies examining transition have been conducted in the United States since the 1960s, no research of this kind and magnitude had been conducted in Canada or more specifically the province of Ontario before this time. This research adds to the already large body of research on transition planning and collaboration, but is unique in that its information is specific and useful to one large area: the province of Ontario.

This chapter will discuss the findings of this research in relationship to previously conducted research in the broad areas of transition, collaboration, and change. It will be divided into five sections. It will begin by answering the three original research questions. The following section will discuss the findings from this research in more detail as related to the literature review, presented in the framework of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) "nested structures". Section three will note the limitations of this study. The implications and contributions of this research will be presented after the limitations. This will be followed by the presentation of an approach to implementing transition planning.

Answers to the Research Questions

This research met its goal to answer the three research questions stated in chapter one. To demonstrate this, each research question will be restated and a brief summary of findings will follow.

To what extent are best practices for service coordination and transition of youth with disabilities from high school to adult life being implemented in Ontario high schools?

Approximately 63% of respondents to the questionnaire had a transition rating greater than 3.1 on a 5-point Likert scale. This suggests that many personnel in high schools across Ontario believe they are already carrying-out many of the best practices for transition more than some of the time. With regards to service coordination, only 28.5% of personnel in schools rated their school above 3.1 on a 5-point Likert scale. This demonstrates that less than 30% of personnel in high schools across Ontario believe their schools are exercising the best practices for collaboration more than some of the time.

Although these are the percentages the data presented, they are most likely exaggerated to some extent. When the questionnaire responses were compared to answers given during the telephone interviews, the information was slightly different. For example, respondents were asked to rate the degree that their school actually develops a formal Individualized Transition Plan (ITP) on the questionnaire. Then, during the telephone interview, I was able to determine whether the respondent's school actually did

an ITP or not. Only 56.2% of the answers corresponded. Reasons for this discrepancy may be because respondents to the questionnaire did not know what an ITP was, or their definition of an ITP was different than mine. If some respondents were uncertain of what an ITP was, they may have answered “sometimes” believing it was a safe response. This does not mean that respondents lied on the questionnaire. The respondent may have answered to the best of their knowledge, and that knowledge has a lot to do with the length of time the person has been in the teaching profession, their current position, and their education and experience. An example like this helps to build the argument favouring qualitative over quantitative data collection. During an interview, if a person is uncertain of a question, the researcher is there to clarify. This point will be discussed further in the limitations section of this chapter. This finding does not mean that the responses to the questionnaire are completely inadmissible, but rather they should be considered accepting this fact.

The telephone interview portion of this research revealed that although schools may be doing some of the best practices for transition, they are not always utilizing the practices to benefit all special education students. More is done to prepare students with severe disabilities for the transition than those with mild and moderate disabilities. Since schools do have many of the practices already in place, this suggests that a foundation from which to implement transition planning already exists, and that, in theory, implementing transition planning may not be as difficult as some people might expect.

The much lower percentage of schools with a high collaboration rating implies that school personnel need to improve existing relationships and establish more

relationships with community agencies to improve transition programs. During the telephone interviews, each person could list agencies they worked with. The majority of people said they work with between 6 and 10 agencies. The capacity and frequency in which they work with those agencies was not ascertained. Although schools may work with a number of different agencies they need to learn how to maximize the mutual benefits of their relationships by realizing the advantages of coordinating services and collaborating. These findings suggests that implementing best practices for collaboration will be more difficult to implement than the best practices for transition since fewer schools have best practices for collaboration already in place.

What factors explain the discrepancy between best and current practices? What obstacles prevent schools from moving toward the ideal?

The questionnaire revealed that respondents did not believe they had sufficient money, resources (personnel and supplies), or time to implement best practices for transition and collaboration. The telephone interviews revealed similar findings, allowing respondents to give a more telling response. The qualitative data showed how the barriers are inter-related. Eighty-one percent of people interviewed said a lack of money was a problem to developing and maintaining transition programs. Sixty-one percent said they lacked the time to do transition planning the way they thought it needed to be done. Respondents spoke about being wearing many hats, being overloaded, having too much paperwork to do, and not having enough time in the day to do everything they needed to do. Seventy-two percent of people interviewed mentioned that having a lack of staff was

a major barrier to transition planning. One third of respondents did not have access to any job coaches. Most often EAs were used as job coaches, but they were in short supply at many schools. When asked what respondents would do if they were given money for transition planning, approximately one-third said they would hire more staff; EAs, job coaches, and people who would find work placements for students. Forty-two percent said they would buy more resources, like computers, newer technology, and ways to transport students to and from work placements. Lack of money, resources, and time are linked together since money buys the resources and pays for the personnel that lighten people's workload and allow people the time to do other things.

There were a number of other barriers noted during the telephone interviews that should be mentioned as well. Parents who were uninvolved with their child's education or future provided little support to the transition process. As well, parents who were opposed to the things the school was trying to do for the students also made the transition process more difficult. School location was a barrier for school personnel in rural, remote, and northern locations because of their distance from central board office resources and personnel, and fewer work placements available for students. A related problem and barrier was lack of transportation to travel to and from work placements. Respondents were also frustrated by a perceived lack of suitable post-secondary education options at colleges and universities, which they identified as a barrier to transition planning. Attitude of students, staff members, and community members were sometimes a barrier. Some students felt stigmatized by being identified as a special education student and needing additional attention. Some staff members were territorial

about their roles and resisted working cooperatively. Community members were sometimes not accepting of students with visible disabilities working in public places. The high turnover rate, long waiting lists, and delayed response time of agencies was a deterrent to collaboration. Respondents said the greatest barriers to services existed for “slow learners” because they did not always qualify for special assistance yet lacked the skills needed to fully succeed on their own.

What strategies can be used to overcome obstacles and help schools to reduce the gap between current and desired practice?

The Ontario Ministry of Education has already taken the first step by mandating that a transition plan accompany the Individual Education Plan for all identified students with Regulation 191/98. Both the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Community and Social Services are publishing guidelines and sample transition plans for distribution to schools, albeit two and a half years after the mandate was given. These two initiatives demonstrate that the government of Ontario is concerned about the transition of students with disabilities. The government’s concern now needs to be accompanied by support in the way of resources and funding.

Some existing funds will need to be re-routed to implement transition planning. Transition programming needs to be made a priority at the provincial and board level. Once it is recognized as a priority, existing funds must be shifted to support implementation efforts to provide resources (like personnel and time) and training.

Key people need to lead transition programming. As Covey (1990) writes, “The core element responsible for the success of any quality initiative is an organization’s people and its leadership.” Johnson and Guy (1997) believe that change will occur when there are committed individuals who will do what is necessary to ensure that students with disabilities and their families reach their desired outcomes. Key people, dedicated to this issue, who possess the necessary skills and characteristics - flexible, creative, dedicated, people-oriented, team-players - need to be recruited and made transition coordinators.

Transition planning should not become an add-on duty for teachers already overburdened with their current responsibilities. Respondents repeatedly said they lacked the time to do their current assignments to the degree they would like. If transition planning becomes an add-on duty, the likelihood that it will be superficially carried-out is higher. New positions and coalitions with human service agencies need to be created and this takes time and energy.

Training at all levels is essential, for administrators, transition coordinators, teachers, parents, and students. Transition planning and ways to work with community agencies must be taught in Bachelor of Education programs, in Ministry of Education additional qualification courses in Special Education, Guidance, and Co-operative Education, and at workshops and in-service opportunities. Not only do people need to learn the how-to of transition planning and collaboration, they need to become familiar with how community agencies, post-secondary institutions, and apprenticeship programs work. Parents are an integral part of the transition process and would greatly benefit from

training. Students need to learn how to set and achieve their desired goals using all resources available to them.

Another strategy is to put the student at the center of the transition process. Every effort to allow the student to express goals, wishes, desires, strengths and weaknesses needs to be made. Mapping³⁸ is a useful technique to use with students with developmental disabilities. Students need to practice self-determination. They need to be taught self-advocacy skills and be encouraged to use those skills.

Students with disabilities need work experience opportunities. This will require people to search out job opportunities and job coaches to support students in the work place. This, in turn, means that training for job coaches needs to be established at the provincial level. Government incentives would encourage employers to give students the opportunity to gain work experience.

The issue of transportation to and from work placements needs to be examined and addressed. Whose responsibility is it to provide transportation? Is transportation a good use of school funds? Is transporting students a good use of an EA's time?

Follow-up studies need to be conducted to indicate the success or weaknesses of transition efforts. Although they are time consuming, follow-up studies provide useful information. Schools and school boards are encouraged to conduct regular follow-up studies of students exiting their schools.

³⁸ Mapping is a process where students discuss their future plans, goals, and barriers using pictorial representations and visualization.

The perceived lack of suitable college and university programs needs to be addressed. Colleges and universities need to advertise available programs and make them easier to access for students. Coordinating an application procedure across the province would be very helpful to students and school personnel. High school personnel need to make a greater effort to be aware of post-secondary programs available for students with disabilities. High school, college, and university personnel are encouraged to work together to identify needs and to streamline their application procedures.

School personnel, agency personnel, and parents need to collaborate more to improve transition programs and services. Within the educational system, elementary, high school, and post-secondary school personnel need to work together to coordinate services to make each other's job easier not more difficult. School and agency personnel need to learn about each other's organizations, routines and procedures to omit any overlap in services, share resources, and open lines of communication. Parents need to be involved with their child's transition. As described in Mary and Peter's stories in the case study, informed, supportive, and active parents are key to a successful transition. For a student's transition to be less stressful and most successful, school personnel, agency personnel, and parents need to work collaboratively.

Therefore the strategies that will help reduce the gap between current and ideal practices are to: make transition planning a priority; provide support in the way of money for resources and training; find the right people for the job; place students at the center of the process; provide work experience opportunities; resolve transportation problems; conduct follow-up studies to monitor program effectiveness; address the perceived lack

of college and university programs for students with disabilities; and improve collaboration between schools, agencies, and parents. The following section will examine these and other strategies in more detail.

Findings Related to the Literature Review in the Conceptual Framework

This section of the discussion chapter will be organized in the same framework and order as the conceptual framework and literature review that utilized Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological theory. The findings demonstrate that Bronfenbrenner's theory is a heuristic model, illustrating that all parts of the system surrounding a child with disabilities must work together. This section will discuss the findings from the four phases of data collection relating findings to the literature and research on change, collaboration, and transition. Each system - macro, exo, meso, micro - affects the development of a child by influencing the student's transition experience.

Microsystem

The microsystem focuses on the one-to-one interactions the student has with school personnel, agency workers, parents, employers, other students, and the curriculum. This system focuses on: the development of the ITP and the student's involvement in this process; placing the student in the least restrictive environment; beginning the planning process before the student reaches the age of 16; helping the student develop self-advocacy skills; exposing the student to career education and

training; ensuring that students gain work experience; and the collection of follow-up data on former students.

Respondents to the questionnaire agree that a formal ITP is a best practice for transition preparation but said that they write one with students only some of the time. Only two people out of the 36 interviewed by telephone said they wrote a separate and formal ITP for their special education students. Another two people interviewed said they included transition plans in the Individualized Education Plan (IEP). The respondents who wrote a transition plan, did so because they saw a need for such planning. The ITP forms used by these respondents were adapted from forms used in the United States. The respondents self-taught themselves and learned from experience how to write a transition plan and what to include in such a plan. Since this research was conducted, all special education students, excluding solely gifted students, have been required by Regulation 181/98 to have a Transition Plan accompany their Individualized Education Plan. The implications of this action will be discussed later in this chapter. The mandate is consistent with what writers in the field of transition planning (Bullis & Egelston-Dodd, 1990; Disabled Persons' Resource Centre, 1991; Riches et al., 1993) believe: that the development of a formal Individualized Transition Plan (ITP) will facilitate the transition of youth with disabilities from high school to adult life.

Respondents to the questionnaire agreed that the Individual Transition Plan should focus on the student's goals, desires, and needs for the future. They said they almost always do this. It was apparent during the telephone interviews, however, that the student's goals were only superficially included in any type of planning. Most people

without disabilities would not tolerate such an occurrence. Three of the 36 schools interviewed by telephone used a process called mapping where the student discusses future plans, goals, and barriers using visualization and pictorial representations. The schools that use mapping said they had success with this form of exploration. Some respondents explained that many special education students have unrealistic goals that cannot be attained, for example a student with Down's syndrome wanting to be an astronaut. During the case study the transition coordinator made a great effort not to discourage students with unrealistic goals, but rather made them recognize other jobs which they would also enjoy and be able to attain. Unrealistic goals could be enjoyed as hobbies and past-times, or related work in these areas could be found. For example, a student with a severe developmental disability may want to be a veterinarian but would also be satisfied caring for the animals in a veterinarian's clinic. Parental support is very useful in cases like this. Parents, who in most cases know the young adults the best, can help their child recognize his or her strengths and weaknesses. They can also help their child to look at all factors related to a career choice, like housing, transportation, and family support. Once again, training parents to assist their child through the many decisions the young adult will have to make would be beneficial.

Respondents agreed that their students should be placed in the least restrictive environment and they claimed that they almost always are placed in this type of environment. During the telephone interviews, 55% of respondents said that students were placed in a combination of integrated and segregated settings. Only 12% said students were totally integrated and only 3%, representing one respondent, said students

were placed in a totally inclusive setting³⁹. I believe that respondents to the questionnaire did not fully understand what the least restrictive environment meant. Without a standard definition, respondents were left to determine what they believed was the least restrictive environment, which for some respondents may have been a segregated setting for all students with disabilities. Also, without a clear and common understanding of the differences between integration and inclusion, I am not certain the percentages of schools claiming to place students in these settings from the questionnaire are accurate. The telephone interviews allowed me to probe more deeply into what type of setting students were actually experiencing and what the person's personal philosophy on the topic of inclusion was. The case study revealed the reality of most school settings. If the child lived in a city where there was more than one type of high school settings - segregated, integrated, and inclusive - the parents, and in ideal situations the student, had the option to choose the type of learning environment they would like to experience. As was the case with families interviewed, the choice of setting is often determined by proximity to the child's home since transportation is a major issue with many students with disabilities. Therefore even if more than one learning environment is offered in the city, the family may still choose the learning environment offered in the school closest to their home. In more remote or rural places where there may only be one high school, the family has little choice but to place their child in the setting provided. The family could

³⁹ The remaining respondents did not indicate in what type of environment their students were placed.

always move, arrange for transportation to a school far from their home, or try to change the school's current set-up, which is, as Emily Eaton's family⁴⁰ can attest to, a long and difficult process that does not guarantee success. Clear and commonly accepted definitions of what is meant by a least restrictive environment and the differences between integration and inclusion would be needed before an accurate account of the type of setting students with disabilities are placed can be ascertained.

Respondents to the questionnaire agree that transition planning should begin before the student reaches the age of 16 and they said they almost always do this. During the telephone interviews, school personnel indicated that any type of transition planning began when they had the available time and staff. In the United States transition planning is mandated to begin before the student reaches the age of 16. Regulation 181/98 mandates the transition process begins when a student is 14 years of age by requiring that an Individual Transition Plan accompany the Individual Education Plan of all identified students.

Respondents to the questionnaire agreed schools should provide social skills and vocational training to special education students and strongly agreed that schools should provide career education curriculum. They also responded that they sometimes to almost

⁴⁰ The Emily Eaton case is well known in Canada. Emily has cerebral palsy. Her family took the Brant County Public School Board all the way to the Supreme Court of Canada to have Emily included in the regular classroom and not segregated as the school board saw fit. After four years of court appearances at the various levels of the judicial system, the Supreme Court ruled that the school board has the right to determine what is the best learning environment they have to offer a student. (The Brant County Board of Education and The Attorney General for Ontario v. Carol Eaton and Clayton Eaton, Court File No. 24668, February 6, 1997)

always provide these things. The telephone interviews revealed that career education curriculum and social skills training are usually taught informally whenever the opportunity arises or as part of other courses. No school interviewed had separate courses addressing career education or social skills for their special education students.

Respondents mentioned during the telephone interviews that vocational schools across the province are being closed or at risk of being closed. Since vocational schools provide the opportunity for students who may not thrive in purely academic schools to learn practical skills, the threat of their closure is alarming, especially if nothing comparable is open to replace them. Numerous researchers (Benz & Halpern, 1986, 1987; Bullis et al., 1995; Hardman & McDonnell, 1987; Knowlton & Clark, 1987; Kohler & Rusch, 1995; Levinson & Ohler, 1998; Stremel, 1995; Wagner, 1991; Wehman et al., 1985) encourage schools to provide career education curriculum, vocational training, and social skills training to all special education students. If these types of training opportunities are as important in the preparation for transition as researchers and respondents believe they are, more effort is needed to make these areas part of the formal curriculum. That may involve incorporating learning outcomes in these areas in the Ontario curriculum, which will be addressed in the policy implementation section of this chapter.

Students also need to be taught self-advocacy skills: the ability to speak up for what they need and desire. Nine out of 36 people interviewed by telephone said they formally taught self-advocacy skills to their students. Two of these people said they taught self-advocacy skills as part of a course, and one said it was taught as a workshop by a community agency. Other respondents said it was taught as part of other things that

they do in the course of a school day. Students need to be made aware of various options and possibilities. Schools and agencies need to focus more energy on this aspect of programming. During the case study, the agencies that segregated students with disabilities by teaching them in settings especially for people with severe disabilities had specific courses and workshops to teach such skills. Although segregation is not ideal, it did facilitate the teaching of such courses because the agency's purpose was more focused on the needs of a specific group of students who were readily available.

Respondents to the questionnaire strongly agreed that students should gain work experience while in high school and claimed students almost always do. The telephone interviews revealed, however, that this question may have been answered with only certain students in mind not considering those with more severe disabilities. Very few schools interviewed across the province had work placements for students with severe disabilities. This was due to a lack of job coaches and available opportunities. If there were job opportunities, students received the experience without being paid. Only one person interviewed during the entire study said that students earned money for work experience arranged through the school. That school, approached during the case study, followed a work experience model called the Breakaway Company. Most schools have difficulty finding unpaid work opportunities for students. Location, the number of schools competing for job placements, availability of job coaches, the philosophy of the school board or school, and accessibility to transportation played a significant role in determining whether a student gained any type of work experience while in high school. Many people believe the government should provide incentives to employees to

encourage them to hire or give experience to people with disabilities. Although research reveals that students who gain paid work experience while in high school are more successful in the workplace after high school (Bates & Panscofar, 1981, Hasazi & Clark, 1988; Hasazi et al., 1985; Roeher Institute, 1994), it is not always possible to obtain work experience in some areas across the province.

Collecting follow-up data on students who have left school helps to inform policy decisions. Respondents agreed that follow-up data is useful information to have but they just do not have the time or the people available to collect it. During the telephone interviews, most respondents said they know where most of their students are through informal communications in the community: at the grocery store, over the fence, and simply “through the grapevine”. Although this may be partially true, without actual follow-up data, people may selectively chose to remember more successful or least successful graduates rather than the possible true outcomes. Follow-up data is evidence of successful or unsuccessful implementation and can be used to credit or discredit people. It is for this reason, the agency that partially funded the work of the transition coordinator in the case study required that follow-up data be collected each year and a report on student outcomes be written. Follow-up studies leave the people who implement the transition process at least partially accountable for a student’s success or failure with transition. This can be intimidating to people and may be another reason why collecting follow-up data is not a preferred activity

The relationships within the microsystem, the direct link between students and others or other things, are crucial to the transition process. In most schools they will

require a shift in current practices and roles. Training on issues related to transition planning needs to occur. Once an understanding of issues related to transition planning increase, the greater the likelihood that change will occur.

Mesosystem

The mesosystem includes the interactions between two systems with which the student is involved. An example of this is the relationship between school personnel and human service providers. The relationship between both systems has an indirect influence on the student. Intra-agency and interagency collaboration are the prominent relationships in the mesosystem. The system also includes the involvement of parents in the process.

Intra-agency collaboration refers to departments or people within the school or within an agency working together. The majority of the respondents to the questionnaire said that there was a high level of collaboration between the staff within their school. When step-wise regression was conducted, a high level of collaboration between staff members was one of the top five indicators of a high transition rating. During the telephone interviews it was learned that at many schools, the majority of transition programming for special education students was not done utilizing intra-school collaboration. Rather, the special education personnel handled the transition process with

little assistance from other school services like guidance⁴¹ and co-op. For example, at some schools, if a student with disabilities did an interest inventory, it was usually conducted under the supervision and aid of a special education teacher rather than through guidance, which would be the normal procedure for non-identified students. If a special education student had a work placement, at some schools the special education teacher found the placement, only with consultation with the co-op teacher at most.

There are two problems with placing all of the school's responsibility for transition on the special education personnel. First, expecting the special education person to do all of the transition planning places considerable strain and additional work on that person. Second, special education personnel are not trained to assist students with transitional decisions (Wandry, Pruitt, Fox, & Anderson, 1998). One special education teacher, who realized the need for a greater knowledge of issues related to guidance and career planning, earned both a specialist in guidance as well as a specialist in special education, at great personal financial and time expenditures. Almost one-third of the respondents said that a team of people should implement the transition plan.

At many schools, however, the people working in guidance and co-op did not serve special education students at all. This was especially true for students with severe

⁴¹ During this research, the researcher was informed that many high schools no longer have sole guidance departments or guidance teachers, rather the special education, guidance, and co-op services were now amalgamated and called student services. As the interviews proceeded, the researcher concluded that although the name of the three separate services may have superficially combined the three departments, designated people who dealt with only one of the three still existed. So in essence, the three departments and their roles are still defined. For the purposes of identifying the roles of the various people, this research will continue to use the "old-fashioned" terminology: special education, guidance, and co-op.

disabilities. Some guidance departments already felt overwhelmed with the number of non-identified students they serve and do not believe they have the time and resources to service identified students as well. Some guidance personnel are not especially supportive of helping special education students. One guidance teacher said special education students already had an advantage over those not identified because they received more one-on-one, direct service with the special education teachers and it would not be fair if they also received individualized attention from guidance and co-op teachers as well.

