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USING A TRANSITION CURRICULUM TO INCREASE SELF-DETERMINATION IN
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Dedication

To my family, my friends, my colleagues, and my students

Acknowledgments

I would not have begun this journey had it not been for my husband, Eric, the most passionate educator and my biggest cheerleader. Thank you, Eric, Joah, and Coen, for your eternal patience, your unwavering confidence, and your gracious understanding throughout this journey. To Mom and Dad, thank you for instilling in me a passion for learning and for loving me so well. I love you all.

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Abstract

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (2004) mandates that students with disabilities who attend public schools should have a well-developed transition plan as part of the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) by the time the child is 16 years old, if not earlier, in an attempt to increase postsecondary preparedness and success. In transition, it is integral that planning and preparation occur in three key areas: postsecondary education, employment, and independent living. Targeted instruction in preparing for postsecondary success is not happening enough, and it is happening even less in private schools. Private schools are often identified as institutions of rigorous instruction, but little is known of efforts being made to develop the whole student in both academic and nonacademic behaviors associated with strong postschool outcomes, especially for students with disabilities. The purpose of this study is to broaden the evidence base for *Whose Future Is It Anyway?* (WFA), a self-directed transition curriculum package designed to increase individual levels of self-determination in youth with disabilities, and to measure its impact on students with disabilities in the private school setting. Forty-nine students participated in 10 transition-focused lessons of WFA. Student-reported levels of self-determination were measured by pre- and posttest administrations of the *AIR Self-Determination Scale-Student* and the *Self-Determination Inventory: Self-Report*. Teachers provided an additional measure of self-determination for participating students on the *AIR Self-Determination Scale-Educator*. Quantitative results suggest some statistical significance in increases in scores of self-determination following participation in WFA, while qualitative interviews allowed for a deeper understanding of students' perspectives of transition-focused instruction of WFA.

Chapter 1

Introduction

The origin of public education in the United States began in Colonial America, a time in which educational opportunities were limited to the upper class; private instruction in reading, writing, and arithmetic was primarily provided for young boys of wealthy families, to ensure their understanding of colonial laws (Liachowitz, 1989). The determination to allow access to education hinged on one's prospect of becoming a contributing member of society. However, changes in the nation occurred, and policymakers determined that more children needed to be educated. In 1852, the state of Massachusetts implemented the first compulsory school; however, not all children were admitted, and a national discourse began, centered on the educability of children across the nation. Since then, education in the United States has evolved; children of all races, gender, class, and ability are entitled to an education (Every Student Succeeds Act [ESSA], 2015).

James Truslow Adams, in 1931, defined the American Dream as “that dream of a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone, with opportunity for each according to ability or achievement” (p. 214). Education is key to reaching the great American Dream. Intact today, a hallmark feature of the United States is access to education for all. Although education in the United States has evolved to be more inclusive of those with disabilities, the question remains: upon graduation from high school, are all students with disabilities prepared to be successful? Recently, research in education has focused on transition practices of students with disabilities, and the evolution of best practices for preparing students with disabilities for life beyond high school is occurring. This study identifies the benefits of

focused transition preparation through a curriculum package that is intended to increase self-determination of students with disabilities.

The remainder of this chapter consists of three sections: the first section presents a brief evolution of initiatives to improve education for students with disabilities; the second section provides a literature review of transition and self-determination for students with disabilities; and the third section frames the research study and presents the broad research questions guiding this study.

Students with Disabilities: Initiatives in Education

In 1990, Congress implemented The Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) (P. L. 102-119) in an attempt to improve educational outcomes for students with disabilities in public schools. Since its inception, IDEA has undergone three reauthorizations: 1994 (P. L. 103-382), 1997 (P. L. 105-17), and 2004 (P. L. 108-466). In 2004, IDEA was amended to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA), an effort to better align the law with No Child Left Behind of 2001 (NCLB), a federally mandated educational program meant to raise educational standards and, in kind, to ensure academic achievement for all children through federally funded services and programs. A key addition to the law introduced the inclusion of a results-oriented process of transition planning, including age-appropriate assessment, education, and related services, as well as measurable annual goals and objectives, for students with disabilities (IDEA). IDEA (2004) defines transition as

a coordinated set of activities for a student with a disability that (1) is designed within an outcome-oriented process, that promotes movement from school to postschool activities, including postsecondary education, vocational education, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing an adult education, adult services,

independent living, or community participation; (2) is based on the individual student's needs, taking into account the student's preferences and interests. (Sec. 300.29)

(Wehmeyer & Webb, 2012)

A plan for transition should be developed by the time the child is 16 years old, if not earlier, in an attempt to increase postsecondary preparedness and success (U. S. Department of Education [USDE], 2007). An integral piece of the Individualized Education Program (IEP), transition planning has emerged as a best practice in educating students with disabilities by identifying and addressing the academic and nonacademic behaviors associated with strong postschool outcomes (McConnell et al., 2012). At the secondary level, transition planning and preparation is intended to equip students with disabilities with the necessary knowledge, skills, and connections to be successful after graduation, and it occurs in three key areas: employment, postsecondary education, and independent living (USDE, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services [OSERS], 2017).