Therefore, although the majority of schools agreed that there was a high level of collaboration within their school, that did not mean a team of people implemented the transition process. At schools where a group of people worked together to implement the transition plan, as in the case study, the greatest benefit seemed to be that no single person was over-burdened with the responsibilities of implementing the plan, rather the responsibility was shared.

Clearly guidance counselors need to become more actively involved with the transition planning of special education students. One complaint made by 39% of the participants in the telephone interviews was that guidance personnel were overwhelmed by the social-emotional problems of students, and this robbed counselors of time to do career planning with students. Some school boards, like one of the boards in the case study, had youth care workers in the school to work with students who were coping with social-emotional issues. The support of youth care workers, psychologists, and social workers in the school would allow the guidance personnel more time to focus on career

planning. Wandry et al. (1998) developed a three-tier Transition Intervention Model for school counselors. In this model, school counselors chose from three potential tiers of involvement with students. In Tier I, the school counselor works within the current financial and role constraints to provide equivalent services to both identified and not identified students. For example, counselors would use existing inventories, create a four-year plan within the regular counselling structure, make information regarding careers available to special education students, and review student portfolios. Since this research revealed that some high schools in Ontario do not provide equivalent services for identified and non-identified students (i.e., special education students were not receiving services of the guidance counselors and not completing interest inventories), Tier I would be an excellent starting point. In Tier III, a full-time counselor is designated for transition-related activities for students with disabilities. The counselor would use alternative verbal and nonverbal inventories, individually implement a four-year plan with special needs students, individually implement job exploration with each identified student, and enhance the student's portfolio to reflect work related skills gained outside the school setting. This was similar to role of the transition coordinator in the case study.

Interagency collaboration involves several agencies or organizations interacting with each other as a unified system. Of the 42.7% of respondents who said they had a transition program in place, 71.9% said they coordinate services with human service agencies. Interestingly, only 44.6% of those respondents had a collaboration rating over 3.1. Comparing this finding to Wehman's (1996) levels of interaction, this indicates that people may be cooperating with agencies, or at the very most, coordinating services, but

they are not at the level of collaboration. True collaboration is difficult to achieve. Even in the case study, where agencies and schools had a good working relationship, there were power struggles. Personnel had to balance what was needed for the student without jeopardizing future relationships with the other party. Although, interagency collaboration is considered a key component to an effective transition planning process by numerous researchers (Allen, Rawlings, & Schildroth, 1989, Benz & Halpern, 1986, 1987; Rusch & DeStefano, 1989; Wehman, 1990, 1992), it is a difficult thing to do and maintain.

The literature review revealed twelve best practices to foster collaboration between schools and agencies. Respondents to the questionnaire agreed with all of these best practices but only sometimes or almost never put the variables into practice. This finding can be compared to research conducted in the United States by Taymans et al. (1995) that asked state level transition coordinators to rate the effectiveness of interagency agreements. On a scale of 1 to 5, coordinators gave their agreements a 3, meaning they believed interagency agreements to be only somewhat effective. After talking with people from various human service agencies, I learned that agencies, especially those working with people with developmental disabilities, have been ready and willing to begin working with schools in the area of transition for a number of years. Although it is true that some school personnel across the province have been working with agencies for many years, the relationship has not approached the level of involvement that many people in the agencies would like to experience. Agencies have seen the need for greater collaboration and are willing to forge new relationships with the

schools. It is not that people who work in the schools do not see the benefit of working with agencies, rather it is that they are faced with barriers to collaboration: lack of time; not being able to adapt the practices to the current routines, procedures, and structure of the school; lack of skills; no control over resources (financial, personnel, and supplies); and sometimes lack of support from the principal. Setting an example for schools and agencies, the ministries of education, labour, social services, and health are working together to create documents and legislation that support collaboration. The development of such relationships is not easy and takes time to foster.

The telephone interviews revealed that lack of communication was one of the biggest barriers to schools and agencies working together. As Heath and McLaughlin (1987) said, "Few effective channels of communication between schools and community organizations exist; both community based organizations and schools are hampered by lack of knowledge about the activities, assets, and interests of the other institution" (p. 89). Schools and agencies do not understand each other's systems or limitations. Recently, both systems have experienced a great deal of change, which makes understanding each other's system more complicated and time consuming, time being one thing personnel said was lacking. This study found that for the purposes of transition planning, communicating by telephone was most convenient. Unfortunately, some special education teachers did not have a phone in or near their room, which meant making and receiving calls more difficult. Agencies and schools are not always open during the same hours and are not always available to take phone calls at the same time, which complicates communication. People are so busy that they find it difficult to return

phone calls. Communicating takes time, and respondents repeatedly said they did not have enough time. Forming lines of communication involves networking. To network, school and agency personnel need opportunities to meet with each other, exchange information, partake in training exercises together, and socialize together. Budget cuts have meant there are fewer opportunities for respondents to participate in professional development activities or attend meetings and social gatherings. Communication requires time, and time was one of the things respondents lacked.

Respondents agreed that parents should be involved in the transition planning process. As in the story of Peter in the case study, students benefit when their parents are active participants in the process. Research by Collet-Klingenberg (1998) identified possible reasons for parent's passive participation in the Individual Education Plan (IEP) process and gives us clues as to why parents may not want to be involved with the development of an Individualized Transition Plan. The researcher found that parents did not participate in the IEP process because: they lacked the information and skills to participate; they had negative perceptions about teachers; the use of educational jargon alienated them; there was an insufficient amount of time set aside for the IEP meeting to allow participation; and the IEPs were already at least partially developed before the meeting, not leaving room for input from the parents. According to findings from the questionnaire, over 80% of parents are involved in the transition process at least some of the time. Four levels of parent participation emerged during the telephone interviews: little involvement and little support, a lot of involvement and a little support, a little involvement and a lot of support, and a lot of involvement and a lot of support.

Therefore, although parents are encouraged to be part of the ITP process, they do not always involve themselves in the process and they are not always supportive of the transition plan. Parents need to be supportive and active for their child's transition to be most successful.

Intra-agency and interagency collaboration and the active participation of parents in the planning process facilitates the transition from high school to adult life for students with disabilities. Achieving collaboration is difficult and is influenced by personality traits, attitudes, time, resources, and structural limitations. Collaboration as Wehman (1996) suggests in his model seems unattainable at this time.

Exosystem

Components of the exosystem may not actively involve the student but they do have an effect on the student by influencing the transition process. For example, teacher training, training for parents, the restructuring of the Ministry of Community and Social Services, and the initiatives of the New Secondary School Reform (1999) have an affect on the lives of students with disabilities but do not directly involve the student.

Teacher training and professional development indirectly influences students with disabilities. Johnson and Guy (1997) concluded that in their experiences in the United States, "professional development was one of the most important components of individual state efforts to improve the provision of transition services for students with disabilities and families" (p. 196). With this statement in mind, approximately 69% of respondents had no training regarding service coordination or working in collaborative

interagency teams while approximately 25% had a limited amount of training. Eighty-eight percent of respondents said they would benefit from training or more training on how to work on interagency collaborative teams to facilitate the school-to-adult life transition of youth with disabilities. Approximately 50% of respondents had no training with regards to transition planning while another 40% had a limited amount of training. Almost 90% of respondents to the questionnaire felt they would benefit from training or more training in the school-to-adult life transition of youth with disabilities. The analysis of the questionnaire demonstrated that the amount of training a person had was related to a high transition rating at that person's school. Therefore, training is a strategy that can be used to reduce the gap between ideal and current practice.

The desire for training expressed by respondents is encouraging to advocates of transition planning but it raises many questions as well. If training is important to respondents, why has training not already been obtained? Who would provide the training? Who would pay for the training? Although the need for training on transition issues has existed since students with disabilities have been integrated in the school setting, it was only realized in the 1980s. At that time, there were no training courses available in Ontario. People involved in transition planning were learning from programs beginning in the United States and from their own experiences as they developed their own routines and procedures. It is only with the proclamation of Regulation 181/98 and the mandatory transition planning for identified students that training on transition issues and how to collaborate with community agencies has come to the forefront. It would seem logical that since the Ministry of Education mandated transition planning, that they

would provide the training to teach people how to do it. This will not occur if the current Progressive Conservative government maintains the same implementation pattern they have been following since they came into office. That means school boards, teacher's unions, and Universities are left to provide training. Unless training is done on Professional Development Days or as free voluntary workshops after school hours, the participants incur the expense of training. The fact that participants must pay for courses and use their personal time to take them, yet receive no financial remuneration or recognition for gaining this additional knowledge, is a disincentive for taking courses. Even though transition planning has been mandated, it is not seen as a priority to all principals or school boards. If a person lacks support and encouragement for taking a course, the disincentive continues. The only motivation for taking a course on transition issues and collaboration would be for personal growth. And personal growth is in competition with the many other facets of a person's life like family, health, and financial concerns. Therefore, although respondents expressed a desire for training, their desire is in conflict with the time and energy that a course requires, the inconvenience of taking a course, and the cost.

Respondents to the questionnaire strongly agree that parents should be involved in the transition planning process and agree that parents should receive training to prepare them for their child's transition. This research revealed that in places where transition planning occurs, parents are almost always involved in the planning process but almost never receive any type of training. Researchers (Danek & McCrone, 1989; DeStefano et al., 1999; Haring et al., 1991; Milner, 1995; Reetz et al., 1990) suggest that training to

help parents prepare for their child's transition is needed. Research has shown that parents tend to take a passive role in the transition process (Collet-Klingenberg, 1998) and are not satisfied with the IEP/TTP meetings (Salembier and Furney, 1997). Training may give parents the knowledge and courage to participate more at transition meetings by helping them to understand the process and to help them define their role as their son or daughter makes the transition into adulthood. It is unlikely that training would ever become mandatory. It is also unlikely that school boards would feel it is their role to provide training for parents or that parents would feel comfortable receiving training from the school system. Training for parents would need to be organized by other parents in organizations that advocate for the interests of students with disabilities. The problem with this type of training is that parents who are already actively involved in their child's education would attend training sessions while those parents who are less involved and may benefit most, would not attend. Some parents may feel that training is a waste of time since they believe they have very little say in their child's future. Therefore, although training would be useful, not all parents would see it as an opportunity to have more involvement in their child's future.

The publication of government documents, the development of policies, and training for teachers and parents may not traditionally involve students with disabilities. Advocates for the rights of people with disabilities argue that students need to be more involved with the development of policies, documents, and training courses since people with disabilities are the ones ultimately affected by the outcomes of such things. In theory this makes complete sense and raises the question as to why this has not been

occurring. The reason seems to be that society as a whole has not yet accepted the idea that people with disabilities have the ability to determine their own future. Hopefully, attitudes will continue to develop allowing for greater self-determination for people with disabilities.

Restructuring by Ontario's Ministry of Community and Social Services in 1999 has had an impact on the lives of people with disabilities. Prior to 1998, the administration of the Provincial Social Assistance program was ruled by the Family Benefit Act (FBA). The FBA was seen by many people as a disincentive for people with disabilities to enter the world of work. Now that Act has been divided into two separate components: the Ontario Disability Support Program (Ministry of Community and Social Services, August 2000) and the Ontario Works Act (Ministry of Community and Social Services, February 1999). The Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) is for people whose disability prevents them from working at this time. The ODSP has stricter criteria than the FBA did, and does not look at social factors as a determining factor for eligibility. The Ontario Works Act is for people whose disability is not preventing them from working at this time. Its function is to provide social assistance to people who are temporarily unemployed. The Ontario Works Act replaced the General Welfare Act. The restructuring is intended to encourage people with disabilities to work if they are able.

Vocational Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons (VRDP) program has been phased out. In the VRDP program the provincial and federal governments shared the costs of many employment related programs (Crawford, 1997). It has been replaced by the Employment Support Program, which is meant to be a resource to persons with

disabilities so that they can self support their needs in finding employment (Murray, 1999). This change is viewed as a reflection of the evolving attitude to help people with disabilities help themselves.

More changes affecting people with disabilities have been made recently by the Canadian federal government under the leadership of Jean Chretien's Liberal party. The new Employment Insurance framework has replaced programs that used to operate under the Labour Force Development Strategy. Unemployment Insurance (UI) has been renamed Employment Insurance (EI). EI is essentially for people who were recently attached to the labour force and met stricter eligibility criteria than in the previous system. People who qualify for EI may have access to Re-employment Benefits or Support Measures. Many persons with disabilities relied on services provided by the Canada Assistance Plan, which has been replaced with the Canada Health and Social Transfer.

The new Secondary School Reform (1999) states that all students, with or without disabilities, must obtain 40 hours of work experience to obtain a secondary school diploma. Many people interviewed during the course of this research wondered how they would be able to achieve this goal since they were already having difficulty finding placements for their co-op students, which represented only a small percentage of the total student population. Linkages with local businesses will need to be strengthened and multiplied to meet this requirement for graduation. As already suggested by respondents during this research, family connections will be instrumental in obtaining work placements for many students.

The new Secondary School Reform (1999) has also involved the creation of Annual Education Plans (AEP) by all students beginning at the age of 14. The AEP focuses the student's attention on future goals and strategies to achieve those goals. Students examine and discuss their Annual Education Plan with their teacher advisor to further solidify goals and for support to use strategies. In cases where a disability may inhibit students from creating their own plan, teachers and parents will help the student. The AEP will ultimately help schools in the transition planning process.

All of the changes are difficult to keep up with, follow, and understand. People working in the social services field have difficulty keeping abreast of all of the changes. The high degree of change makes it difficult for the average person, like parents of children with disabilities, who are not directly involved with the management of these organizations, to understand how the system works in order to access services.

With all of the re-organization that is occurring at the provincial and federal levels, this is a good time for people who understand the issues facing people with disabilities to speak up and have some influence on the new programs that are being created. As an example, Crawford (1997) writes, "E. I. Support Measures include funding for organizations that help unemployed people find jobs. Organizations that can show provincial authorities that their services result in competitive jobs for people with disabilities may have a chance of qualifying for these funds" (p. 61). Opportunities for input and impact exist for people willing to take any risks associated with speaking out.

Macrosystem

Elements of the macrosystem surround the student and influence the transition process but are sometimes overlooked. Elements like culture, gender, and type of disability appear to complicate assessment and the transition process and raise questions about fairness and equal treatment that are not easily answered. The relationships highlighted in the macrosystem support the need for transition programs to be individualized.

The use of alternative assessments mean that a type of assessment is chosen that matches the student's abilities, rather than the student trying to match the abilities necessary to succeed on standard assessments. Minority groups, like people with disabilities are at a disadvantage with standard forms of assessment because standard assessments were written for the majority. Researchers (Dias, 1993; Kansas State Board of Education, 1996; University of Minnesota, 1995; Thoma, 1999) are in favour of the use of alternative assessment practices like portfolios for students with disabilities, however no empirical studies were found to support their opinion. Respondents to the questionnaire in this study agree that alternative assessments like portfolios should be used, however, they report that they are only occasionally used in schools across the province. Alternative methods of assessment are continuously being developed, and it takes time for new methods to be learned, accepted, and adapted. As familiarity with the use of portfolios and other less-biased forms of evaluation increase, and as more people become trained in their uses, it is possible that they will be used more often, effectively, and efficiently.

Should the transition process be different for males and females? Follow-up and follow-along studies in the United States reveal that post-school outcomes for men and women are different. Males are more likely to dropout than females (Marder & D'Amico, 1992), males experience more labour market success than females (Hasazi et al., 1985, Mithaug et al., 1985; Sitlington & Frank, 1990; Wagner, 1991) and males tend to earn more money (Sitlington & Frank, 1990). A solution to these differences may not be gender specific, but rather individual specific. Sinclair, Christenson, Evelo, & Hurley (1998) found that an effective strategy to prevent dropouts was to establish a trusting relationship between a staff member and the student. Since males have a higher tendency to dropout, could greater effort be made by staff members to develop trusting relationships with male students with disabilities, although it is probable that all students, male and female, could benefit from such a relationship?⁴² During the telephone interviews, participants were asked if there was any difference in their transition program for males and females. All respondents indicated that there was no difference in transition planning for males and females. One respondent argued that it would be unfair for programs to treat males and females differently. Other respondents were puzzled by the suggestion that such a distinction be made. During the case study, however, the alternative school made a point of having more traditional work options available for males (e.g., plumbing and building) and females (i.e., cooking and sewing) and found

⁴² The Ministry of Education in Ontario has recently addressed this specific area by implementing the Teacher Advisor Program for all students. Students aged 14 and up are matched with a teacher advisor who helps them plan for their future education and life after high school. If implemented properly, this program could lessen the number of dropouts.

this to help students develop self-esteem. More research needs to be conducted to determine the unique needs of males and females in making a successful transition. Most literature on transition suggests that transition plans should be differentiated, not based on the gender of the student, but rather based on that individual's particular wishes, interests, needs, strengths, and abilities.

Respondents to the questionnaire agreed that transition programs should be community based, but they do this only some of the time. For students with severe disabilities in a segregated classroom, efforts to make their programs community-centered were apparent during the case study. The parents interviewed believed their child benefited from a community-based program. Researchers (Hardman & McDonnell, 1987; University of Minnesota, 1995; Nisbet et al., 1991; Rusch & DeStefano, 1989; Steere et al., 1993; Wagner, 1991; Wehman et al., 1985; Wehman, 1990, 1992) agree that transition programs need to be community based and that the curriculum should be community referenced. Although there have not been any empirical studies to prove or disprove that designing transition programs to be community based is beneficial to student outcomes; it is probable that students with moderate and severe disabilities may be less likely to leave their communities. Students with mild disabilities, however, who have a higher dropout rate (DeBettencourt, Zigmond, & Thorton, 1989), tend to be more transient (Edgar, 1987). In the case of students with mild disabilities, a community-based program may give students a solid foundation from which to begin, but they may also benefit from a broader-based program to prepare them for living in other locations. However, community programs are not easily created. In rural, remote, and northern

parts of Ontario, carrying out this practice is more difficult given to the lack of work placements, services, and opportunities. The creation of community based programs requires teachers to be informed of, and connected to the constantly changing services and resources in the community. In areas where there are many services available, the complexity of the social services system that seems to be constantly changing makes this difficult. The findings from this research demonstrate that special education department heads do not believe they have the time or resources to do this. A community-focused transition program is a logical place to start when preparing a person for the transition from high school to adult life but it requires time and resources to create, maintain, and implement.

Should transition programs be different for students with differing levels of disability? Smithdas (1995) believes that the more severe the disability, the more demanding and intense the challenge of transition. The telephone interview portion of this research revealed that the transition process in practice during the winter of 1998 was different for students with mild disabilities and students with severe disabilities. The transition of a student with severe disabilities received the attention of more individuals. In most communities the Association for Community Living worked with the school, taking the lead in planning for the transition of students with developmental disabilities. To demonstrate the difference, a student with severe disabilities may need a job coach present at all times while at a job placement, whereas a student with a mild disability may be able to work more independently. For a student with a mild disability, the most responsibility for transition planning falls on the individual and the individual's family.

Necessity dictates that transition programs will be different for students with different disabilities.

Relationships in the macrosystem suggest that individual transition programming and assessment should consider differences in gender and disability, and focus on the individual's community. Transition programming can be done individually to a certain extent but given the number of special education students in our school systems and the limitations of the number of staff and amount of time and resources, absolute individual programming is not likely to occur. School personnel report constantly needing to trade off the needs of the individual student with disabilities with the needs of the larger student body when using available resources.

Discussion Related to the Planned Change and Implementation Literature

Research on planned change identified 14 indicators likely to influence the adoption of an innovation. The research on implementation revealed 4 stages of implementation. Some of the variables have already been looked at in discussions surrounding the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem. In this section of the discussion the interrelationships between the indicators and how they influence the implementation of transition planning across the province of Ontario will be discussed.

Respondents to the questionnaire 'somewhat agreed' to 'agreed' that: (a) their school would be able to adapt all of the best practices to their current routines and procedures; (b) they had the skills; (c) their principal and board administrators had the skills; (d) transition planning was important to administration, parents, and their

community; and (e) their staff worked well together. These findings stated the degree to which personnel in schools believed they had the capability, and perhaps willingness, to adapt the best practices, but it also revealed some reluctance. The other indicators help to explain this hesitation. Respondents did not believe they had the financial resources, the personnel, materials, or the time to fully adapt the practices. These findings indicate that schools in Ontario are at risk of not implementing transition planning as intended.

Huberman and Miles' (1984) stages of implementation demonstrate this point.

An examination of the provincial government's effort to implement transition planning using Huberman and Miles' (1984) stages, places Ontario in the earliest stages of implementation. If the publication Bridges to Employment for Students with Disabilities in 1988 was the first step toward implementation, and since this is the year 2000, that makes transition planning a poor example of the government's ability to affect change in the education system. Only 38.8% of people surveyed in this research had read or considered themselves familiar with the document. As one respondent put it, "the document had no teeth". Clearly, the publication had little widespread impact. In fact between the years 1988 and 1998, few boards had even entered the early implementation stage. Phase one of this research revealed that only 8 boards had documents regarding transition planning. It was not until the release of Regulation 181/98 that many school personnel began initial use of practices.

Since transition planning was mandated, teachers across the province have been off to a rough start as Huberman and Miles (1984) would have predicted. At the Council for Exceptional Children's Conference at which I presented in October 1998, a handful

of people from school systems across Ontario shared with me their anxiety and frustration about trying to create transition planning forms, policies, and procedures for their students without any resources or training. At the time, the provincial government had promised to publish resource documents to help schools and social agencies work together to do transition planning in the spring of 1999. In the spring of 1999 the date of publication of those documents was pushed to the fall of 1999, and later pushed back further until the spring of 2000. Almost two and a half years after the government mandated transition planning across the province, the documents have still not been published. A great deal of time and energy has been expended by a large number of people across the province who are trying to create procedures, routines, and forms. Considering that a lack of time and staff were among the top two barriers to transition planning, it is ironic that those two limited resources were unwisely used when the same amount of work could have been done by one central body, distributed across the province, and later modified and adapted to suit local needs. This centralized process would have utilized less time and staff. A subsequent consequence is that because of the government's lack of direction, transition planning will look very different at each board across the province. Some boards will superficially implement transition planning, not fully realizing its importance or potential because they will not have the time, personnel, interest, or financial resources to implement it as intended.

As described, Huberman and Miles correctly predict that at this stage there is a lack of user commitment to and understanding of the practice, insufficient or unavailable resources and materials, and inadequate skills and training. There is much complaining

and negotiating going on to make the practice easier to adapt. Positively, this stress on teachers forces them to improve interpersonal ties since they need to rely on others to compensate for the lack of resources and support from the government. Teachers' skills will undoubtedly sharpen if the pressure does not push them over the edge into burnout. Huberman and Miles warns administrators who want to see sizeable results not to give in to user's requests for changes to the innovation.

Whether or not transition planning will move into the next stage or die depends on the amount and quality of assistance teachers will receive. If provided, assistance in the way of conferences, training, meetings, materials, consultation with experts, and access to central office personnel will increase commitment to the innovation. If assistance is not provided, the transition planning will not be seen as a priority and will not be implemented to its fullest potential. Transition planning will not completely die because it has been mandated, but it risks being implemented in only a symbolic way. This would be disappointing considering the possibilities this innovation has on positively affecting the lives of approximately 15% of the school population.

Limitations

As with all studies, this research was limited by a number of factors at various stages. In phase one, the objective was to receive policies and documentation regarding the transition of youth with disabilities and interagency collaboration from school boards across the province. This effort was limited by the political climate during the time of data collection. A letter requesting policies and documentation was sent to directors of

education during the first week of August 1997. A follow-up letter was sent one week later to encourage participation. During this time, school boards were faced with many changes to their current system - upcoming amalgamations of school boards across Ontario, new funding formulas, the threat of a province-wide teacher's protest, a new curriculum - which caused much work and subsequent stress for board office staff. Given these circumstances, it is amazing that over 80% of school boards participated in the study.

Only 15 out of a possible 108 boards returned documentation or policies. Only 8 of these school boards sent policies or documents pertinent to this research. The low response to this portion of the research may be due to a number of factors. It is possible that documents do exist at more school boards but that board office staff were too occupied to find and forward anything to me. Board office staff may have thought that the respondent to the questionnaire at the high school level would forward related documentation and therefore they did not have to meet the request. Another possibility is that school boards at the time were not familiar with this topic or the way in which it was presented and did not know what type of information to send. Even though I indicated in the letter that school boards could contact me if they had any questions, board personnel may not have utilized this option to clarify what type of materials were requested. After analyzing the questionnaires and talking to people across the province, the most likely explanation for the low response rate was that at the time of data collection, policies and documentation simply did not exist.

With regards to the stated best practices, agreement about which practices are definitively the best practices for the transition of youth with disabilities from high school to adult life is not unanimous among experts and researchers in this field. Kohler (1993) conducted a meta-analysis of literature between 1985 and 1991 identifying best practices for transition classifying them as being implied best practices or empirically tested practices. Kohler found that the majority of suggested best practices had not been empirically tested. Greene and Albright (1995) agree that a critical issue in the field of transition is that there is little empirical evidence to support what is considered to be best practices for transition. I conducted an analysis similar to Kohler's investigation up to 1997 confirming earlier conclusions. More recently, Hughes et al. (1997) conducted a review of 113 empirical studies identifying ten best practices and verifying their findings with 54 researchers who publish in this field. The findings from research conducted by Hughes et al. were worded and categorized differently than the best practices identified by Kohler (1993) and Petruka (1997). It is unlikely that a steadfast list of best practices can be generalized for all people, in all regions, for all time.

Question 3b of part A of the questionnaire, which asked what the percentage of the total number of special education students would be classified as mild, moderate, and severe, could not be used when analyzing the data because it was interpreted differently by respondents. The problem resulted from respondent's different understandings of which student's would be classified as having a mild, moderate, or severe disability. Some respondents believed all disabilities were mild since the students were at school, while others felt all of their students' disabilities were severe since their disabilities

should be taken seriously. Some respondents simply left the question blank, while others wrote qualifying explanations in the margins explaining for which group of students they were responding. This question was the most misinterpreted question of the questionnaire. To alleviate a similar problem on future questionnaires, definitions for each classification could be provided along with examples of students that fall into each category.

In part B question one of the questionnaire, the degree to which respondents believed their school carried out each best practice was higher than anticipated. I was surprised by the fact that so many of the best practices are being done in high schools in Ontario for students with disabilities. I can only speculate at reasons for the high ratings respondents gave themselves on behalf of their school. Respondents may not have known what the questions were asking. For example, question one, sub-question one asked if schools are actually developing Individualized Transition Plans (ITPs) for students. Respondents may have confused an ITP with an IEP, falsely raising the mean score for that item. Another example would be in the next question where respondents were asked if a student's wishes, interests, needs, strengths, and abilities were incorporated into the transition plans. The respondent may believe that the student's wishes were elicited and incorporated by their standards for participation, while my expectation and understanding for student participation was higher. Each individual question may have been better asked separately with more explanation, however this would have made the questionnaire unreasonably long and still may not have clarified items enough.

The descriptors used for scales to rate agreement with best practices and actual carrying out of the practice were different. The scale used for agreement with best practice ranged from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”. The scale rating the degree to which the practice is actually being carried-out ranged from never to always. Can the results of these inquiries be compared? Although the descriptors for the scales differed, I believe the results are comparable because if a person strongly agrees with a best practice it is logical that the person would always want to carry-out the practice (but may not be able to due to other factors).

Respondents also misinterpreted question 6, Part C of the questionnaire. The question asked “Does your school *need* a transition program for special education students?” If a respondent’s school already had a transition program in actuality or if the respondent simply believed this to be true, the answer was no because the school already had a transition program and therefore did not need another one. Some respondents wrote a note on the questionnaire to explain their answer. This question was carefully interpreted and was included in the analysis. This question should have followed question seven which asked if the respondent’s school had a transition program for students with disabilities at the present time, and only respondents who answered ‘no’ would be asked to answer question 6.

Respondents may have also been confused by what was meant by a “transition program”. They may have been unsure of what a transition program exactly was. Wondering if it was a separate program for only a certain group of students or if it was a combination of things the school already did that could be grouped together and called a

program? Answers were dependent on the respondent's interpretation of what a program was.

Findings from the telephone interview phase of this research indicate that the findings from the questionnaire were somewhat exaggerated. This is not unusual in self-report measures. Two examples of other studies where self-report surveys differed from actual behaviour are Bradford (1994) and Manfredo and Shelby (1988). Bradford (1994) compared the self-reported account of teacher preparation courses to actual transcripts and found that teachers tended to overstate their preparation. Manfredo and Shelby (1988) compared records of non-game tax-fund donations to self-reported mail survey and found that self-reports produced results different from past behaviour. Even though there is some degree of uncertainty with self-report measures, they provide information from many respondents over a large geographical area when it is logistically impossible, too expensive, and too time consuming to employ research designs that obtain measures of actual behaviour (Manfredo and Shelby, 1988).

Even with its flaws, I believe the questionnaire served its purpose, which was to survey the province to determine to what extent the best practices for transition were being implemented in Ontario high schools. The questionnaire produced a large amount of data and information that went beyond answering only the research questions, revealing aspects of how schools are organized and further issues in special education. Since the study was conducted province-wide, it does give a slightly exaggerated overview of what was happening in Ontario high schools with respect to transition at the

time. It does not, however, give a picture of what is happening in every high school across the province. No two schools are exactly the same in the province.

The telephone interviews provided more in-depth information than the questionnaire. It was kept in mind during the analysis that the information provided was from the sole perspective of the respondent. If another person at the same school had been asked the same questions, the likelihood of receiving identical answers were slim. The role of the person being interviewed influenced the person's perspective. Even if the interviews were conducted with people across the province that had the same job title, the comparison would not have been perfect because the job description, duties, years of experience, and areas of specialty differ greatly among people.

The information obtained during the telephone interviews can not be generalized to each high school in the province since there are so many factors that influence what a school does for its students. For example the people running the programs, proximity to resources, availability of agencies, and the location of the school each have a significant affect on the programs a school has to offer.

This research demonstrated that there is much variation in what is occurring at different schools in the province. Some schools were quite advanced in the areas of transition and collaboration while other schools were not. The findings from this study could not be generalized to other provinces since there are too many factors that influence outcomes.

Being a lone researcher, I did not have another person built in to the research design to cross check the coding and analysis of the qualitative phases of my research.

Although this is true, this was compensated by the fact that the mixed methods research design allowed for verification and triangulation of findings. The four-phased sequential design was structured so each phase informed the other phases and built a more robust and valid snapshot of the state of implementation of transition policies. As I analyzed the data, I systematically looked for parallels and differences in the themes amongst the phases. I made a conscious effort to be objective throughout the analysis. The scope of this research was broad enough to allow for verification to occur. I was engaged in the analysis of the telephone and case study interviews over a long period of time, which allowed for cross-referencing and synthesis of themes. The methods and procedures used to collect and analyze the data were clearly described in chapter 3, in sequence and enough detail to allow for replication of this research. In chapter 4, a rich description of findings was provided allowing for transference of information to other contexts. Although being a lone researcher could be seen as a limitation, the research design, system of analysis, and the way the findings were reported safeguarded against researcher bias.

Implications for Policy and Practice

Based solely on the findings from this study, will transition planning occur as intended by researchers and government Ministries in the province of Ontario? No, not unless transition planning is made a priority by government, school boards, and principals. Once it is made a priority then financial support will be routed to obtain the necessary people, training, and resources needed to implement transition planning. Time

would be set aside for training and for the implementation of practices. Training at all levels - school board administration, principals, board members, teachers, and parents - would be provided to highlight the importance of transition planning and teach necessary skills.

Even with all of that, I do not believe transition planning will be fully implemented as intended. Too much change has been forced on the education system over the years. There are too many competing priorities not allowing any one innovation the time and attention it needs to be fully and properly implemented. As Fullan and Miles (1992) put it, "After several experiences with the dominance of symbolic change over substantive change, people are cynical and take the next change that comes along much less seriously" (p.747). Transition planning is just another change to an already overburdened system. It will be implemented because it has been made law, but the degree to which it will be implemented as intended will vary from school to school.

Implications for Theory

The implications for policy and practice are consistent with the literature on change. Policy does not guarantee change. Knoll (1987) writes, one of the most common and serious mistakes of policymakers is to presume that once an innovation has been introduced and training is complete, the users will actually put the innovation into place and react in similar ways. As researchers (Elmore, 1979; Fullan, 1996; Lipsky, 1971; 1980; Mawhinney, 1994; McLaughlin 1976b; Weatherly & Lipsky, 1977) explain, the street-level bureaucrats, the people actually implementing the change at the ground-level,

are overloaded with demands and expectations from new policy innovations and limited resources which cause them great stress. In order to cope, they will distort or oversimplify the aims of policymakers by “routinizing” procedures, modifying goals, rationalizing services, asserting priorities, and limiting or controlling clientele”

(Weatherly & Lipsky, 1977, p. 172). The result is that the accommodations and coping mechanisms they develop become the actual “change” which is very different from the intended outcome of the policy. As demonstrated in Oregon (Benz & Halpern, 1987) the local political, economic, geographic, and social nature of each school board and school will influence the change process and have a bearing on the outcomes: cross-site variations make exact replication of practices unlikely (Firestone & Corbett, 1988).

Researchers (Fullan, 1991; Johnson & Guy, 1998; McLaughlin, 1976a) believe that practices will not change until values and skills change. Changing values takes time.

Enhancing skills requires training, which in turn requires need, desire, time and resources. Regulation 181/98 has caused people to examine what they value and assess the skills they have. What people will conclude will vary depending on attitude, location, available time, energy, and resources.

A further implication is the use of Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) ecological theory as a framework to design and organize research. By using this theory’s nests of support as a guide, it enables a researcher to systematically examine the varying levels of influence and interaction different systems have on an individual’s development. For example, as told in the case study, Peter’s story showed the dynamics of those interactions. Through Bronfenbrenner’s lens, I was able to look at the roles and relationships that parents,

school personnel, and agency personnel had in the student's transition. This research supported Bronfenbrenner's theory by demonstrating that the child is at the center of the transition process. It showed how the relationships and environment surrounding children affect them. It demonstrated the dynamics of an open system, how everything is interconnected. This research confirmed the belief that no one person is able to make the transition simple and easy for a child, rather all parts must work together. The hierarchical nature of the nests of support imply that some relationships have greater influence than others, and that one person can make a significant difference in the life of a child.

Implications for Further Research

Since the area of transition planning is relatively new to education in Ontario, and Canada, the research potential is endless. In the United States, research has been conducted in this area since the early 1980's. Johnson and Rusch (1993) did a review of these studies and identified numerous areas of concern and recommendations for future research in the United States. They identified seven areas of concern: drop-out prevention; student and parent involvement; transition planning; curriculum and instruction; best practices; transition policy; and future research and demonstration. They made 21 recommendations for research, for example identifying and evaluating transition services to be implemented for students at risk of dropping out. The larger literature base and years of experience with transition planning allows researchers of U.S. transition planning efforts to look at more specific aspects of the transition planning process. In

Canada, our limited experience with transition planning suggests that research here needs to begin with broader studies and eventually look at the specifics of the process in the Canadian context. Five research ideas are presented here that would begin to develop a base for this topic in Canadian literature. Such research would become the foundation for further research and development.

In Ontario, there are only a few local follow-up studies that record what happens to special education students after they leave high school. It is crucial that more studies like this be done on recent graduates that have not gone through a formal transition planning process. This information would enable researchers to measure the effectiveness of formal transition planning efforts.

Follow-along studies of special education students who experience the transition planning process need to be conducted. These studies would measure the effectiveness of transition planning efforts. They would also reveal ways the process can be further developed and improved.

Longitudinal studies of students who went through the transition process would not only be interesting to read, they would also provide a history of special education. They would reveal the long-term effects of transition planning and the many other factors that effect outcomes.

The role of the job coach in transition planning needs to be further established. This research could begin with an extensive literature review of the topic. Case studies of transition coordinators and people in the role of job coach could be conducted to learn more about what a job coach does and what challenges a job coach faces. Once the role

is established, a job coach manual could be created for use across the province. Training courses could be established at colleges to teach people how to be a job coach. This is an area where more attention needs to be focused. The potential for this developing profession is great.

Once transition programs are under way in the province, their effectiveness needs to be monitored. Students, parents, teachers, agency personnel, and employer's perceptions of the transition program need to be solicited and used to evaluate and improve programs. Studies examining the level of interaction between school personnel and agency personnel would help to identify ways to improve relationships and the transition process for students.

Transition Planning is a relatively new area of research in Canada. Not only does work in this area provide numerous possibilities for research, it also has the potential to affect the post-secondary outcomes of students with disabilities and have an impact on the lives of people.

Contributions to Policy and Practice

This research contributes a number of practical tools to aid schools in Ontario and beyond in the implementation of transition planning for special education students. It has summarized the literature and identified best practices for transition and collaboration, which could be used as a checklist by school personnel. It allows school systems to determine how well they are currently doing and it gives them goals to strive toward. The indicators of implementation capacity help a school to determine its readiness for

implementation and suggests where a school can improve to be more conducive to change.

The case study provides a model that other schools and school boards can learn from and follow. Although the set-up of the case study, in which the transition coordinator was jointly paid by two school boards and a local agency, is unique, it opens the door to other possibilities that would at one time never been thought possible.

This research is the unified voice of people in the province who work with special education students on a daily basis. It is a testament of their experiences, concerns, and reality. Since educators do not often have the opportunity to share their stories with other educators, this document provides a glance into what others in the province are living. It helps to dispel some of the loneliness and isolation that teachers often feel because they do not have the opportunity to discuss issues like transition planning in detail with many people. Their testimonies will be interesting to anyone who works in the field of special education, has a child with a disability, or has a disability themselves, who lives in Ontario or elsewhere.

This research brings issues specifically in transition planning and more generally in special education to the forefront for policy-makers. It demonstrates a level of concern about the issues and highlights their importance to people. It opens discussion on the issue of transition planning and leads the way for further research in this area (see Johnson & Rusch, 1993). It indicates to policy-makers that in order for transition planning to be successful, school personnel need to develop the necessary skills, be given

the time to develop and carry-out transition programs, and have the support of administration.

Interest in my findings has increased since transition planning was made mandatory. People are looking for information on a topic they know little about. This research provides a starting place from which transition programs can be built. It also provides a launching point for further research in the area of transition planning. Since other provinces are also in the process of implementing transition planning, they will also be interested in this research.

From a research point of view, this study contributes to our understanding of how inter-agency collaboration occurs informally. It highlights the pitfalls of informal working relations and makes a case for the development of more formal forms of communication to improve coordination of services.

This research is also an example of the pre-implementation phase of change. It provides a basis of comparison for future studies of the later phases of change. It will also provide clues to the success or failure of transition planning in Ontario in years to come.

This research contributes to the study of research in at least two ways as well. It serves as an example of a mixed methods study, helping to build a case for the benefits of combining and comparing quantitative and qualitative methods. The development of the questionnaire used in phase 2 of this research is a tool other researchers can use to learn from. Researchers can learn from the research design of this study and improve their own research.

Approaches for Implementation

Wald and Repetto (n.d.) utilize the Total Quality Management (TQM) model to encourage educators to build transition programs that are continuously improving.

Transition coordinators must first be aware of the students' needs, truly getting to know students, programs, and available resources. Second, they must then reflect and monitor a program's success by listening to students and their families. The third step is training programs with release time and financial support. Improvement must be aimed at anticipating student's future needs. A quality program comes from understanding and improving the process.

Various researchers (Aspel, Bettis, Quinn, Test, & Wood, 1999; Blalock, 1996; Danek, Seay & Collier, 1989; Szymanski, Hanley-Maxwell, and Asselin, 1990; Wehman et al., 1988) discuss a multilevel team approach to transition planning. In Ontario, an adaptation of the levels might look like the following (see Table 5.1). At the broadest level would be the provincial level team whose purpose would be to study transition, evaluate province-wide interagency agreements, and provide fiscal and legislative guidance. At the local level would be citywide teams and/or board level teams. If there is more than one school board or high school in a community, it would be wise for the schools and/or boards to work together to appoint a city-wide team who would create lists of employers, agencies, and resources. The community team would also establish initial agreements with all local agencies rather than having each school or school board negotiate separate agreements. This team would assess, plan, and implement changes in

Table 5.1**Teams, members, and responsibilities**

	Possible Members ⁴³	Responsibilities ⁴⁴
Provincial team	• Member(s) of Provincial Government's Policy Planning Branch in Education, Labour, and Community and Social Services • Provincial Transition Coordinators • Representatives from community teams • Transition Coordinator Representative • Parent Representative • Student Representative	1. Provide guidelines and resources to community and school teams. 2. Set the direction for future development. 3. Distribute funding provided by provincial government. 4. Provide training and support to community and school teams. 5. Coordinate province-wide awareness of the issues 6. Develop and update province-wide interagency service agreements. 7. Identify areas of responsibilities and tasks for team members. 8. Develop strategies for solving problems or removing barriers to the successful delivery of transition services. 9. Collect and disseminate information. 10. Evaluate transition program effectiveness.
Community team	• Transition Coordinator (s) • Principals • Board Representatives • Parent Representatives • Representatives from Public Service Agencies • Representatives from Community Agencies • Representatives from Local Employers • Representatives from City Council • Member of Local Chamber of Commerce • Representatives from post-secondary institutions	1. Identify community resources. 2. Clarify roles of service providers. 3. Develop and update interagency agreements. 4. Coordinate community awareness. 5. Coordinate job development and job placements among service providers. 6. Develop strategies for overcoming barriers to service delivery. 7. Establish a network among service providers. 8. Coordinate staff development activities. 9. Track student outcomes (follow-up/follow-along). 10. Share information related to employment of individuals with special needs. 11. Identify community needs in the area of employment and other related adult services. 12. Assist with program evaluation and quality assurance. 13. Provide support to school teams. 14. Identify areas of responsibilities and tasks for team members. 15. Develop strategies for solving problems or removing barriers to the successful delivery of transition services.

⁴³ The people listed are only suggestions. Not all people are necessary to make a team effective.

⁴⁴ Adapted from Aspel, Bertis, Quinn, Test, & Wood (1999).

		16. Develop local time-lines for approaching employers, etc. 17. Share information about each other's services and working parameters (restrictions). 18. Recommend changes in programming and transition planning procedures. 19. Collect and disseminate information. 20. Evaluate transition program effectiveness.
School team	• Student • Student's friend, or friend of the family • Parents • Transition Coordinator • Special Education Teacher • Guidance Counselor • Co-op Education Teacher • Teachers • Principal or Vice-Principal • Case Manager representing agencies • Agency Representatives • Employers • Health Care Representatives	1. Plan and attend meetings annually or more often if necessary. 2. Provide information about the transition planning process and adult service agencies to people attending the meeting. 3. Ensure input from student and parents as well as other team members. 4. Review all information relevant to student's current status and future goals. 5. Develop the Individual Education Plan and Individual Transition Plan. 6. Address other student issues that may not be directly related to transition. 7. Coordinate school awareness. 8. Project post-graduate needs. 9. Identify areas of responsibilities and tasks for team members. 10. Develop strategies for solving problems or removing barriers to the successful delivery of transition services. 11. Develop timelines for the delivery of services. 12. Eventual transfer of case management and responsibilities from school to agencies. 13. Recommend changes in programming. 14. Collect and disseminate information. 15. Evaluate transition program effectiveness.

existing systems and develop local guidelines for transition. School based teams and/or teams created for individual students would develop and implement student transition plans. A school team could be created to develop and implement transition plans for all students with disabilities, or a separate team comprised of different people each time could be set up for each individual student based on the student's needs and the expertise of staff members. Aspel et al. (1999) recommends careful selection of team members, representing the school system and agencies. "The best team members tend to be those who are open-minded, flexible, willing to try new ideas, hard working, student-oriented, and confident" (p. 40). Wehman et al. (1988) suggested a three-level interagency planning process in the U. S.: state-level, local-level, and individual transition teams. Blalock (1996) suggests five levels of transition teams, also in the U.S.: state; regional; community; school-based; and individual. A three level team would be appropriate in Ontario: provincial, community, and school.

In order for a team approach to work, school personnel need to establish relationships with the possible partners. For example, schools and agencies need to collaborate more. Although schools and agencies may share a common problem, the problem may not be at the same priority level at both locations. Limited resources means that not all problems can be addressed at the same time. Another issue is the development of a common mission statement. Like the misalignment between policy and actual practice, although agencies and schools create mission statements with the intent to follow them, the degree to which they follow them may be different. There is often

“slippage” (White & Whelage, 1995) between what is hoped for and what is actually done.

Greater understanding of each other’s system is needed. School and agency personnel do not have the time or desire to learn the entitlement and eligibility requirements for each other’s organizations because people are occupied with continuously learning about their own organizations which seem, especially in the current political climate, to be in a continuous state of flux. Even the people in roles like transition coordinator in this study said they had difficulty keeping abreast of all of the changes.

Do the benefits of collaboration outweigh the challenges? “Neither schools nor most of the children’s service providers are institutions in which control is shared with ease” (Crowson & Boyd, 1993, p. 159). Alder (1994) reminds us that bringing together professionals from various networks is bound to create fertile ground for conflict, negotiations, and coalition building. Each agency has its own norms, dialects, and missions. When agencies collaborate, new roles must be negotiated, and they must struggle to understand each other’s terminology. Tension exists between the need to work cooperatively, to deal with an ever-increasing demand and reduced supply of resources, and the need to maintain organizational identity and professional integrity. Smylie (1993) found that service agencies have difficulty in establishing an “understanding and consensus regarding the service coordination mission of the project” (p. 3). Although the challenges seem to outweigh the benefits when listed (see Table 5.2), current trends promote collaboration.

Table 5.2**Benefits and Challenges of Collaboration**

Benefits	Challenges
■ lessens the work load of one person ■ since a group developed something, it has a better chance of working, there is more commitment to it ■ support for each other - not alone ■ avoids overlap ■ promotes networking ■ have ready access to experts	■ turf wars ■ agencies and schools do not understand the limitations under which the other works ■ communication ■ having the time to work together ■ the institutional structures of schools and agencies inhibit interagency collaboration to be fully implemented ■ differing goals ■ conflicting service eligibility requirements (Johnson & Guy, 1997) ■ lack of personnel to participate in interagency meetings (Johnson & Guy, 1997) ■ lack of effective interagency agreements (Johnson & Guy, 1997)

Alder (1994) reminds readers that collaborations are frequently crafted by individuals who are unfamiliar with the realities of the people they are attempting to help, and unaware of the strengths and weaknesses of the organizations brought together in the partnership. Instead, they are more often driven by their anticipated effects on bureaucratic efficiency rather than helping the people in need.

A constraint to collaboration is a lack of common training (Crowson & Boyd, 1993; Cunningham, 1990; Kirst, 1991; Smylie, Crowson, Chou & Levin, 1993). Professionals who have been trained distinctly and separately have difficulty agreeing on implementation procedures (Smylie, Crowson, Chou, & Levin, 1993). Training is a form of re-socialization. Without common training, although a common goal for the

collaboration may be established, the means to reach that goal may be difficult to determine given the different training and certification systems of the professionals involved. Eighty-eight percent of respondents believed they would benefit with training or more training on interagency collaborations.

Interagency collaboration takes years to develop. "It takes time for professionals to learn the language and customs of their colleagues from other disciplines. Time is also required to forge the trusting, cross-institutional personal relationships that are crucial to overcoming inertia and resistance." (Adler, 1994, p. 11). Adler (1994) predicts that interagency collaboration is not a 5 to 10 year project, rather it is a 15-20 year project.

Is the effort to implement transition planning worth it if, as in the story of Mary, there is the fear that there will be no services at the end of the transition for students? Yes. One lesson learned from the systems change initiative on transition for youth with disabilities in the United States is that systems change is not simple and will take time (Benz & Bullis, 1997). Fullan (1993) declares that the more complex a system is, the more time it takes to change it. The education and social services systems in Ontario are certainly complex.

We know that transition systems change is not a stepwise or linear process in which one activity, or one set of activities, results in a permanent or stable change or improvement in policy, interagency cooperation, and/or the provision of appropriate programs and services. Rather, transition systems change is a process typified by highly dynamic and multi-faceted interactions impacting multiple levels and components of service delivery structure and organization within states and local communities (Johnson & Guy, 1997, p. 192).

Systems change is a slow, but dynamic and continuous process of improvement. In time, conditions will improve for people with disabilities. Proof of this can be seen when a

person looks back at the history of people with disabilities and sees where attitudes and conditions are today. That does not mean that change happens solely on its own. Many caring and concerned people, dedicated to advocating for people with disabilities, will expend much energy and time, working to ensure that change happens. Patience is required.

CHAPTER 6

Conclusions and Recommendations

Decades of research have proven that implementing change in the education system is a complex, slow, and unpredictable process. Attempting to implement transition planning across the province of Ontario will be no different. It may face even greater challenges because it is happening at a time when much change is occurring in the education system: numerous new initiatives are being implemented. Transition planning is only one of many initiatives being implemented in the province at this time, and its importance and potential must be recognized if it will be deemed a priority.

Transition planning for special education students is a relatively new concept in education in Ontario. It has only been since 1982 that students with disabilities have been integrated into the regular school system. Before that time, children with visible or severe disabilities were educated and trained in segregated settings. The first children with severe disabilities that were integrated all the way from Kindergarten through to age 21 and mandatory high school leaving, only left high school in 1998. Many changes have occurred since 1982. Attitudes about people with disabilities and their right for self-determination have evolved. This evolution has been accompanied by a shift in financial priorities of the provincial government and has resulted in the closing of sheltered workshops and “Institutes” for people with disabilities across the province.

The Ministry of Education, observing trends in education in the United States and around the world, foresaw the need for transition planning. In 1988, they published

Bridges to Employment for Student with Disabilities as a resource guide to help educators prepare students with disabilities for the transition from school to work. The problem with the document was that it did not mandate transition planning, and it did not come with any funds or resources to aid in its implementation. As a result most people in the province who received a copy shelved the document.

Nothing was heard about transition planning from the Ministry of Education until May of 1998, 10 years later, when a memo was sent to school boards mandating that a transition plan accompany the Individual Education Plan (IEP) for all students with developmental disabilities. Months later, Regulation 181/98 mandated that a transition plan accompany the IEP for all special education students (except solely gifted students). Once again no resources or funds were provided to help school systems implement the change.

Many problems face the implementation of the mandate. Since the mandate was released, personnel in school systems across the province have been trying to do the same thing – implement transition planning without any training, guidance, additional time, or resources. People are frustrated with the amount of work they are already doing, the lack of gratitude for their work, and the perception that their load is going to be getting heavier before it gets lighter.

Not only is the mandate overwhelming, its intent is not fully understood. Few people in the education system know what the transition process is like for students with disabilities. Most people working in education went through the education system when students with disabilities were still segregated. The large majorities of people in the

education system are university educated and do not have a disability. Few people in the education system have a child or relative with a disability, and therefore most do not have a first-hand understanding of the struggles that a young person with a disability faces when trying to make the transition out of high school and into adult life. School personnel do not have the time to conduct in-depth follow-ups with former students to learn about the challenges that they face.

People in the school system are overwhelmed. They have reached their saturation point for new initiatives. Morale is low. People are overburdened. They repeatedly say they have no time, no support, and not enough resources.

If transition planning is implemented in the current climate and without the needed support in the way of resources, money, and time, it is highly likely that the Ministry's intent for transition planning will be superficially implemented in most boards across the province. The responsibility for the change will fall on the shoulders of the special education teachers. The same teachers who already believe they do not have enough time to do everything they would like to do to help their students. Without more support from the provincial government, transition planning will not be as helpful to students with disabilities as it could be.

It is not too late, however, for the Ministry of Education to help guide schools in implementing transition planning. School boards have already received a draft copy of the upcoming Transition Planning Resource Guide. The long awaited revised publication on transition planning is expected to be published sometime in the year 2001 and will be of assistance to school boards who know very little about the transition planning process.

The government could further help the process by re-directing money to be allotted solely for the purpose of implementing transition planning. Training could be provided at all levels: board, school, and family. Release time to allow for this training could be provided. This will also require funding. Human resources in the way of community transition coordinators and job coaches could be established and material resources in the form of training manuals and support documents could be provided. Progress would need to be monitored to ensure that boards are using the funds and resources as intended. There must be consequences for those boards that do not use the money and resources as intended or who do not implement transition planning as intended.

For proper implementation, change would need to occur at three levels. The following paragraphs include suggestions for ideal implementation of transition planning across the province.⁴⁵ At the provincial level, provincial coordinators would be responsible for coordination across the province and for support to the community and school levels. At the community level, collaboration amongst boards and community social service agencies would need to occur. At the school level, a team approach would distribute the workload. Teamwork is important at all levels; provincial, local, and school.

At the provincial level, a re-direction of funding would need to occur to support transition planning initiatives. Provincial coordinators would need to be hired. Community transition coordinators would need to be established. Job coaches need to be

⁴⁵ A more detailed list of suggestions is provided in Chapter 5, Table 5.1.

trained and hired. Monies to support training at all levels would be needed. Support documents and training manuals would need to be written, published, and distributed. They should be made available in both paper and electronic format.

To aid in the research of transition efforts across the province, one university could be designated as a Transition Institute. The Institute would provide resources to parents, agencies, transition coordinators, teachers and researchers. Its main role would be to continue research in the area of transition planning and act as a leader in encouraging best practices and change.

At the provincial level, greater effort to keep technology schools open could be made. A more positive image of technology schools could be created. Work to help schools offer more vocational courses in high school could be done. More effort could be directed to develop and promote apprenticeship programs and skilled crafts careers. A continued effort to help schools develop and maintain peer helper/tutor/mentor programs could be made.

Two provincial transition coordinators would act as resource people and consultants to communities and school boards. The provincial coordinators would aid in the set up and maintenance of transition programs. Training is one of the most important aspects of the implementation process since it has the potential to influence people's beliefs and attitudes. The provincial coordinators would design and run training courses for existing administrators, transition coordinators, and parents to give people the knowledge and materials from which to develop transition programs. They would provide regular in-service to help community and school personnel set-up transition

programs. For new teachers and administrators, education and training about transition issues and practices would need to be included as part of the Ministry training courses (B.Ed. and additional qualification courses). Training opportunities and in-service sessions would be an opportunity for networking as well as an opportunity for people to learn from each other. Current “model” transition coordinators could be chosen to help with the creation of a training course, guide books, standard provincial forms, and subsequent in-service sessions for community transition coordinators and school coordinators across the province. Again, all resources would be available in paper and electronic format. Communication between provincial coordinators and community transition coordinators would be facilitated through the use of the Internet, e-mail, discussion groups, on-line newsletters, instructional videos, and telephone/video conferencing.

Provincial coordinators would work to help government ministries work together to coordinate their efforts. They would work to establish training courses for job coaches and work to make them available at colleges across the province. They would be involved in the development of a provincial training manual for job coaches.

Provincial coordinators would work with provincial coordinators from community service agencies to establish province-wide service coordination agreements. They would make a concerted effort to use common terminology that would have common meaning across schools and community agencies.

At the community level, boards should collaborate to select a person to be a transition coordinator who will lead and manage transition programs for the public and

Catholic school systems in the community. It would be the transition coordinator's job to keep an on-going list of community services available to help students with disabilities. It would also be the coordinator's job to create a list of local employers who would be willing to offer a student with disabilities some work experience. Both of these lists would be given to the special education department head at each of the community's high schools. The coordinator would sit on numerous committees and be the link between the agencies and the schools. The coordinator needs to be flexible, creative, dedicated, people-oriented, and a team player. The coordinator would help the individual schools evaluate the best practices they already have in place and help the school to adapt those practices to help students with disabilities.

The community transition coordinator would be responsible for conducting on-going follow-up studies of special education students who have left the school system to determine strengths and weaknesses of the current transition process. The community transition coordinator may give a less biased assessment of current practices than a person directly involved with the process at the school level. A portion of the community transition coordinator's job could be conducting follow-up and therefore time to conduct the study would be allotted.

It would be the community transition coordinator's role to develop strategies to remove barriers that inhibit the successful delivery of transition services. Part of this role would be to establish better provisions for sharing resources between board resource centers and schools located a distance from each other.

At the high school level, special education teachers would initiate the transition planning process and a team of people including the student, the student's parents, school personnel, and personnel from human service agencies would implement the process. To facilitate communication between school personnel, the guidance, special education, and co-op departments are best located close to each other. Time would need to be allotted in school personnel's schedules to dedicate to transition planning initiatives. A guidance counselor would help the student conduct a career inventory. The student would develop an Annual Education Plan (AEP) with a teach advisor before the meeting. Parents would complete a questionnaire to have them think about their child's future. The student's individual education plan would be written by school personnel and forwarded to the parents for review. Parents would understand their rights with regards to the IEP/ITP process⁴⁶ and be prepared to actively participate in the planning and review meeting. A person in special education would arrange the meeting. It is imperative that a sufficient amount of time would need to be allotted for each student to allow for a proper discussion. The student and all involved parties would be called together to discuss the student's future. An Individual Transition Plan (ITP) would be written for each student at the meeting. Actions needed to help the student achieve goals would be noted, as would the person responsible for the action, and the date by which the actions should be completed. One of the responsibilities should be to periodically check with involved parties to see if the person responsible is completing designated actions. Students should

⁴⁶ Parents would be taught about the IEP/ITP process at information sessions. Parents unable to attend the evening could watch the presentation on video or listen to the presentation on audio cassette.

be encouraged to take vocational and career oriented courses. All special education students would benefit from work experience. This process would begin when the student is 14 years of age and would re-occur once a year for all special education students.

The Ministry of Education's draft document Transition Planning Resource Guide (April 1, 1999) clearly sets out guidelines to implement transition planning for personnel in schools but it does not mention the Ministry's role in helping to support initiatives nor does it mention how school systems can work together to help each other with the transition process. For transition planning to reach its potential and truly help special education students, the onus must not solely fall on the schools. Students must take an active role in planning for their future. Parents must be actively involved. Support must come from the provincial government. Schools and agencies within communities must work together. Employers must see the importance of giving students with disabilities opportunities for work experience. Indeed, implementing transition planning is complex. Even with all of the suggestions put into place, it will not guarantee that transition planning will be implemented as intended by researchers or government. One thing is for sure; no matter how important or valuable implementing transition planning in the school system will be to special education students, it will be a slow process that will take years to put into place.

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APPENDIX A**Excerpts from Regulation 181/98****Following initial Identification, Placement, and Review Committees**

- 6. (4) Where the pupil is 14 years of age or older, the individual education plan must also include a plan for transition to appropriate post-secondary school activities, such as work, further education and community living.
- 6. (5) Subsection (4) does not apply in respect of a pupil identified as exceptional solely on the basis of giftedness.
- 6. (6) In developing the individual education plan, the principal shall,
 - (a) consult with the parent and, where the pupil is 16 years of age or older, the pupil, and
 - (b) take into consideration any recommendation made by the committee of the Special Education Tribunal, as the case may be, requiring special education programs or services.
- 6. (7) In developing a transition plan under subsection (4), the principal shall consult with such community agencies and post-secondary education institutions as he or she considers appropriate.
- 6. (8) Within 30 days after placement of the pupil in the program, the principal shall ensure that the plan is completed and a copy of it sent to a parent of the pupil and, where the pupil is 16 years of age or older, the pupil.

Following Review Identification, Placement and Review Committees

- 7. (4) Where an individual education plan does not include a plan for transition to appropriate post-secondary school activities and the pupil has attained the age of 14 or will attain the age of 14 within the school year, the principal shall ensure that a transition plan is developed and included in the individual education plan.
- 7. (5) Subsection (4) does not apply in respect of a pupil identified as exceptional solely on the basis of giftedness.
- 7. (6) In reviewing an individual education plan that includes a transition plan or in developing a transition plan under subsection (4), the principal shall consult with such community agencies and post-secondary educational institutions as he or she considers appropriate.

7. (7) Within 30 days of an implementation of a change in placement or, where the placement is confirmed, within 30 days of receiving the notice under subsection (1), the principal shall ensure that,
- (a) the plan has been reviewed and updated as appropriate;
 - (b) a transition plan has been added to the individual education plan where required by subsection (4); and
 - (c) a copy of the individual education plan has been sent to the parent of the pupil and, where the pupil is 16 years of age or older, the pupil.

Following initial and review IPRCs

The principal shall ensure that the individual education plan for a pupil is included in the record kept in respect of the pupil under clause 265 (d) of the Act, unless a parent of the pupil has objected in writing.

APPENDIX B**Transition and Collaboration Practices Implied and Substantiated in the Literature**

Transition Practice	Implied by:	Substantiated by:
1. Development of a formal Individualized Transition Plan (ITP).	Asselin, 1985; Benz & Halpern, 1986, 1987; Bullis, Bull, Johnson, Peters, 1995; Daneek & McCrone, 1989; DeStefano, Heck, Hasazi, & Furney, 1999; Getzel, 1990; Halpern & Benz, 1987; Hardman & McDonnell, 1987; Peters, Templeton, & Brostrom, 1987; Rocher Institute, 1994; Rusch & DeStefano, 1989; Stremel, 1995; Thomson, Latter, & Ward, 1995; Wehman, 1990	Bullis & Egelston, 1990 Disabled Persons' Resource Centre, 1991; Riches, Paramentoer, Fegent, & Bouley 1993;
2. The student's wishes, interests, needs, strengths, and abilities are incorporated into the transition plans.	Hughes, Eisenman, Hwang, Killian, & Scott, 1997; Kloos, 1995; Maine Department of Education, 1990; Milner, 1995; Rocher Institute, 1994; Thoma, 1999; University of Minnesota, 1995; Wehman, 1990	Riches et al., 1993; Thomson et al., 1995;
3. Planning for transition begins before the student reaches the age of 16.	Bullis et al., 1995; Daneek & McCrone, 1989; De Stefano et al., 1999 Halpern, 1993; Hardman & McDonnell, 1987; Milner, 1995; Thomson et al., 1995; Wagner, 1991; Wehman, Kregel, & Barcus 1985; Wehman, 1990	
4. The student is notified of vocational options, opportunities, and support services before reaching the age of 16.	Hardman & McDonnell, 1987; Meers, 1992; Rocher Institute, 1994; Rucker, 1993; Stremel, 1995; Steere, Wood, Pansosfar, & Rucker, 1993; Wehman et al., 1985	
5. Vocational and academic curricula are integrated.	Bullis & Egelston-Dodd, 1990; Kohler & Rusch, 1995; Repetto & Correa, 1996; Wehman et al., 1985	

Transition Practice	Implied by:	Substantiated by:
6. The student is placed in the least restrictive instructional setting (age-appropriate, aiming for regular classroom placement as much as possible).	Arkansas State Department of Education, 1996; Asselin, 1985; Benz & Halpern, 1986, 1987; Fairweather, 1988; Halpern, 1985; Halpern & Benz, 1987; Hardman & McDonnell, 1987; Hasazi et al., 1985; Stremel, 1995; Wehman et al., 1985	Hudson, Schwartz, Sealander, Campbell, & Hensel, 1988
7. Students are encouraged to take occupationally oriented vocational courses.	Benz & Halpern, 1986, 1987; Halpern, 1985; Halpern & Benz, 1987; Knowlton & Clark, 1987; Wehman et al., 1985	
8. Student gains work experience while in school (e.g., co-operative education).	Asselin, 1985; Bates & Panscofar, 1981; Benz & Halpern 1986, 1987, 1993; Cobb & Hasazi, 1987; Halpern & Benz, 1987; Hasazi & Clark, 1988; Hasazi et al., 1985; Milner, 1995; Rocher Institute, 1994; Rusch & DeStefano, 1989; Rusch & Phelps, 1987; Sowers & Powers, 1989; Stremel, 1995; Wehman, 1990; Wehman et al., 1985	Fabien, Lent, & Willis, 1998; Hasazi et al., 1985; Hudson et al., 1988; Scuccimarra & Speece, 1990
9. Job placement services are available in the school for students with disabilities prior to and following completion of vocational education courses.	Asselin, 1985; Thomson et al., 1992	
10. Curriculum and transition programs are focused on resources and jobs available in the community.	Benz & Halpern, 1987; Halpern, 1985; Hardman & McDonnell, 1987; McDonnell, Hardman, Hightower, Keifer-O'Donnell, & Drew, 1993; Meers, 1992; Nesbit, Clark, & Covert, 1991; Pollard, Pollard, & Meers, n.d.; Rusch & DeStefano, 1989; Sowers & Powers, 1989; Steere et al., 1993; Thoma, 1999; University of Minnesota, 1995; Wagner, 1991; Wehman et al., 1985; Wehman, 1990, 1992	

Transition Practice	Implied by:	Substantiated by:
11. School provides career education curriculum.	Asselin, 1985; Benz & Halpern, 1986, 1987; Halpern & Benz, 1987; Halpern, 1985; Knowlton & Clark, 1987; Wehman et al., 1985	
12. School provides vocational training.	Bullis et al., 1995; Kohler & Rusch, 1995; Levinson & Ohler, 1998; Pollard et al., n.d. Sherman & Osborn, 1989; Sowers and Powers, 1989; Stremel, 1995; Wagner, 1991	Benz & Halpern, 1993; Bullis & Egelston-Dodd, 1990; Hudson et al., 1988; Mithaug, Horiuchi, & Fanning, 1985; Riches et al., 1993;
13. School provides social skills training.	Benz & Halpern, 1986, 1987; Halpern & Benz, 1987; Halpern, 1985; Hardman & McDonnell, 1987; Hughes et al., 1997; Kohler & Rusch, 1995; Kranstover et al., 1989; Rusch & DeStefano, 1989	Hudson et al., 1988; Mithaug et al., 1985;
14. Instructional support services are available (e.g., teacher aides, special materials, assistive technology, interpreters, peer tutors).	Asselin, 1985; Hasazi, 1985; Wehman et al., 1985; Wehman, 1990, 1992	
15. School provides career guidance services for special education students.	Asselin, 1985; Hudson et al., 1988	
16. Students receive on-going job support (e.g., job coach, supported employment, regular contact between the school and the agency).	Asselin, 1985; Bullis et al., 1995; Ministry of Education, 1988; Hardman & McDonnell, 1987; Reetz et al., 1990; Sowers & Powers, 1989; Thomson, Ward, Dyer, Riddell, 1992; Thomson et al., 1995	
17. School provides vocational assessments for special education students.	Asselin, 1985; Bullis et al., 1995; Kohler & Rusch, 1995; Sherman & Osborn, 1989; Stremel, 1995; Wagner, 1991	Bullis & Egelston-Dodd, 1990; Hudson et al., 1988; Mithaug et al., 1985; Riches et al., 1993;

Transition Practice	Implied by:	Substantiated by:
18. Alternative assessments like portfolios are used.	Dias, 1993; Kansas State Board of Education, 1996; University of Minnesota, 1995	
19. Parents are involved in the transition planning process.	Asselin, 1985; Arkansas State Department of Education, 1996; Benz & Halpern, 1986, 1987; Danek & McCrone, 1989; De Stefano et al., 1999 Halpern & Benz, 1987; Halpern, 1985; Hardman & McDonnell, 1987; Haring et al., 1991; Kloos, 1995; Milner, 1995; Mithaug et al., 1985; Nesbit et al., 1991; New Jersey, 1995; Repetto & Correa, 1996; Rocher Institute, 1994; Rusch & DeStefano, 1989; Sowers & Powers, 1989; Stremel, 1995; Wehman et al., 1985; Wehman, 1990;	Blackorby & Wagner, 1996; Hudson et al., 1988; Riches et al., 1993; Thomson et al., 1995;
20. Parents receive training to prepare them for the transition their child is about to make.	Asselin, 1985; Danek & McCrone, 1989; DeStefano et al., 1999; Haring et al., 1991; Milner, 1995; Nesbit et al., 1992; Reetz et al., 1990; Thoma, 1999	Taymans, Corbey, & Dodge, 1995
21. Follow-up data on the post-school outcomes of former special education students are collected.	Johnson et al., 1987; New Jersey, 1995; Peters, Templeman, & Brostrom, 1987	Taymans, Corbey, & Dodge, 1995
Collaboration Practice	Implied by:	Substantiated by:
22. The school and agencies share a common problem (the need to prepare for the transition from high school).	Wehman et al., 1985; Wehman, 1990	
23. Schools and agencies are committed to a common mission (to prepare students for the transition).	Rachal, 1995	

Collaboration Practice	Implied by:	Substantiated by:
24. Schools and agencies understand each other's eligibility and entitlement requirements.	Johnson et al., 1987;	
25. Schools and community agencies share common definitions of disabilities.	Benz et al., 1995;	
26. Teachers and agency personnel were involved in the formation of plans and policies for collaboration at the local level.	Backer, Liberman, & Kuehncl, 1986; Brown, Halpern, Hasazi, Wehman, 1987; Hardman & McDonnell, 1987; Leithwood, Cassie, Cousins, Hannay, Maynes, Robertson, Quirotee, Sellar, & Townsend, 1990; Leithwood, Cousins, & Trider, 1990; Peters et al., 1987; Rocher Institute, 1994;	
27a) Formal written agreements to coordinate services between the school and human service agencies.	Allen et al., 1989; Asselin, 1985 Arkansas State Department of Education, 1996; Benz & Halpern, 1986, 1987; Dane & McCrone, 1989; Edgar, 1987; Fairweather, 1988; Halpern & Benz, 1987; Halpern, 1985; Hardman & McDonnell, 1987; Kloos, 1995; McDonnell, Wilcox & Boles, 1986; Milner, 1995; New Jersey State Department of Education, 1995; Rocher Institute, 1994; Rusch & DeStefano, 1989; Rusch & Phelps, 1987; Sherman & Osborn, 1989; Stremel, 1995; Ward & Halloran, 1989; Wehman et al., 1985; Wehman, 1990; West Virginia State Department of Education, 1996;	Bullis & Egelston-Dodd, 1990; Riches et al., 1993; Thomson et al., 1995;
27b) Agreements state the roles and responsibilities of both the school and the community agency.	Milner, 1995; Ministry of Labour, 1988; Virginia State Department of Education, 1994	

Collaboration Practice	Implied by:	Substantiated by:
27c) Written agreements state the specific supports and resources the student requires.	Meers, 1992; Ministry of Education, 1988;	
28. Schools and agencies share and combine resources so that services overlap.	Wehman 1992, 1996	
29. All costs are shared equally between schools and agencies.	Wehman 1990, 1992, 1996	
30. Lines of communication between the school and agencies have been developed.	Wehman 1992, 1996; Brown et al., 1987	
31. Monitoring occurs to ensure that responsibilities of the school and agencies are being carried out.	Peters et al., 1987;	

APPENDIX C**Factors Influencing Implementation of an Innovation**

Indicator of Implementation Capacity	Implied by:	Substantiated by:
1. Adaptability of the practices to current school procedures and organization.	Fullan, 1991	Backer, Liberman, & Kuehnelt, 1986; Leithwood, Cousins, & Trider, 1990; Huberman & Miles, 1984
2. Having sufficient financial resources.	Fullan, 1992; Fullan & Miles, 1992; Hardman & McDonnell, 1987; Louis & Miles, 1990; National Center for Youth with Disabilities, 1993; University of Minnesota, 1995	
3. Having sufficient resources (personnel and supplies).	Fullan, 1991, 1992; Fullan & Miles, 1992; Goens & Clover, 1992; National Center for Youth with Disabilities, 1993;	Huberman & Miles, 1984; Leithwood, Cousins, & Trider, 1990
4. Having the necessary skills for implementation of the practices.	Fullan 1991, 1992	Huberman & Miles, 1984; Leithwood, Cousins, & Trider, 1990
5. Having the time to implement the practices.	Fullan & Miles, 1992	Louis & Miles, 1990
6. Practices are needed.	Fullan, 1991;	Leithwood, Cousins, & Trider, 1990
7. Believing the practices are worthwhile.	Goens & Clover, 1992; Fullan & Miles, 1992	Leithwood, Cousins, & Trider, 1990
8. Principal has the necessary skills to support the practices.	Asselin, 1985; Fullan, 1991, 1992; Hall & Hord, 1989; Trider, 1985	Berman & McLaughlin, 1977; Huberman & Miles, 1984

9. Transition programming is important to the principal.	Asselin, 1985; Fullan, 1991, 1992; Trider, 1985	Berman & McLaughlin, 1977; Huberman & Miles, 1984
10. School board administrators have the necessary skills to support practices.	Asselin, 1985; Fullan, 1991, 1992	Berman & McLaughlin, 1977; Huberman & Miles, 1984
11. Transition programming is important to the school board.	Asselin, 1985; Fullan, 1991, 1992	Berman & McLaughlin, 1977; Huberman & Miles, 1984
12. Parents of special education students see practices as being important.		Leithwood, Cousins, & Trider, 1990
13. Practices are important to city/town/community.	Fullan, 1991	Leithwood, Cousins, & Trider, 1990
14. Having a high level of collaboration between staff within the school.	Fullan, 1991, 1992; Lieberman & McLaughlin, 1992	Huberman & Miles, 1984; Leithwood, Cousins, & Trider, 1990

APPENDIX D**Questionnaire****SURVEY ON TRANSITION SERVICES
FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS**

This questionnaire is divided into 3 sections. Part A briefly asks about your school's characteristics. Part B asks for your views and opinions about transition programs and service collaboration. Part C asks for your background information.

Please complete and return the questionnaire in the self-addressed and stamped envelope provided by _____. If you require further information about the survey please do not hesitate to contact me.

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PART A: INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR SCHOOL

In this section I am interested in specific information about your school. Please place a check mark beside the appropriate response or provide the information needed on the space provided.

1. In what type of area is your school located?

Urban ____ Suburban ____ Rural ____

2. Approximately how many students attend your high school? _____

- 3a) How many special education students does your high school serve? _____

- b) What percentage of the total number of special education students would you classify as mildly, moderately or severely disabled? (The three amounts should total 100% and represent all special education students indicated in question 3a)

Mild ____% + Moderate ____% + Severe ____% = 100%

PART B: YOUR VIEWS AND OPINIONS

1. The following table contains a list of 31 practices that may facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from high school to adult life. In the second column, please circle the degree to which you agree that the practice facilitates the transition of youth with disabilities (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree). In the third column, please circle the degree to which your school actually carries out the practice (1 = never, 3 = sometimes, 5 = always).

Practices that may facilitate transition	How much do you agree that this practice actually facilitates the transition from school to adult life?					To what degree does your school actually carry out the practice at the present time?				
	strongly disagree				strongly agree	never				always
Planning:										
1.1 Development of a formal Individualized Transition Plan (ITP).	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
1.2 The student's wishes, interests, needs, strengths, and abilities are incorporated into the transition plans.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
1.3 Planning for transition begins before the student reaches the age of 16.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
1.4 The student is notified of vocational options, opportunities, and support services before reaching the age of 16.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Curriculum:										
1.5 Vocational and academic curricula are integrated.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
1.6 The student is placed in the least restrictive instructional setting (age-appropriate, aiming for regular classroom placement as much as possible).	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
1.7 Students are encouraged to take occupationally oriented vocational courses.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
1.8 Student gains work experience while in school (e.g., co-operative education).	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
1.9 Job placement services are available in the school for students with disabilities prior to and following completion of vocational education courses.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
1.10 Curriculum and transition programs are focused on resources/jobs available in the community.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
1.11 School provides career education curriculum.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
1.12 School provides vocational training.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
1.13 School provides social skills training.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Support Services:										
1.14 Instructional support services are available (e.g., teacher aides, special materials, assistive technology, interpreters, peer tutors).	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

	strongly disagree	strongly agree	never	always
1.15 School provides career guidance services for special education students.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5		
1.16 Students receive on-going job support (e.g., job coach, supported employment, regular contact between the school and agency)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5		
Student Assessment:				
1.17 School provides vocational assessments for special education students.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5		
1.18 Alternative assessments like portfolios are used.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5		
Parent Involvement:				
1.19 Parents are involved in the transition planning process.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5		
1.20 Parents receive training to prepare them for the transition of their child.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5		
Follow-up:				
1.21 Follow-up data on the post-school outcomes of former special education students are collected.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5		
Collaboration:				
1.22 The school and human service agencies share a "common problem" (the need to prepare students for the transition from high school).	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5		
1.23 School and agencies are committed to a common mission. (to prepare students for the transition).	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5		
1.24 Schools and agencies understand each other's eligibility and entitlement requirements.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5		
1.25 Schools and agencies share common definitions of disabilities.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5		
1.26 Teachers and agency personnel were involved in the formation of plans and policies for collaboration.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5		
1.27 There is a written agreement to coordinate services between the school and human service agencies.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5 (if never skip to #28)		
(b) Agreements state the roles and responsibilities of both the school and the community agency.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5		
(c) Written agreements state the specific supports and resources the student requires.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5		
1.28 School and agencies share and combine resources so that services overlap.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5		
1.29 All costs are shared equally between schools and agencies.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5		
1.30 Lines of communication between the school and agencies have been developed.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5		
1.31 Monitoring occurs to ensure that the responsibilities of the school and agencies are being carried out.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5		

2. Are there any other practices that you believe facilitate the transition process for students with disabilities?

3. Whose responsibility do you believe it is to initiate the transition process?

(check only one)

Special education teacher _____ Parents _____ Agency _____
 School administration _____ Student _____
 Other (please specify) _____

4. Whose responsibility do you believe it is to implement the transition planning process?

(check only one)

Special education teacher _____ Parents _____ Agency _____
 School administration _____ Student _____
 Other (please specify) _____

5. The 31 practices for transition listed in the preceding table creates a model for transition. With those practices in mind, give me your opinion to the following statements. Circle only one of the responses (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree Somewhat, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree).

Do you agree that:

	strongly disagree	disagree	agree somewhat	agree	strongly agree
a) Your school would be able to adapt the practices to your current school's procedures and organization.	1	2	3	4	5
b) Your school has sufficient financial resources to adapt these practices.	1	2	3	4	5
c) Your school has sufficient resources (i.e., personnel and supplies) to adapt these practices.	1	2	3	4	5
d) You have the skills to implement these practices.	1	2	3	4	5
e) You have the time to implement these practices.	1	2	3	4	5
f) These practices are needed at your school.	1	2	3	4	5
g) These practices are worthwhile.	1	2	3	4	5
h) Your principal has the necessary skills to support these practices.	1	2	3	4	5
i) Transition programming is important to your principal.	1	2	3	4	5
j) Your school board's administrators have the necessary skills to support these practices.	1	2	3	4	5
k) Transition programming is important to your school board.	1	2	3	4	5
l) Transition programming is important to the parents of special education students at your school.	1	2	3	4	5
m) Transition programming is important to your city/town/community.	1	2	3	4	5
n) There is a high level of collaboration between the staff within your school.	1	2	3	4	5

PART C: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Please place a check mark beside the appropriate response or provide the information needed on the space provided.

1. Have you read and consider yourself to be familiar with the Ministry of Labour and Ministry of Education's document *Bridges to Employment for Students with Disabilities: A Resource Guide for School-to-Work Transition (SWT) Programs* published in 1988?

Yes _____ No _____

Your training:

2. What degrees do you hold? (Check more than one if needed)

Bachelor's Degree(s) _____
 Master's Degree _____ Area of Concentration _____
 Doctorate _____ Area of Concentration _____
 Other _____ Please specify _____

3. Which Ministry of Education Special Education courses have you taken and what year did you complete each component.

Part I _____ Year completed _____
 Part II _____ Year completed _____
 Part III (Specialist) _____ Year completed _____
 None of the above _____

4a) How much training have you had regarding *transition* issues?

Extensive training _____ (more than 20 hours of training) Some training _____ (less than 20 hours of training) No training _____ (Go to 4d)
 (zero hours of training)

b) If you have had training, in what course(s)/program(s) did you receive your training? (Place a check mark beside all appropriate responses)

B.Ed. program _____
 M.O.E. Special Education Part I _____ Part II _____ Part III (Specialist) _____
 Inservice training _____
 Other _____ Please specify _____

c) How beneficial was this training to your understanding of transition issues?
 Very beneficial _____ Somewhat beneficial _____ Not beneficial _____

d) Do you feel you would benefit from (more) training in the school-to-adult life transition of youth with disabilities?

Yes _____ No _____

5a) How much training have you had regarding *service coordination and/or working in collaborative interagency teams*?

Extensive training _____ (more than 20 hours of training) Some training _____ (less than 20 hours of training) No training _____ (Go to 5d) (zero hours of training)

b) If you have had training in this area, in what course(s)/program(s) did you receive your training? (Place a check mark beside all appropriate responses.)

Part of B.Ed. program _____
 M.O.E. Special Education Part I _____ Part II _____ Part III (Specialist) _____
 Inservice training _____
 Other _____ Please specify _____

c) How beneficial was this training to your understanding of service coordination?

Very beneficial _____ Somewhat beneficial _____ Not beneficial _____

d) Do you feel you would benefit from (more) training on how to work on interagency collaborative teams to facilitate the school-to-adult life transition of youth with disabilities?

Yes _____ No _____

Your school's transition program(s).

6a) Does your school *need* a transition program for special education students?

Yes _____ No _____ (Go to 6c)

b) If yes, who do you believe should benefit from transition programming (e.g., all special education students, only severely disabled, only university bound students, etc.)

c) Do you believe the transition programs should include service coordination between schools and agencies?

Yes _____ No _____

7. Does your school have a school-to-work (and/or a school-to-adult life) transition program for students with disabilities at the present time?

Yes _____ No _____ (go to 8)

b) If yes, were members of your school communities involved in the creation of the program?

Yes _____ No _____

c) If yes, who is eligible for your program? (e.g., all identified students, only university bound students, only severely disabled students, only mildly mentally challenged students?)

-

d) If yes, is there frequent assessment of the quality of the program?

Often _____ Sometimes _____ No _____

c) Does your school's transition program include service coordination with human service agencies?

Yes _____ No _____

d) If yes, with what agencies does your school coordinate services?

-

8. What barriers inhibit your school from having a transition program in place for all special education students?

-

9. What facilitates your school's transition program?

Additional information:

10. May I call you if clarification or elaboration is required about any of your responses?

Yes _____ No _____

11. Would you be willing to participate in a telephone interview in which you could tell me more detailed information about your school's transition program?

Yes _____ No _____

If yes, what is the best time to contact you and at what number?

Best time to call: _____ **Phone Number:** _____

Your name: _____

Your job title: _____

Name of your school board: _____

Name of your school: _____

School's address: _____

School's phone number: _____

Thank you for completing the survey.

APPENDIX E

Scenarios Used during Telephone Interviews

Scenario #1 - A Student with a Mild Disability Heading to University

Sue has a mild learning disability. She has difficulty understanding the written word. When reading, she can see the letters and recognize words but the information is not processed in her mind. She needs to hear her instructions to understand what to do. Her exams are modified - they are given orally. Intellectually, Sue is above average. Sue wants to go to University and become a teacher.

Scenario #2 - A Student with a Mild Disability Heading to Work

Jan has a mild behavioural disability. She has attention deficit disorder. She has difficulty following instructions and focusing on the task at hand. She has low self-esteem. She can be forgetful - she misses appointments or forgets to bring a lunch to school. Intellectually, Jan is below average verbally and non-verbally. Jan wants to start working as soon as she graduates - probably in retail.

Scenario #3 - A Student with a Severe Physical Disability Heading to University

Beverly has a severe visual disability. She is classified as legally blind. She was born blind. She is unable to benefit from visual modes of learning and/or visual educational materials (functionally blind). Beverly reads Braille well and uses a white cane and a seeing-eye dog to guide her. She is an honour roll student and is definitely aiming to go on to University.

Scenario #4 - A Student with a Severe Intellectual Disability Heading to Work

Christine is a grade 10 student with a severe intellectual disability. She was born with Down Syndrome. She has the physical features that are commonly associated with Down Syndrome. She is near-sighted and wears corrective lenses. Her IQ test score was in the moderate range of 40-55. Her achievement in academic areas is very limited, however, she is capable of learning self-help skills and adjusting to social situations. She loves animals and would like to work in a veterinarian's clinic when she finishes school.

Extra scenario – A Student with a Severe Physical Disability Heading to Work

Christine is a grade 10 student with a severe physical disability. She has Spina Bifida. She is a paraplegic (she does not have the use of her legs) and is confined to a wheelchair. She is absent from school sometimes for a week or more for medical purposes. She has a lack of bowel and bladder control but is able to take care of this independently most of the time. She has average academic and intellectual ability. She wants to begin work as soon as she finishes high school. She would like to work in an office.

APPENDIX F

Telephone Interview Questions and Format

Start time: _____

Introduction

Hello. This is Dale Petruka calling from the University of Ottawa. We set up an interview for this time. Is this a good time?

Before we begin, I'd like to remind you that I will not use any names when reporting my research. Your name, the name of anyone you mention during the interview, the name of your school and/or the name of your school board will not be used when I report my research in any format. If I do need to quote you, I will use a fictitious name. You, your school and your school board will remain anonymous.

When I ask you a question, you may chose not to answer it.

Would you mind if I tape record this interview so that I do not miss any important points that you make.

Do you have any questions?

Background Information

**Please begin by briefly describing your high school student population and setting.
How many special education students does your school have? Please describe this population.
What is your role at your school? Specifically what type of students do you work with?
(What training have you received?)**

Scenarios

I am going to describe to you four imaginary students. After each scenario I would like you to tell me what your school does to help prepare a student like this for life after high school.

(Dale - rotate the order of these because people tend to talk the longest on the first scenario.)

Scenario #1 - a student with a mild disability heading to University

Sue has a mild learning disability. She has difficulty understanding the written word. When reading, she can see the letters and recognize words but the information is not processed in her mind. She needs to hear her instructions to understand what to do. Her exams are modified -

they are given orally. Intellectually, Sue is above average. Sue wants to go to University and become a teacher.

Scenario #2 - a student with a mild disability heading to work

Jan has a mild behavioural disability. She has attention deficit disorder. She has difficulty following instructions and focusing on the task at hand. She has low self-esteem. She can be forgetful - she misses appointments or forgets to bring a lunch to school. Intellectually, Jan is below average verbally and non-verbally. Jan wants to start working as soon as she graduates - probably in retail.

Scenario #3 - a student with a severe physical disability heading to University

Beverly has a severe visual disability. She is classified as legally blind. She was born blind. She is unable to benefit from visual modes of learning and/or visual educational materials (functionally blind). Beverly reads Braille well and uses a white cane and a seeing-eye dog to guide her. She is an honour roll student and is definitely aiming to go on to University.

Scenario #4 - a student with a severe intellectual disability heading to work

Christine is a grade 10 student with a severe intellectual disability. She was born with Down Syndrome. She has the physical features that are commonly associated with Down Syndrome. She is near-sighted and wears corrective lenses. Her IQ test score was in the moderate range of 40-55. Her achievement in academic areas is very limited, however, she is capable of learning self-help skills and adjusting to social situations. She loves animals and would like to work in a veterinarian's clinic when she finishes school.

Extra scenario for a student with a severe physical disability heading to work:

Christine is a grade 10 student with a severe physical disability. She has Spina Bifida. She is a paraplegic (she does not have the use of her legs) and is confined to a wheelchair. She is absent from school sometimes for a week or more for medical purposes. She has a lack of bowel and bladder control but is able to take care of this independently most of the time. She has average academic and intellectual ability. She wants to begin work as soon as she finishes high school. She would like to work in an office.

Probing questions:

- At what age/grade would your school begin to prepare this student for life after high school?
- How would you modify the school program/curriculum for this student? Especially with regards to preparing for life after high school (transition)?
- Would the school environment be modified in any way (T.A., devices, elevator)?
- How would the guidance/special education/co-op department be involved?
- How would the parents be involved with the transition process?
- Would the principal/vice-principal(s) be involved in this process?

- Would any community agencies be involved in this case? How? (formal written agreements/informal process)
- How would the community in general be involved?
- How would post-secondary institutions or training facilities be involved?
- Does your school do any follow-up of former special education students? Do you keep statistics of outcomes?

1. In all four scenarios I chose female examples. Would the process be any different for a male student? What is your percentage of male and female special education students?
2. What facilitates (helps) your transition program?
3. What barriers hinder your transition program?
4. What facilitates service coordination?
5. What barriers exist hindering service coordination?
6. What would happen if you left your position (you retired, took another job, became ill)?

Summary questions

7. Just to re-cap and summarize, how does your transition program differ for students with a mild disability versus a student with a severe disability? For a student heading to work or heading to University?
8. Is the level of service coordination the same for students with mild disabilities as for students with severe disabilities? For a student heading to work or heading to University?
9. This is the last question. Please list for me the agencies you work with in regards to transition services?

Would you mind if when I am reviewing this interview, if I have any questions that I call you back to get clarification?

Optional (I could ask them at a later time):

Would you mind participating in a case study of your school's transition programs? It would involve telephone or face-to-face interviews with you and members of your school community. If you answer yes, it does not necessarily mean your school would be chosen for the study. If your school is chosen, I will obtain proper authorization from your school board and from each individual that I will need to interview.

Record end time: _____

APPENDIX G

Package Sent to Directors

Dale R. Petruka
401 - 27 Henderson Avenue
Ottawa, ON
K1N 7P3
(613) 569-8345

August 6, 1997

«School_Board_Name»
«Address_Line_1»
«Address_Line_2»
«City», ON
«Postal_Code»

Dear «Title» «First_Name» «Middle_Initial» «Last_Name»,

I am a Ph.D. candidate of the University of Ottawa working under the supervision of Dr. Hanne Mawhinney. I am conducting research in the area of transition services for youth with disabilities. For the purposes of my research, a youth with a disability will be a student that has been identified by an Identification , Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC) at the high school level.

The transition from high school to adult life is a difficult step for students with disabilities. While at school, students receive the services they need, but once they leave school, they must often search for services, meet eligibility criteria and be put on lengthy waiting lists. Schools help to alleviate this gap in services by working with community service agencies before the student leaves school to prepare for life after high school.

The goal of my research is to determine the extent to which high schools in Ontario work with agencies in the community to facilitate the transition process for students with disabilities. I hope to discover what practices are currently being used in Ontario that facilitate the transition process and that aid schools to work with community agencies. I am writing this letter to you to ask for your assistance with my research.

Your participation would involve:

1. Granting me permission to send a survey to the special education heads at your board's high schools by signing the enclosed informed consent form.
2. Providing me with the names of the special education head or person in charge of transition programming at each of your board's high schools, along with the addresses and telephone numbers for those schools.

3. Providing me with a copy of your board's policies regarding transition and/or working with community agencies if they are in existence.

It is anticipated that all three items will take you between 15 and 30 minutes to complete.

There is little risk associated with your involvement. The information you provide will be completely confidential and your board will not be identified in any oral or written reports - rather the information you provide will become part of a large data base which will be analyzed for generalities. You, your board, and your staff's anonymity will be protected.

It is anticipated that findings from this research will serve to inform policy makers, educators, and people with disabilities about the current state of transition services in Ontario and will lead to the formation of recommendations that may serve to guide the future direction of transition services and interagency collaboration across the province.

Please complete the enclosed forms and return it in the postage paid, self-addressed envelope before August 29, 1997. If you have any questions, please contact me at (613) 569-8345.

Thank you for your cooperation,

Dale R. Petruka

Please Return by August 29, 1997

1. I, (please print your name) _____
 grant Dale R. Petruka, Ph.D. candidate at the University of Ottawa, permission to
 send a questionnaire to the special education heads or transition coordinators at my
 board's high schools?
 Yes _____ No _____ Permission not required _____
 Signature: _____

2. Please provide the name of the special education department head or transition
 coordinator and principal at each of your board's high schools along with the mailing
 address for each high school. *Please print clearly.*
 - a) Name of school: _____
 School's address: _____

 School's telephone number: _____
 Principal's name: _____
 Name of special education department head
 or transition coordinator: _____

 - b) Name of school: _____
 School's address: _____

 School's telephone number: _____
 Principal's name: _____
 Name of special education department head
 or transition coordinator: _____

 - c) Name of school: _____
 School's address: _____

 School's telephone number: _____
 Principal's name: _____
 Name of special education department head
 or transition coordinator: _____

 - d) Name of school: _____
 School's address: _____

 School's telephone number: _____
 Principal's name: _____

Name of special education department head
or transition coordinator: _____

Please use an additional sheet or the back of this sheet if needed.

3. Please provide a photocopy of your board's policies that pertain to
- (a) the transition of high school students with disabilities (who have been identified through the IPRC process), and/or
 - (b) the coordination of high school services with other human service agencies (for example; colleges, universities, vocational rehabilitation services, community employers, and/or the Easter Seal society).

It would be useful for me to know the year the policies were developed. If this is not indicated on the policy please hand write the year of policy creation on the photocopy if it is known.

If your board does not have policies regarding either of these areas,
please check here. _____

Please return the following:

- 1) a signed copy of the consent form;
- 2) the completed school addresses sheet;
- 3) copies of pertinent policies or this form indicating that your board does not have policies related to this research.

Informed Consent Form for School Boards
Please sign and return this copy

Title of the Project: An analysis of service coordination and the transition of youth with disabilities from high school to adult life in Ontario

Researchers: Dale R. Petruka (Ph.D. candidate)
401 - 27 Henderson Avenue
Ottawa, ON
K1N 7P3
(613) 569-8345

Hanne Mawhinney, Ph.D. (advisor)
Faculty of Education
University of Ottawa
145 Jean-Jacques Lussier
Ottawa, ON
K1N 6N5
(613) 562-5800 ext. 4039

This research has been funded by the Easter Seal Research Institute and the Scottish Rite Foundation for the Roher Institute. The funding agencies have not influenced or placed limitations on the research being conducted. Rather, they have found the research as initiated and designed by the researchers to be worthy of their financial support.

When a research project involving individuals is undertaken by researchers at the University of Ottawa, the Ethics committee of the University requires the written consent of the participants and, in the case of a minor, the written consent of a parent or legal guardian. This does not imply that the project is risky in any way. Rather, the intention is simply to assure the respect and confidentiality of the individuals concerned.

The purpose of this research is: to determine the current level of transition services and service coordination for the transition of students with disabilities from high school to adult life in Ontario; to compare that to the perceived best practices in transition and service coordination as identified in the literature; and to make recommendations to improve transition services for students with disabilities.

If you agree to participate, your participation will consist of:

1. Granting me permission to send a survey to your board's high schools by signing the enclosed form.
2. Providing me with the names of the special education heads or transition coordinators at each of your board's high schools and the addresses and telephone numbers for those schools.
3. Providing me with a copy of your board's policies regarding transition and working with community agencies if they are in existence.

It is anticipated that all three items will take you between 15 and 30 minutes to complete. Information gathered from this study will be used for research purposes only.

Any participant in this study may abstain or withdraw from participating at any time.

The study will consist of a mailed questionnaire sent to special education heads at high schools across Ontario that will take approximately 30-45 minutes to complete. Approximately thirty to forty of those questionnaires will be followed-up by a telephone call conducted at the department head's convenience. The purpose of the telephone calls will be to reveal more detailed information about transition programs and service coordination. Finally, one school with a highly collaborative transition program will be selected from the telephone interviews and a case study will be conducted.

The name of your school board, high schools, or individual staff members will not be used in any publication or oral presentation resulting from this research. When direct quotes or paraphrasing are used, fictitious names will be employed. Your school board, high schools, and staff members will remain anonymous. Personal information shared by any of the participants will remain confidential.

Data collected from this research will be stored and kept secure for a minimum of five years for further analysis by the aforementioned researchers only.

It is anticipated that findings from this research will serve to inform policy makers, educators, and people with disabilities about the current state of transition services in Ontario and will lead to the formation of recommendations that may serve to guide the future direction of transition services and interagency collaboration across the province.

Any requests for information or complaints about the ethical conduct of this project may be addressed to the University Human Research Ethics Committee Chair: Faculty of Education, room 305, Lamoureux Hall, tel. (613) 562-5800, extension 4057. If you have any questions about this research project please contact the researcher, Dale R. Petruka at (613) 569-8345.

There are two copies of the consent form, one to be returned to the researcher and the other to be kept by you if desired. Please use a pen when completing the next portion.

I, (please print your name) _____, of the (state the name of your Board of Education) _____

allow the special education department heads and/or transition coordinators at the high schools of the previously stated school board to voluntarily participate in the study being conducted by Dale R. Petruka under the supervision of Hanne Mawhinney, Ph.D.

Signature of the Participant

Date

Signature of the Researcher

Date

Optional: If you would like to receive a summary of the findings of this study which should be available by December 1998, please indicate your name and address below.

Reminder Letter to Directors

ON UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA LETTERHEAD

Dale R. Petruka
401-27 Henderson Avenue
Ottawa, ON
K1N 7P3
(613) 569-8345

August 15, 1997

«School_Board_Name»
«Address_Line_1»
«Address_Line_2»
«City», ON
«Postal_Code»

Dear «Title» «First_Name» «Middle_Initial» «Last_Name»,

Approximately one week ago, I mailed you a letter asking for your cooperation with a research project I am undertaking to examine the current level of transition programs and service coordination for students with disabilities at high schools in Ontario. Your school board's participation is important to the study because it will allow for a complete picture of the services available in the province to be taken. If you have already responded, thank you for your assistance and please disregard this letter. If you have not yet returned your consent form and address sheet, I hope you will find the time to participate.

If you have any questions or require another consent form or introductory letter, please contact me at (613) 569-8345.

Thank you,

Dale R. Petruka

APPENDIX H**Policy Analysis Framework**

Do the transition policies recognize the following needs?	Yes	No
1. Clearly articulated policy goals.		
2. Development of a formalized Individualized Transition Plan (ITP).		
3. Begin planning early (no later than age 16).		
4. Involvement of the parents in the transition planning process.		
5. Work experience for students while in school.		
6. The student's wishes, interests, needs, strengths, and abilities be incorporated into the transition plans.		
7. The student is placed in the least restrictive environment.		
8. Staff training.		
9. Training for parents.		
10. Availability of a job coach (and/or supported employment).		
11. Use of an alternative assessments like portfolios.		
12. Community based curriculum and transition programs.		
13. Career education curriculum.		
14. School provides vocational training and assessment.		
15. School provides social skills training.		
16. The school has formal written agreements with relevant community agencies.		
17. Indicates roles for all involved.		
18. Different transition programs for different levels of disability.		
19. Follow-up to ensure that policies are being followed.		
20. Planned review of policies		
21. Clearly written.		

Do the service coordination policies recognize the following needs?	Yes	No
1. Clearly articulated policy goals.		
2. Frequent, planned communication and information exchange.		
3. Coordinated and overlapping service delivery?		
4. Equal sharing of costs and resources among schools and community agencies.		
5. Agreements between school and agency should state the specific support and services the student requires.		
6. Agreements state the type of resources the student requires.		
7. Agreements state the roles and responsibilities of both the school and the community agency.		
8. Follow-along services and on-going support (when someone from the school or agency makes regular contact with the student and the employer).		
9. Contains guidelines to reduce difference in definitions of disability.		
10. Contains guidelines to reduce difference in eligibility and entitlement requirements.		
11. Plans and policies for collaboration need to be formed at the local level.		
12. Monitoring of the transition program occurs to ensure that responsibilities are being carried out.		
13. Follow-up to ensure that policies are being followed.		

APPENDIX I

Package sent to High Schools

Dale R. Petruka
401-27 Henderson Avenue
Ottawa, ON
K1N 7P3
(613) 569-8345

Date

Principal's name
High school's name
Address
City, ON
Postal code

Dear [principal],

The director [and/or superintendent in charge of special education services] at your school board has identified your school as a potential participant in a province-wide assessment to determine the current level of transition programs for students with disabilities. This research has been approved by your board's Research Advisory Committee. Although the research does not involve your direct participation, your approval is required for the research to proceed. Upon approval, a questionnaire will be sent to the head of special education services at your school.

The goal of my research is to determine the level at which high schools in Ontario work with agencies in the community to facilitate the transition process for students with disabilities. I hope to discover what practices are currently being used in Ontario that facilitate the transition process and that aid schools in working with community agencies.

It is anticipated that findings from this research will serve to inform policy makers, educators, and people with disabilities about the current state of transition services in Ontario and will lead to the formation of recommendations that may serve to guide the future direction of transition services and interagency collaboration across the province.

Any information provided by your staff member will be completely confidential and neither your board or school will be singled out - rather the information provided will become part of a large data base which will be analyzed for generalities. Your school, your board, and your special education department head's anonymity will be protected.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at (613) 569-8345.

Thank you for your cooperation,

Dale R. Petruka

Consent Form for Special Education Department Heads

Title of the Project: An analysis of service coordination and the transition of youth with disabilities from high school to adult life in Ontario

Researchers: Dale R. Petruka (Ph.D. candidate)
401-27 Henderson Avenue
Ottawa, ON
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(613) 569-8345

Hanne Mawhinney, Ph.D. (advisor)
Faculty of Education
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When a research project involving individuals is undertaken by researchers at the University of Ottawa, the Ethics committee of the University requires the written consent of the participants and, in the case of a minor, the written consent of a parent or legal guardian. This does not imply that the project is risky in any way. Rather, the intention is simply to assure the respect and confidentiality of the individuals concerned.

This research is being conducted with the knowledge and approval of your school board.

The purposes of this research are to (1) determine the current level of transition services and service coordination for the transition of students with disabilities from high school to adult life in Ontario, and (2) compare that to the perceived best practices for transition and service coordination as identified in the literature in order to make recommendations to improve transition services for students with disabilities.

If you agree to participate, your participation would involve completing the enclosed questionnaire about your opinions regarding transition practices and your school's current practices in transition and service coordination for students identified through the IPRC process. It is anticipated that it will take you approximately 30 to 45 minutes to complete the questionnaire. If your school has a collaborative transition program in place, your participation may also involve a telephone interview conducted at your convenience at which time I would ask you more detailed questions about your transition program.

Any information gathered from this study will be used for research purposes only. Your name, the name of your school board, and the name of your high school will not be used in any publication or oral presentation resulting from this research. When direct quotes or paraphrasing are used, fictitious names will be employed. You, your school board, and your high school will remain anonymous.

You have the right to abstain or withdraw from all or part of the study at any time.

Data collected from this research will be stored and kept secure for a minimum of five years for further analysis by the aforementioned researchers only.

It is anticipated that findings from this research will serve to inform policy makers, educators, and people with disabilities about the current state of transition services in Ontario and will lead to the formation of recommendations that may serve to guide the future direction of transition services and interagency collaboration across the province.

Any requests for information or complaints about the ethical conduct of this project may be addressed to the University Human Research Ethics Committee Chair: Faculty of Education, room 305, Lamoureux Hall, tel. (613) 562-5800, extension 4057. If you have any questions about this research project please contact the researcher, Dale R. Petruka at (613) 569-8345.

There are two copies of the consent form, one to be mailed back to the researcher with the questionnaire and the other to be kept by you if you would like to retain a copy.

I, (please print your name) _____, of (high school's name) _____ hereby consent to participate in the above named study. My participation is voluntary, and I understand I am participating in this project anonymously, and that my name will not be associated with this project in any way.

Signature of the Participant

Date

Signature of the Researcher

Date

Optional: If you would like to receive a summary of the findings of this study which should be available by December 1998, please indicate your name and address below.

Letter to special education department heads

ON UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA LETTERHEAD

Dale R. Petruka
401-27 Henderson Avenue
Ottawa, ON
K1N 7P3
(613) 569-8345

Date

Special education department head's name
Title
High school's name
Address
City, ON
Postal code

Dear [special education department head's name],

The director [and/or superintendent in charge of special education services] at your school board has identified you as the head of special education services at your school. If you are not in charge of special education at your school please give this letter and survey to the appropriate person.

This research has been approved by your board's Research Advisory Committee and your school's principal.

I am a Ph.D. candidate of the University of Ottawa working under the supervision of Dr. Hanne Mawhinney. I am asking for your assistance in a province-wide survey to determine the current level of transition programs for students with disabilities. For the purposes of this research a youth with a disability will be defined as a student that has been identified by the Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC) at the high school level. A transition program is:

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

The goal of my research is to determine the level at which high schools in Ontario work with agencies in the community to facilitate the transition process for students with disabilities. I hope to discover what practices are currently being used in Ontario that facilitate the transition process and that aid schools in working with community agencies.

Your participation would involve completing the enclosed questionnaire about your opinions regarding transition practices and your school's current practices in transition and service coordination for students identified through the IPRC process. It is anticipated that it will take you

approximately 30 to 45 minutes to complete the questionnaire. If your school has a collaborative transition program in place, your participation may also involve a telephone interview conducted at your convenience at which time I would ask you more detailed questions about your transition program.

It is anticipated that findings from this research will serve to inform policy makers, educators, and people with disabilities about the current state of transition services in Ontario and will lead to the formation of recommendations that may serve to guide the future direction of transition services and interagency collaboration across the province.

The information you provide will be completely confidential and neither you, your board or school will be singled out - rather the information you provide will become part of a large data base which will be analyzed for generalities. You, your school's, and your board's anonymity will be protected.

Although it is most useful for me that you complete the entire questionnaire, you may skip any questions you want. You may refuse or withdraw your participation at any time.

Please complete the survey and return it in the postage paid, self-addressed envelope before November 30, 1997. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to phone me at (613) 569-8345.

Thank you for your cooperation,

Dale R. Petruka

Consent Form for Special Education Department Heads

Title of the Project: An analysis of service coordination and the transition of youth with disabilities from high school to adult life in Ontario

Researchers: Dale R. Petruka (Ph.D. candidate)
401-27 Henderson Avenue
Ottawa, ON
K1N 7P3
(613) 569-8345

Hanne Mawhinney, Ph.D. (advisor)
Faculty of Education
University of Ottawa
145 Jean-Jacques Lussier
Ottawa, ON
K1N 6N5
(613) 562-5872

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This research is being conducted with the knowledge and approval of your school board.

The purposes of this research are to (1) determine the current level of transition services and service coordination for the transition of students with disabilities from high school to adult life in Ontario, and (2) compare that to the perceived best practices for transition and service coordination as identified in the literature in order to make recommendations to improve transition services for students with disabilities.

If you agree to participate, your participation would involve completing the enclosed questionnaire about your opinions regarding transition practices and your school's current practices in transition and service coordination for students identified through the IPRC process. It is anticipated that it will take you approximately 30 to 45 minutes to complete the questionnaire. If your school has a collaborative transition program in place, your participation may also involve a telephone interview conducted at your convenience at which time I would ask you more detailed questions about your transition program.

Any information gathered from this study will be used for research purposes only. Your name, the name of your school board, and the name of your high school will not be used in any publication or oral presentation resulting from this research. When direct quotes or paraphrasing are used, fictitious names will be employed. You, your school board, and your high school will remain anonymous.

You have the right to abstain or withdraw from all or part of the study at any time.

Data collected from this research will be stored and kept secure for a minimum of five years for further analysis by the aforementioned researchers only.

It is anticipated that findings from this research will serve to inform policy makers, educators, and people with disabilities about the current state of transition services in Ontario and will lead to the formation of recommendations that may serve to guide the future direction of transition services and interagency collaboration across the province.

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There are two copies of the consent form, one to be mailed back to the researcher with the questionnaire and the other to be kept by you if you would like to retain a copy.

I, (please print your name) _____, of (high school's name) _____ hereby consent to participate in the above named study. My participation is voluntary, and I understand I am participating in this project anonymously, and that my name will not be associated with this project in any way.

Signature of the Participant

Date

Signature of the Researcher

Date

Optional: If you would like to receive a summary of the findings of this study which should be available by December 1998, please indicate your name and address below.

Reminder letter to Special Education Department Heads

ON UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA LETTERHEAD

Dale R. Petruka
401-27 Henderson Avenue
Ottawa, ON
K1N 7P3
(613) 569-8345

Date

Special education department head teacher's name
Title
High school's name
Address
City, ON
Postal code

Dear [special education department head's name],

Approximately one week ago, I mailed you a questionnaire regarding your school's transition program for students identified through the IPRC process. The purpose of this letter is to serve as a reminder to encourage your participation. Your response is important to the study as it will help to ascertain the current level of transition services for special education students across the province and will aid in the formation of recommendations to improve those services.

If you have any questions or would like me to send you another consent form or questionnaire, please call me at (613) 569-8345.

Thank you,

Dale R. Petruka

APPENDIX J**Telephone Interview Data Sheet**

<<# of agencies mentioned

Interview # _____

Length of Time person interviewed has been in their role? _____ Type of courses offered:

1. Transition plans -
 separate ITP transition plan included in IEP none
 mapping done?
 Are notes kept in the OSR?
2. Transportation - Is it a problem?
 How is the transportation problem solved?
 Associated problems?
 Was the school urban suburban rural remote northern
3. Was lack of staff considered a major problem?
4. Did the schools have job coaches? Yes No
 Who were the job coaches?
5. Least Restricted Environment -
 Inclusion Integration Segregation Drop-in Resource Resource Withdrawal
 If integrated - What subjects for how much of the day?
6. Attitude - Were self-advocacy skills taught? Yes No
 Formally? What course?
 Informally - how?
7. Stigma with being a special education student? Yes No
 Stigma with carrying an assistive device (tape recorder)?
8. Did the respondent say "The apple doesn't far from the tree" or something similar? Yes No
9. Parental Support - did not attend meetings
 attended meetings but didn't follow through
 supportive
 had opposing views
10. School contact with parents and level of disability
 level of disability _____ contact: seldom often
 level of disability _____ contact: seldom often
 level of disability _____ contact: seldom often
 level of disability _____ contact: seldom often

11. P/VP involvement - little involvement IPRC awards/recognition behaviour
 more involvement Why? _____
 Was VP in charge of discipline - yes no
12. Follow-up? Yes No Type of follow-up? _____
 Reason for no follow-up? _____
13. Guidance/Special education/ Co-op
 work separately
 work together? When? _____
 what facilitates collaboration?
14. Guidance - how often/when do they see students?
 What types of students does guidance see?
 Does spec. ed. department take the role of guidance?
 When? _____
15. Is guidance overwhelmed with the social/emotional problems of kids? Yes no
 Why/Why not? _____
16. Does school/school board have a transition coordinator? Yes No
17. Role of Co-op - What grade does co-op start and for whom?
18. Role of the EA -
19. Difficulty finding placements? Yes No
 Why/Why not? _____
 Do parents help find job placements? Yes no
20. Does contact between the school and the parents increase with
 the severity of the disability? Yes No
21. Supports to teachers?
 Peer mentors Peer helpers Peer tutors
 Do they have sufficient training? _____
22. College Programs? Good/useful no good
23. Agencies - Is there a high turnover? Yes no Is this a problem?
 Do the supervisory officers stay the same?
 Waiting List? Yes no Where/How long? _____
 Or are there simply no agencies available? _____
 Do they use jargon? _____
 Have a different or similar mission?
 Any formal applications for services? _____

24. Does school do a computer/career inventory? Yes No

Which one? _____

Who administers it? _____

25. Is money a problem? Yes No Money for what? _____

26. Is time a problem? Yes No How? _____

27. Networking - sits on many committees? _____

28. Any Gaps -

28. How is transition handled at this school?

APPENDIX K**Case Study Interview Questions**

I'd like to ask you a few questions about:

For school staff: how you prepare your special education students for life after high school.

For agency personnel: how you work with schools to prepare students with disabilities for life after high school.

For parents: how you, the school, and community agencies are preparing your son/daughter for life after high school.

For the student: the school and community agencies are preparing you for life after school.

Before we begin, please read the following consent form.

(If the person signs the consent form, proceed.)

1. Describe what the transition process has been like for you.
2. What made the transition process easier for you?
3. What made the transition process more difficult?
4. Did you work with people from (other) community agencies during the transition process? If yes, with whom did you work and in what ways?
5. What made working with the community agency personnel easier?
6. What made working with community agency personnel more difficult?
7. How would you improve things to make the transition process better?
8. How would you change things to make it easier for schools to work with agencies in the community?

APPENDIX L**Case Study Forms****Informed Consent Form for Directors and/or Superintendents
for the Case Study**

Title of the Project: An analysis of service coordination and the transition of youth with disabilities from high school to adult life in Ontario

Researchers: Dale R. Petruka (Ph.D. candidate)
401-27 Henderson Avenue
Ottawa, ON
K1N 7P3
(613) 569-8345

Hanne Mawhinney, Ph.D. (advisor)
Faculty of Education
University of Ottawa
145 Jean-Jacques Lussier
Ottawa, ON
K1N 6N5
(613) 562-5800 ext. 4039

This research has been partially funded by the Easter Seal Research Institute and the Scottish Rite Foundation for the Roehrer Institute. The funding agencies have not influenced or placed limitations on the research being conducted. Rather, they have found the research as initiated and designed by the researchers to be worthy of their financial support.

When a research project involving individuals is undertaken by researchers at the University of Ottawa, the Ethics committee of the University requires the written consent of the participants and, in the case of a minor, the written consent of a parent or legal guardian. This does not imply that the project is risky in any way. Rather, the intention is simply to assure the respect and confidentiality of the individuals concerned.

The purposes of this research are to conduct a case study of a highly collaborative transition program to determine what practices facilitate the transition process and service coordination between schools and service agencies. Participation in the case study would involve allowing the researcher to enter the school for a period of approximately one week to conduct interviews with the various stakeholders in the transition process: principal, vice-principals, guidance counselors, teachers, parents, students, and human service agency personnel. It is anticipated that the findings will allow for the generation of recommendations that may improve transition services and service coordination for students with disabilities across the province.

The participation of a student will require the permission of the student's parent(s) or guardian(s). The name of your school board, high schools, or any individual's name will not be used in any publication or oral presentation resulting from this research. When direct quotes or paraphrasing are used, fictitious names will be employed. Your school board, high schools, staff members, and community members will remain anonymous. Any personal information revealed by any of the participants will remain confidential. Information gathered from this study will be used for research purposes only.

Any participant in this study may abstain or withdraw from participating at any time.

It is anticipated that findings from this research will serve to inform policy makers, educators, and people with disabilities about the current state of transition services in Ontario and will lead to the formation of recommendations that may serve to guide the future direction of transition services and interagency collaboration across the province.

Data collected from this research will be stored and kept secure for a minimum of five years for further analysis by the aforementioned researchers only.

Any requests for information or complaints about the ethical conduct of this project may be addressed to the University Human Research Ethics Committee Chair: Faculty of Education, room 305, Lamoureux Hall, tel. (613) 562-5800, extension 4057. If you have any questions about this research project please contact the researcher, Dale R. Petruka at (613) 569-8345.

There are two copies of the consent form, one which is to be signed and returned to the researcher and the other to be kept by you if you would like to retain a copy.

I, (please print your name) _____, of the (state the name of your Board of Education) _____, allow Dale R. Petruka under the supervision of Hanne Mawhinney, Ph.D. to conduct a case study of the transition program in place at (name of high school).

Signature of the Director/Superintendent

Date

Signature of the Researcher

Date

Optional: If you would like to receive a summary of the findings of this study which should be available by December 1998, please indicate your name and address below.

Informed Consent Form for Parents/Students of the Case Study

Title of the Project: An analysis of service coordination and the transition of youth with disabilities from high school to adult life in Ontario

Researchers: Dale R. Petruka (Ph.D. candidate)
401-27 Henderson Avenue
Ottawa, ON
K1N 7P3
(613) 569-8345

Hanne Mawhinney, Ph.D. (advisor)
Faculty of Education
University of Ottawa
145 Jean-Jacques Lussier
Ottawa, ON
K1N 6N5
(613) 562-5800 ext. 4039

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This research has been approved by the Blank District School Board.

The purpose of this research is to conduct a study of a highly collaborative transition program to determine what practices help the transition process and service coordination between schools and service agencies. It is hoped that the findings from this study will allow for the generation of recommendations that may improve transition services and service coordination for students with disabilities across the province.

Your participation involves a face-to-face interview that will be audio-taped and later transcribed. I will ask you questions about your experiences and understanding of the transition program at your school, what you think helps the program, what you think stops the program from working, and your suggestions for how the program can be improved.

If you are a student under the age of 18, your participation requires the permission of your parent(s) or guardian(s).

Your name, the name of your school board, or your high school will not be used in any publication or oral presentation resulting from this research. When a direct quote will be used, a fictitious name will be employed. The anonymity of all participants in this study will be protected.

Information gathered from this study will be used for research purposes only. Data collected from this research will be stored and kept secure for a minimum of five years for further analysis by the aforementioned researchers only. The information collected for this project is confidential and protected under the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, 1989.

You may abstain or withdraw your participation at any time.

It is anticipated that findings from this research will serve to inform policy makers, educators, and people with disabilities about the current state of transition services in Ontario and will lead to the formation of recommendations that may serve to guide the future direction of transition services and interagency collaboration across the province.

Any requests for information or complaints about the ethical conduct of this project may be addressed to the University Human Research Ethics Committee Chair: Faculty of Education, room 305, Lamoureux Hall, tel. (613) 562-5800, extension 4057. If you have any questions about this research project please contact the researcher, Dale R. Petruka at (613) 569-8345.

There are two copies of the consent form, one which is to be signed and returned to the researcher and the other which may be kept by you if you would like to retain a copy.

I, (please print your name) _____ have read and understood the request for my participation and the participation of my son/daughter in the above described study. I have discussed it with my son/daughter and:

_____ I will participate and I give permission for my son/daughter to participate.

_____ I will not participate and I do not give permission for my son/daughter to participate.

Signature of the Student

Date

Signature of the Student's parent(s) or
legal guardian(s)

Date

Signature of the Researcher

Date

Optional: If you would like to receive a summary of the findings of this study which should be available by December 1998, please indicate your name and address below.

Informed Consent Form for School/Agency personnel of the Case Study

Title of the Project: An analysis of service coordination and the transition of youth with disabilities from high school to adult life in Ontario

Researchers: Dale R. Petruka (Ph.D. candidate)
401-27 Henderson Avenue
Ottawa, ON
K1N 7P3
(613) 569-8345

Hanne Mawhinney, Ph.D. (advisor)
Faculty of Education
University of Ottawa
145 Jean-Jacques Lussier
Ottawa, ON
K1N 6N5
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This research has been approved by the Blank District School Board.

The purpose of this research is to conduct a study of a highly collaborative transition program to determine what practices help the transition process and service coordination between schools and service agencies. It is hoped that the findings from this study will allow for the generation of recommendations that may improve transition services and service coordination for students with disabilities across the province.

Your participation involves a face-to-face interview that will be audio-taped and later transcribed. I will ask you questions about your experiences and understanding of the transition program at your school, what you think helps the program, what you think stops the program from working, and your suggestions for how the program can be improved.

Your name, the name of your school board, or the name of your high school will not be used in any publication or oral presentation resulting from this research. When a direct quote will be used, a fictitious name will be employed. The anonymity of all participants in this study will be protected. The information collected for this project is confidential and protected under the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, 1989.

Information gathered from this study will be used for research purposes only. Data collected from this research will be stored and kept secure for a minimum of five years for further analysis by the aforementioned researchers only.

You may abstain or withdraw your participation at any time.

It is anticipated that findings from this research will serve to inform policy makers, educators, and people with disabilities about the current state of transition services in Ontario and will lead to the formation of recommendations that may serve to guide the future direction of transition services and interagency collaboration across the province.

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There are two copies of the consent form, one which is to be signed and returned to the researcher and the other which may be kept by you if you would like to retain a copy.

I, (please print your name) _____ have read and understood the request for my participation.

_____ I will participate.

_____ I will not participate.

Signature

Date

Signature of the Researcher

Date

Optional: If you would like to receive a summary of the findings of this study which should be available by December 1998, please indicate your name and address below.

APPENDIX M**Descriptive Statistics from Questionnaire****Part A: Information about your school**

1. In what type of area is your school located?

Urban	Suburban	Rural
39.5%	32.7%	27.9%

2. Approximately how many students attend your high school?

Range: 45-2365	M = 1000.1	SD = 432.77
----------------	------------	-------------

- 3a) How many special education students does your high school serve?

Range: 2-500	M = 131.12 = 14.93%	SD = 84.87
--------------	---------------------	------------

- b) What percentage of the total number of special education students would you classify as mildly, moderately or severely disabled? (The three amounts should total 100% and represent all special education students indicated in question 3a)

Mild	Moderate	Severe
NB: The results from this question were not reliable.		

Part B: Your Views and Opinions

1. Frequencies and descriptive statistics for agreement with best practices can be found in Appendix N.

Frequencies and descriptive statistics for actual carrying-out of best practices can be found in Appendix O.

2. Are there any other practices that you believe facilitate the transition process for students with disabilities?

- 43% of respondents answered this question

3. Whose responsibility do you believe it is to initiate the transition process? (check only one)

Special Education Teacher	100/282 = 35.5%
Parents	55/282 = 19.5%
School Administration	31/282 = 11%
Student	19/282 = 6.7%
Agency	12/282 = 4.3%
Other	65/282 = 23%
No response	18/300

4. Whose responsibility do you believe it is to implement the transition planning process? (check only one)

Special Education Teacher	78/279 = 28%
Parents	25/279 = 9%
School Administration	21/279 = 7.5%
Student	24/279 = 8.6%
Agency	42/279 = 15.1%
Other	89/279 = 31.9%
No response	21/300

5. Frequencies and descriptive statistics indicators of implementation capacity can be found in Appendix P.

Part C: Background Information

1. Have you read and consider yourself to be familiar with the Ministry of Labour and Ministry of Education's document *Bridges to Employment for Students with Disabilities: A Resource Guide for School-to-Work Transition (SWT) Programs* published in 1988?

Yes	No	No Response
108/278 = 38.8%	170/278 = 61%	22/300

Your training:

2. What degrees do you hold? (Check more than one if needed)

Bachelor's Degree(s)	199/291 = 68.4%
Master's Degree	90/291 = 30.9%
Doctorate	2/291 = .7%
No response	9/300

3. Which Ministry of Education Special Education courses have you taken and what year did you complete each component.

Part I	14/289 = 4.8 %
Part II	12/289 = 4.2%
Part III (Specialist)	248/289 = 85.8%
None of the above	15/289 = 5.2%
No response	11/300

4a) How much training have you had regarding *transition* issues?

Extensive training (more than 20 hours of training)	Some training (less than 20 hours of training)	No training (zero hours of training)
31/287 = 10.8%	115/287 = 40.1%	141/287 = 49.1%

b) If you have had training, in what course(s)/program(s) did you receive your training?
(Place a check mark beside all appropriate responses)

B.Ed. program	19/269 = 6.3%
Special Education Part I	30/269 = 10%
Special Education Part II	28/269 = 9.3%
Special Education Part III (Specialist)	41/269 = 13.7%
Inservice Training	99/269 = 33%
Other	52/269 = 17.3%

NB: People marked more than one

c) How beneficial was this training to your understanding of transition issues?

Very beneficial	Somewhat beneficial	Not beneficial
45/140 = 32.1%	94/140 = 67.1%	1/140 = 0.7%

d) Do you feel you would benefit from (more) training in the school-to-adult life transition of youth with disabilities?

Yes	No	No Response
245/274 = 89.4%	29/274 = 10.6%	26/300

5a) How much training have you had regarding *service coordination and/or working in collaborative interagency teams*?

Extensive training (more than 20 hours of training)	Some training (less than 20 hours of training)	No training (zero hours of training)
18/286 = 6.3%	71/286 = 24.8%	197/286 = 68.9%

b) If you have had training in this area, in what course(s)/program(s) did you receive your training? (Place a check mark beside all appropriate responses.)

B.Ed. program	4/145 = 1.3%
Special Education Part I	1/145 = 3.7%
Special Education Part II	8/145 = 2.7%
Special Education Part III (Specialist)	25/145 = 14.7%
Inservice Training	58/145 = 19.3%
Other	39/145 = 13%

NB: People marked more than one

c) How beneficial was this training to your understanding of service coordination?

Very beneficial	Somewhat beneficial	Not beneficial
24/85 = 28.2%	59/85 = 69.4%	2/85 = 2.4%

d) Do you feel you would benefit from (more) training on how to work on interagency collaborative teams to facilitate the school-to-adult life transition of youth with disabilities?

Yes	No	No Response
222/252 = 88.1%	30/252 = 11.9%	48/300

Your school's transition program(s).

6a) Does your school *need* a transition program for special education students?

Yes	No	No Response
230/278 = 82.7%	48/278 = 17.3%	22/300

c) Do you believe the transition programs should include service coordination between schools and agencies?

Yes	No	No Response
269/273 = 98.5%	4/273 = 1.5%	27/300

7. Does your school have a school-to-work (and/or a school-to-adult life) transition program for students with disabilities at the present time?

Yes	No	No Response
222/252 = 88.1%	30/252 = 11.9%	48/300

- b) If yes, were members of your school communities involved in the creation of the program?

Yes	No	No Response
93/118 = 78.8%	25/118 = 21.2%	182/300

- c) If yes, is there frequent assessment of the quality of the program?

Often	Sometimes	No
40/108 = 37%	44/108 = 40.7%	24/108 = 22.2%

- d) Does your school's transition program include service coordination with human service agencies?

Yes	No	No Response
82/114 = 78.8%	32/114 = 21.2%	114/300

Additional information:

10. May I call you if clarification or elaboration is required about any of your responses?

Yes	No	No Response
262/292 = 89.7%	30/292 = 10.3%	8/300

11. Would you be willing to participate in a telephone interview in which you could tell me more detailed information about your school's transition program?

Yes	No	No Response
185/267 = 69.3%	82/267 = 30.7%	33/300

If yes, what is the best time to contact you and at what number?

area code	valid %	frequency
416	13.6%	36
519	17.8%	47
613	14%	37
705	17.8	47
807	2.3%	6
905	34.1%	90
missing	—	36
total =		<u>300</u>

Your job:

special education teacher	$231/276 = 77.5\%$
teacher	$10/276 = 3.6\%$
principal	$7/276 = 2.5\%$
head of student services	$19/276 = 6.9\%$
all others	$1/276 = .4\%$
missing	24/300

Your school board:

separate	$94/284 = 33.1\%$
public	$187/284 = 65.8\%$
provincial school	$3/284 = 1.1\%$
missing	16/300

APPENDIX N**Frequencies and Descriptive Statistics for Agreement with Best Practices**

Practices that may facilitate transition	Number of responses	Number of missing responses	Frequency (valid %)					M	Mode	SD	Correlation between agreement and actual practice* (Pearson R)
			1 strongly disagree	2	3	4	5 strongly agree				
1.1 Development of a formal Individualized Transition Plan (ITP).	285	15	1.1	5.3	25.6	32.6	35.4	3.96	5	.96	.48
1.2 The student's wishes, interests, needs, strengths, and abilities are incorporated into the transition plans.	281	19	0	.4	8.2	27.0	64.4	4.56	5	.66	.59
1.3 Planning for transition begins before the student reaches the age of 16.	285	15	1.1	6.3	15.8	30.9	4.14	4.14	5	.97	.58
1.4 The student is notified of vocational options, opportunities, and support services before reaching the age of 16.	283	17	.4	2.8	17.	27.9	51.9	4.28	5	.87	.63
1.5 Vocational and academic curricula are integrated.	278	22	.4	3.2	10.4	30.6	55.4	4.37	5	.83	.58
1.6 The student is placed in the least restrictive instructional setting (age-appropriate, aiming for regular classroom placement as much as possible).	276	24	1.1	2.9	8.7	25.0	62.3	4.45	5	.85	.68
1.7 Students are encouraged to take occupationally oriented vocational courses.	273	27	2.6	4.4	17.9	29.7	45.4	4.11	5	1.02	.68
1.8 Student gains work experience while in school (e.g., co-operative education).	287	13	0	0	3.1	16.0	80.8	4.78	5	.49	.66

1.9 Job placement services are available in the school for students with disabilities prior to and following completion of vocational education courses.	266	34	2.6	1.1	15.4	33.1	47.7	4.22	5	.93	.53
1.10 Curriculum and transition programs are focused on resources/jobs available in the community.	273	27	1.8	4.0	11.7	41.0	41.4	4.16	5	.91	.59
1.11 School provides career education curriculum.	284	16	0	.7	4.9	33.8	60.6	4.54	5	.62	.53
1.12 School provides vocational training.	272	28	1.8	1.8	11.4	33.8	51.1	4.31	5	.88	.50
1.13 School provides social skills training.	274	26	0	2.2	6.9	28.5	62.4	4.51	5	.72	.50
1.14 Instructional support services are available (e.g., teacher aides, special materials, assistive technology, interpreters, peer tutors).	288	12	0	.3	1.0	16.3	82.3	4.81	5	.45	.47
1.15 School provides career guidance services for special education students.	288	12	0	0	4.5	23.6	71.0	4.67	5	3.02	.44
1.16 Students receive on-going job support (e.g., job coach, supported employment, regular contact between the school and agency)	286	14	1.4	1.0	9.4	32.5	55.6	4.40	5	.81	.51
1.17 School provides vocational assessments for special education students.	282	18	1.8	1.1	18.8	35.1	43.3	4.17	5	.89	.46
1.18 Alternative assessments like portfolios are used.	269	31	3.0	3.7	24.9	34.9	33.5	3.92	4	1.00	.59
1.19 Parents are involved in the transition planning process.	287	13	0	107	4.2	32.1	62.0	4.54	5	.66	.47
1.20 Parents receive training to prepare them for the transition of their child.	269	31	3	2.6	21.6	35.7	37.2	4.02	5	.98	.41

1.21 Follow-up data on the post-school outcomes of former special education students are collected.	283	17	1.8	3.5	34.6	34.3	25.8	3.79	3	.93	.25
1.22 The school and human service agencies share a "common problem" (the need to prepare students for the transition from high school).	279	21	.4	1.4	9.3	29.4	59.5	4.46	5	.75	.47
1.23 School and agencies are committed to a common mission. (to prepare students for the transition).	279	21	1.1	2.9	15.1	23.7	57.3	4.33	5	.91	.50
1.24 Schools and agencies understand each other's eligibility and entitlement requirements.	265	35	4.5	3.4	15.8	30.6	45.7	4.09	5	1.07	.52
1.25 Schools and agencies share common definitions of disabilities.	273	27	4	5.5	10.3	30.4	49.8	4.16	5	1.08	.45
1.26 Teachers and agency personnel were involved in the formation of plans and policies for collaboration.	267	33	3	3.4	13.9	37.5	42.3	4.13	5	.98	.48
1.27 There is a written agreement to coordinate services between the school and human service agencies.	236	64	9.3	5.5	28.4	28	28.8	3.61	5	1.22	.43
(b) Agreements state the roles and responsibilities of both the school and the community agency.	67	233	3	3	22.4	40.3	31.3	3.94	4	.97	.72
(c) Written agreements state the specific supports and resources the student requires.	66	234	1.5	1.5	21.2	42.4	33.3	4.05	4	.87	.75
1.28 School and agencies share and combine resources so that services overlap.	253	47	5.1	6.3	20.9	30.8	36.8	3.88	5	1.13	.57
1.29 All costs are shared equally between schools and agencies.	225	75	12.4	7.1	28.0	23.6	28.9	3.49	5	1.31	.54

1.30 Lines of communication between the school and agencies have been developed.	262	38	1.5	2.7	9.2	31.7	55	4.36	5	.87	.65
1.31 Monitoring occurs to ensure that the responsibilities of the school and agencies are being carried out.	252	48	4.8	5.2	21.0	35.3	33.7	3.88	4	1.08	.53

Note. Missing variables were not used in the calculations.

* sign. = .00 for all of these values

M = Mean

SD = Standard Deviation

APPENDIX O**Frequencies and Descriptive Statistics for Actual Carrying-out of Best Practices**

Practices that may facilitate transition	Number	Number of missing variables	Frequency (%)					M	Mode	SD	Correlation between agreement and actual practice* (Pearson R)
			1 never	2	3	4	5 always				
1.1 Development of a formal Individualized Transition Plan (ITP).	286	14	24.1	18.9	24.1	19.9	12.9	2.79	1	1.35	.48
1.2 The student's wishes, interests, needs, strengths, and abilities are incorporated into the transition plans.	273	27	11.7	5.5	19.4	28.9	34.4	3.69	5	1.31	.59
1.3 Planning for transition begins before the student reaches the age of 16.	278	22	8.6	12.2	29.1	32	18	3.39	4	1.17	.58
1.4 The student is notified of vocational options, opportunities, and support services before reaching the age of 16.	283	17	4.9	11.0	29.0	27.9	27.2	3.61	3	1.14	.63
1.5 Vocational and academic curricula are integrated.	282	18	3.5	10.6	28.4	33.0	24.5	3.64	4	1.07	.58
1.6 The student is placed in the least restrictive instructional setting (age-appropriate, aiming for regular classroom placement as much as possible).	280	20	.7	5.0	10.0	28.2	56.1	4.34	5	.90	.68
1.7 Students are encouraged to take occupationally oriented vocational courses.	272	28	6.6	13.2	29	29	22.1	3.47	3	1.16	.68
1.8 Student gains work experience while in school (e.g., co-operative education).	287	13	0	2.1	12.9	36.2	48.8	4.32	5	.78	.66

1.9 Job placement services are available in the school for students with disabilities prior to and following completion of vocational education courses.	266	34	26.3	24.1	19.5	15.4	14.7	2.68	1	1.39	.53
1.10 Curriculum and transition programs are focused on resources/jobs available in the community.	268	32	10.4	20.9	30.6	23.9	14.2	3.11	3	1.19	.59
1.11 School provides career education curriculum.	284	16	2.1	11.6	21.8	31.3	33.1	3.82	5	1.08	.53
1.12 School provides vocational training.	272	28	14.3	20.2	26.8	20.6	18	3.08	3	1.30	.50
1.13 School provides social skills training.	275	25	3.3	11.3	30.5	26.9	28.0	3.65	3	1.10	.50
1.14 Instructional support services are available (e.g., teacher aides, special materials, assistive technology, interpreters, peer tutors).	290	10	.7	4.5	20.7	28.3	45.9	4.14	5	.94	.47
1.15 School provides career guidance services for special education students.	290	10	3.4	7.6	22.4	31.0	35.5	3.88	5	1.09	.44
1.16 Students receive on-going job support (e.g., job coach, supported employment, regular contact between the school and agency)	287	13	12.5	16.7	25.1	21.3	24.4	3.28	3	1.34	.51
1.17 School provides vocational assessments for special education students.	282	18	23.4	24.1	28.4	14.5	9.6	2.63	3	1.25	.46
1.18 Alternative assessments like portfolios are used.	278	22	29.1	18.7	27.0	15.8	9.4	2.58	1	1.31	.59
1.19 Parents are involved in the transition planning process.	284	16	2.8	15.8	21.8	28.9	30.6	3.69	5	1.15	.47
1.20 Parents receive training to prepare them for the transition of their child.	273	27	43.6	25.3	189.8	6.6	4.8	2.04	1	1.15	.41

1.21 Follow-up data on the post-school outcomes of former special education students are collected.	285	15	51.2	26.7	15.1	5.3	1.8	1.80	1	1.00	.25
1.22 The school and human service agencies share a "common problem" (the need to prepare students for the transition from high school).	274	26	15.0	19.7	31.4	19.0	15.0	2.99	3	1.26	.47
1.23 School and agencies are committed to a common mission. (to prepare students for the transition).	283	27	9.5	24.5	30.4	19.8	15.8	3.08	3	1.21	.50
1.24 Schools and agencies understand each other's eligibility and entitlement requirements.	259	41	16.2	27.0	28.6	17.8	10.4	2.79	3	1.21	.52
1.25 Schools and agencies share common definitions of disabilities.	262	38	9.9	23.7	29.8	19.8	16.8	3.10	3	1.22	.45
1.26 Teachers and agency personnel were involved in the formation of plans and policies for collaboration.	268	32	30.2	25.4	22.4	14.6	7.5	2.44	1	1.26	.48
1.27 There is a written agreement to coordinate services between the school and human service agencies.	227	73	78.4	5.3	8.4	4.0	4.0	1.50	1	1.07	.43
(b) Agreements state the roles and responsibilities of both the school and the community agency.	47	253	19.1	12.8	31.9	21.3	14.9	3	3	1.32	.72
(c) Written agreements state the specific supports and resources the student requires.	50	250	20.0	12.0	36.0	18.0	14.0	2.94	3	1.30	.75
1.28 School and agencies share and combine resources so that services overlap.	257	43	31.9	28.0	24.1	10.5	5.4	2.3	1	1.18	.57
1.29 All costs are shared equally between schools and agencies.	221	79	61.1	19.5	14.0	3.6	1.8	1.66	1	.97	.54

1.30 Lines of communication between the school and agencies have been developed.	266	34	10.9	13.9	30.8	26.3	18.0	3.27	3	1.22	.65
1.31 Monitoring occurs to ensure that the responsibilities of the school and agencies are being carried out.	257	43	37.7	23.3	19.8	12.1	7.0	2.27	1	1.27	.53

Note. Missing variables were not used in the calculations.

* sign. = .00 for all of these values

M = Mean

SD = Standard Deviation

APPENDIX P**Frequencies and Descriptive Statistics for Indicators of Implementation Capacity**

Indicators of Implementation Capacity	Number of responses	Number of missing responses	Frequency (valid %)					<u>M</u>	<u>Mdn</u>	Mode	<u>SD</u>
			1 strongly disagree	2 disagree	3 agree somewhat	4 agree	5 strongly agree				
a) Your school would be able to adapt the practices to your current school's procedures and organization.	282	18	2.8	8.9	32.6	38.7	17.0	3.58	4	4	.97
b) Your school has sufficient financial resources to adapt these practices.	282	18	43.6	29.8	19.9	5.3	1.4	1.91	2	1	.99
c) Your school has sufficient resources (i.e., personnel and supplies) to adapt these practices.	286	14	39.2	29.4	20.6	8.7	2.1	2.05	2	1	1.07
d) You have the skills to implement these practices.	290	10	4.8	6.2	31.4	36.9	20.7	3.62	4	4	1.03
e) You have the time to implement these practices.	289	11	42.9	28.4	19.7	6.6	2.4	1.97	2	1	1.05
f) These practices are needed at your school.	289	11	.7	4.5	24.6	38.4	31.8	3.96	4	4	.90
g) The practices are worthwhile.	284	16	.4	.4	12.0	39.4	47.9	4.34	4	5	.73
h) Your principal has the necessary skills to support these practices.	259	41	2.7	9.7	25.5	35.5	26.6	3.74	4	4	1.04
i) Transition programming is important to your principal.	260	40	3.8	8.1	33.1	33.8	21.2	3.60	4	4	1.03
j) Your school board's administrators have the necessary skills to support these practices.	246	54	3.3	14.2	30.5	37.0	15.0	3.46	4	4	1.02

k) Transition programming is important to the parents of special education students at you board.	256	44	7.0	19.5	38.3	21.5	13.7	3.15	3	3	1.11
l) Transition programming is important to the parents of special education students at your school.	271	29	.7	3.3	22.1	36.9	36.9	4.06	4	4*	.89
m) Transition programming is important to your city/town/community.	257	43	4.3	17.9	29.6	24.1	24.1	3.46	3	3	1.16
n) There is a high level of collaboration between the staff within your school.	273	27	1.5	7.3	31.5	37.0	22.7	3.72	4	4	.95

Note. Missing variables were not used in the calculations.

* Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown.

M = Mean

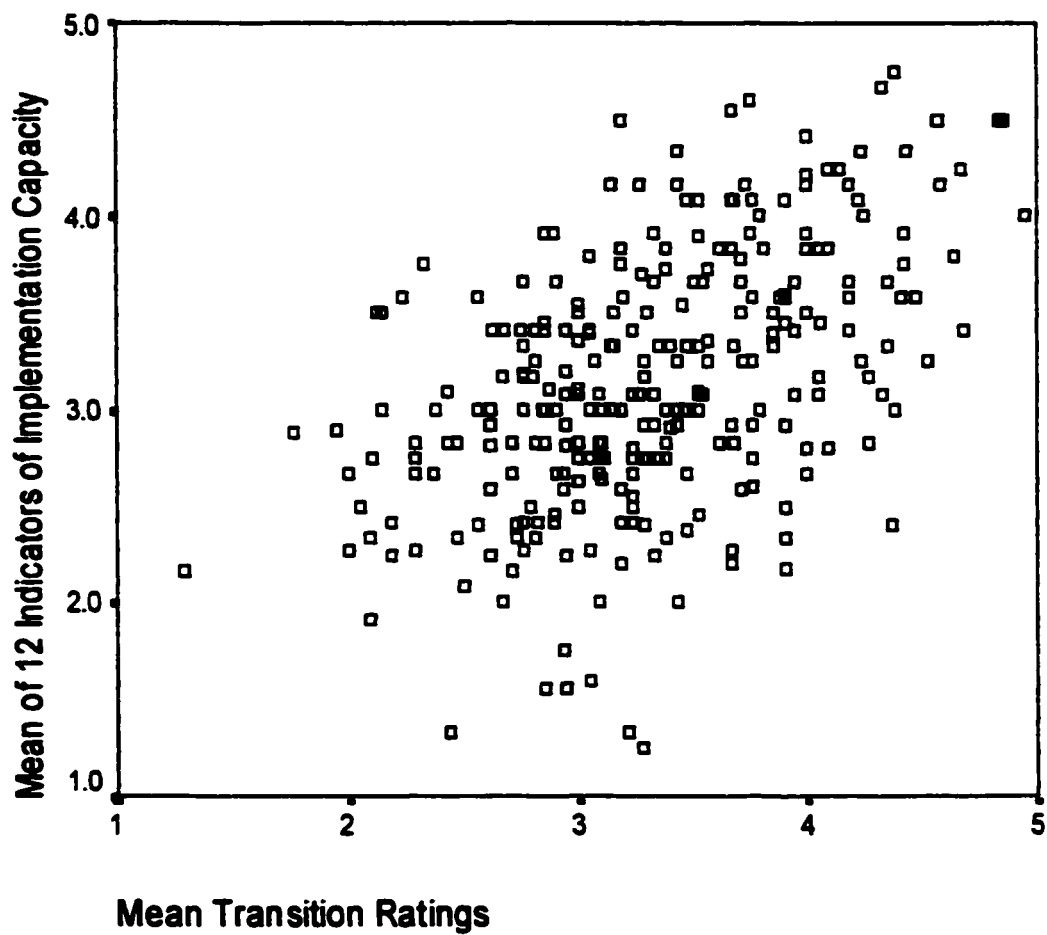
Mdn = Median

SD = Standard Deviation

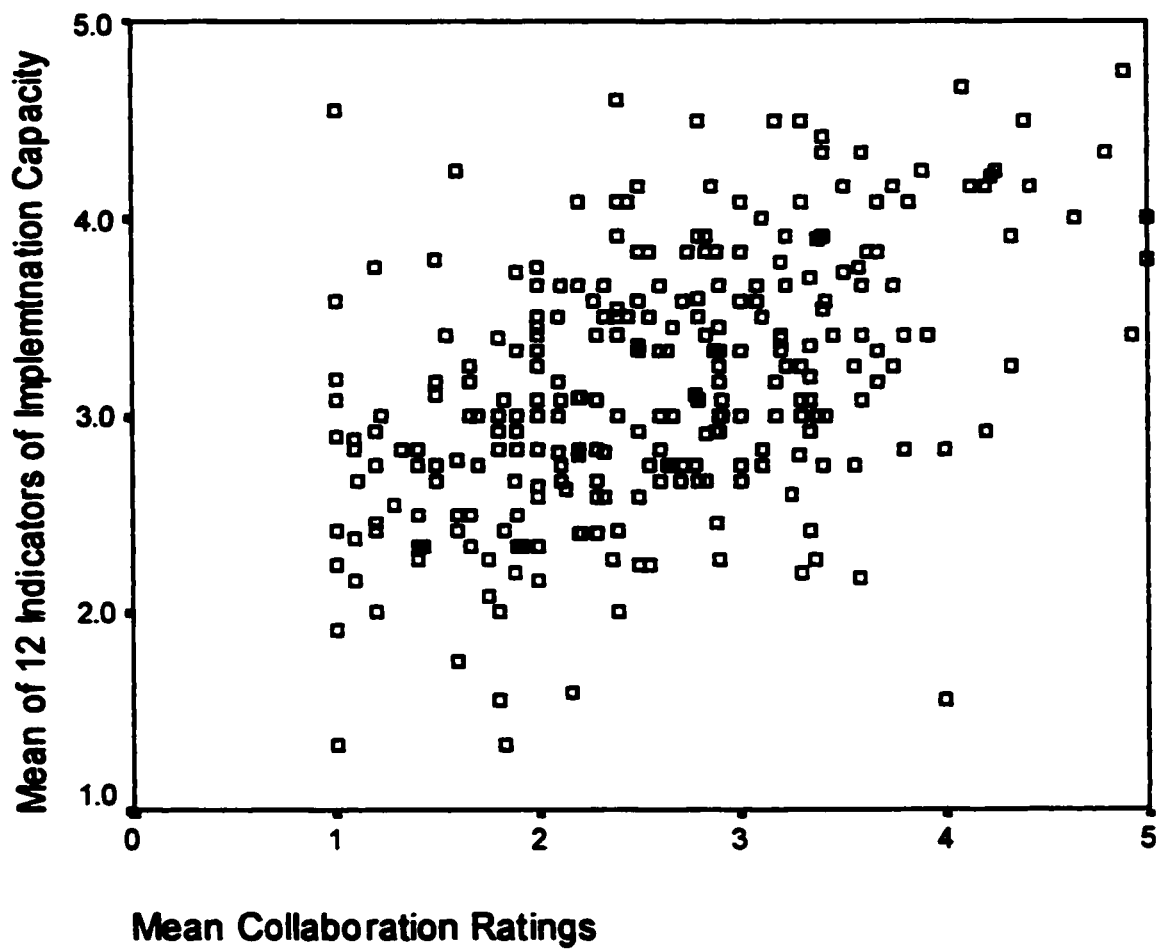
APPENDIX Q

Scatterplot Diagrams of Transition and Collaboration Ratings

Scatterplot Diagram of Transition Ratings



Scatterplot Diagram of Collaboration Ratings



APPENDIX R**Table of Tests Conducted and Findings from the Questionnaire**

Test conducted	Why test was performed?	Findings
Chi-square goodness-of-fit tests - by public/separate/provincial - student population - postal codes - Ministry of Education districts	- to determine of the distribution of my sample was similar to the distribution of all English high schools in Ontario	At the 5% significance level - by public/separate/provincial $p < .05$ - student population $p < .05$ - postal code $p < .05$ - Ministry of Education districts $p < .05$
Descriptive Statistics and Correlations Part A – Information about schools - frequencies (valid %), range, mean, standard deviations on - urban/rural/suburban, - school population - number of special education students	- to describe sample	- most schools are urban, then suburban, then rural - large range of student populations (45 - 2365) - special education students comprises about 15% of student population – this is higher than expected
Part B – Opinions and Views - frequencies (valid %) mean, median, mode, standard deviation of all transition and collaboration practices	- to demonstrate the degree to which respondents agreed with best practices and the degree to which they were being carried out	- respondents agreed or strongly agreed with all of the best practices but one – they were neutral about collecting follow-up data - 63.8% of respondents believe they are doing most of these practices more than some of the time

		- 28.5% of respondents believe they are doing most collaboration practices more than some of the time - schools need to do more collaborating with agencies
- correlations (Pearson R) between agreement and actual practices	- to see if agreement is related to actual practice	- agreement and actual practices are moderately related
Frequencies only - who should initiate transition planning? - who should implement transition planning?	- to find out who respondents believe should initiate and implement planning	- I was surprised that one of the most frequent answers was one I didn't even give as an option: team effort was second most popular choice for initiate after special education teacher, and the first choice for implementation
Frequency, mean, median, mode for all indicators of implementation capacity	- to learn to what degree respondents believe indicators of readiness for change are present in their schools	- respondents agreed with 6/12 indicators; they could adopt practices, had skills, believed their principal had the skills, it was important to principal and parents, and there was a high level of collaboration - neutral with 3/12 indicators – school board administrators have the skills and importance of transition planning to school board and community - disagreed with money, time, and resources

Correlation coefficients amongst predictors	- to see if indicators are related and if there are any redundant indicators	- moderately correlated
<u>Part C – Background Information</u> <u>Frequencies</u> - <u>Bridges</u> document - Education level of respondents - Training - Whether respondents have or don't have a transition program - Barriers and facilitators	- to learn about the people answering the questionnaire and their opinions	39% had read the <u>Bridges</u> document - 70% have a BEd, 30% have a masters, <1% have doctorate - 85.5% had special education specialist - majority had no or little training in transition - if respondent had training it was from Spec. Ed. MofEd courses or in-service (few in BEd courses) - 88.1% want more training - 99% believed they should coordinate services with outside agencies - 43% said they already had a transition program - 73% of the 43% involved the community in the program's creation - top barriers – money, personnel, time, not needing a program, and lack of resources

		- 5 facilitators – staff dedication, co-op, spec. ed. personnel, parents, and the guidance department
<u>Additional Information</u> Frequencies	- to learn about respondents - to prepare for the next phase	- questionnaires were answered by 77.5% special education teachers - 70% would allow me to interview them
Cronbach's Alpha	- to test the internal consistency of all 5 criterion	- scores demonstrate internal consistency
Intercorrelation Matrix	- to determine to what degree practices and indicators are related to each other	- agreement and actual means and means for indicators show all variables are moderately correlated - indicators are moderately correlated to means of each of the 4 criterion - indicators explain some of the gap between agreement and actual practice
Regression Linear Regression	- to test relationships between variables - to answer the question: Do indicators indicate a school's transition score?	- there is some relationship although not strong between the indicators and a school's transition score
Step-wise multiple regression	- to determine which of the indicators best explain actual practice	- Indicators that predict actual transition most - skills, importance to principal, time, collaboration with staff, importance to parents

Chi-square tests	- to look for significant relationships between variables	Indicators that predict actual collaboration most - time, ability to adapt practices, skills, money, importance to principal - reading the document <u>Bridges</u> did not mean a higher transition rating but <i>not</i> reading it almost always meant a low rating - training helped, but not having training did not stop schools from carrying out transition practices - wanting to collaborate or having a transition program that had did collaborate with agencies was not significantly related to collaboration ratings - schools may have a transition program but not necessarily collaborate - some schools are carrying out transition practices but do not have a transition program in place - being involved in the creation of a transition program was not significantly related to transition or collaboration ratings
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		- frequent assessments related to higher collaboration ratings but not transition ratings - suburban schools had a higher percentage of transition ratings than urban and rural schools - student population, number of special education students, and geographic location were not significantly related to transition or collaboration score - separate schools had a higher percentage of schools with a high transition score than public schools - those respondents who believed the spec. ed. teacher, student, or a group should initiate the transition process had a higher transition score - those respondents who believed administration should initiate the transition process had the lowest percentage of high transition scores
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APPENDIX S

Dale R. Petruka
847 Colborne St. E.
Brantford, ON
N3S 3S8
(519) 770-0451
fax: (519) 759-4497

September 1, 2000

Dr. Paul Wehrman
Professor of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation
Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Supported Employment
Virginia Commonwealth University
1314 West Main Street
Richmond, Virginia
23284-0211
(804) 828-1851
fax (804) 828-2181

Dear Dr. Wehrman,

I am a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Ottawa in Canada. My thesis advisor is Dr. Hanne Mawhinney, currently at the University of Maryland. I am in the process of writing the final draft of my thesis on the implementation of transition planning in Ontario, Canada. I would like permission to reproduce your model of agency interaction in the literature review chapter of my thesis. A copy of the page with the diagram is attached to this letter.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. If you agree to give me authorization, please mail a letter of permission to:

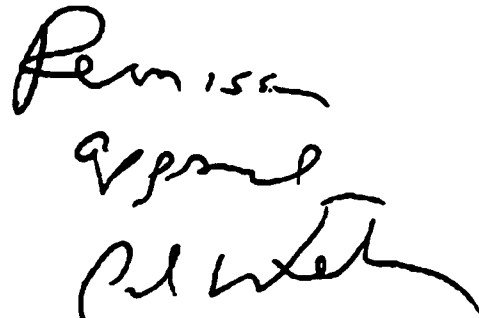
Dale R. Petruka
847 Colborne St. E.
Brantford, ON
N3S 3S8

If you would prefer to fax the letter, my fax number is (519) 759-4497.
Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at (519) 770-0451.

Sincerely,



Dale R. Petruka
Ph.D. Candidate
University of Ottawa, Canada



09/01/00 FRI 07:48 FAX 541 346 1411



UNIVERSITY OF OREGON
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

September 1, 2000

Dale R. Petruka
847 Colborne Street E.
Brantford, ON
N3S 3S8

Dear Ms. Petruka:

In your letter to me dated August 29, 2000 you requested permission to reproduce the diagram of my transition model as part of the literature review of your doctoral thesis. I am pleased to grant you this permission.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Andrew S. Halpern".

Andrew S. Halpern
Professor

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