Increasing Postsecondary Outcomes through Transition Planning

Youth with disabilities have the right to determine the steps they will take after high school. In transition, it is integral that planning and preparation occur in the aforementioned key areas: postsecondary education, employment, and independent living (Halpern, 1994). Current transition-related outcomes, as identified in Wave 3 of the National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS-2) (Wagner, Newman, Cameto, Levine, & Marder, 2007), indicate that individuals with disabilities continue to experience poor postsecondary outcomes, supporting the need for continued improvement and expansion of transition planning and preparation for postsecondary education, employment, and independent living (Test et al., 2009a).

Attainment of postsecondary education is considered a natural stepping stone to competitive employment. The National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) (2011) identified that in the 2008-2009 school year, 88% of reporting two-year and four-year Title IV degree-granting postsecondary institutions enrolled students with disabilities, approximately 707,000 across the nation. Although enrollment and attendance of students in general has increased, students with disabilities continue to experience lower retention and graduation rates in comparison to their nondisabled peers (Newman et al., 2011). In 2015, 45% of individuals with disabilities aged 25 to 64 years old had attained a bachelor's degree or higher, in comparison with 84% of individuals without disabilities (NCES, 2017), the smallest population of individuals enrolling in postsecondary education (Trainor, Morningstar, & Murray, 2016). Students diagnosed with Learning Disabilities (LD), Emotional Disturbance (ED), and Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) enroll in four-year postsecondary settings at a rate of less than half than their nondisabled peers two to five years after graduating from high school (Trainor et al., 2016).

Employment allows for the social integration of individuals with disabilities, influencing measures of well-being, self-esteem, and quality of life (Stephens, Collins, & Dodder, 2005). However, individuals with disabilities enter the workforce at lower rates than those who are nondisabled (Lindstrom, Doren, & Miesch, 2011; NLTS-2, 2011; NCES, 2017). Data from the NLTS-2 (2010) indicate that one to four years after high school, 57% of individuals with disabilities were gainfully employed, compared to 66% of individuals without disabilities. Additionally, in examining the employment-related goals of students with disabilities in IEPs, 70% indicated they would like to pursue employment after high school (NLTS-2, 2010).

Independent living outcomes for individuals with disabilities emphasize the need for

comprehensive and targeted transition planning. A study conducted by Trainor et al. (2016) indicated that individuals with high-incidence disabilities continue to experience poor postschool outcomes in the areas of community participation and independence, encompassing independent living and other behaviors, such as financial independence, obtaining a driver's license, and registering to vote. Five years after graduation, 49% reported living at home with parents or other relatives, while 37% lived independently or with a roommate; 62% had opened a checking account, while 47% obtained a credit card.

Although much improvement has been made, the continued examination of postschool outcomes for individuals with disabilities indicates that students receiving special education services need more support in their preparation for life beyond high school (Trainor et al., 2016). Transition occurs naturally for some, while others need targeted support and opportunities to prepare in order to be successful and satisfied with their own lives (Test et al., 2009c).

Transition Education

The evolution of transition planning has been carefully scrutinized in order to determine the behaviors that contribute to strong postsecondary outcomes for students with disabilities. In this examination, the concept of self-determination emerged as a construct for increasing postsecondary outcomes for individuals with disabilities. Different conceptualizations of self-determination exist, but across the frameworks are four overarching characteristics: (a) choice, (b) control, (c) self-awareness, and (d) environment (Bambara, Cole, & Koger, 1998). Self-determination is defined by Field, Martin, Miller, Ward, and Wehmeyer (1998) as

a combination of skills, knowledge, and beliefs that enable a person to engage in goal directed, self-regulated, autonomous behavior. An understanding of one's strengths and limitations together with a belief in oneself as capable and effective are essential to self-

determination. When acting on the basis of these skills and attitudes, individuals have greater ability to take control of their lives and assume the role of successful adults. (p. 2)

Historically, the concept of self-determination was a result of “social movements such as self-advocacy, self-determination, disability rights, and independent living movement” (Rosser, 2010, p. 25) that were to increase quality of life for individuals with disabilities. Although IDEA (2004) does not explicitly call for self-determination development in students with disabilities, it does require that student preferences, needs, strengths, and interests guide the development of the IEP (Konrad, Walker, Fowler, Test, & Wood, 2008). Strong self-determination is important for individuals with disabilities, as it emphasizes the value of choice and control in one’s life (Martin & Huber Marshall, 1995; Wehmeyer, 1999; Rosser, 2010). Self-determination has long been used as a predictor of strong postschool outcomes (Agran, 1997), as well as academic and nonacademic skills that are linked to positive postsecondary education and employment outcomes (McConnell et al., 2012). In its original conceptualization, transition focused on students “transitioning” from one system to another, but since then the concept of transition has expanded to encompass more than simply determining the next move (Kohler & Field, 2003). Instead, transition-focused education “represents a shift from disability-focused, deficit-driven programs to an education and service-delivery approach based on abilities, options, and self-determination” (Kohler & Field, 2003, p. 176). The integration of self-determination instruction in the transition-planning process has had broad-sweeping implications for youth with disabilities, the results of which include stronger postsecondary outcomes and more fulfilling lives. One such curriculum is *Whose Future Is It Anyway?* (WFA) (Wehmeyer & Lawrence, 1995; Wehmeyer, Lawrence, Garner, Soukup, & Palmer, 2004), a self-directed transition curriculum package designed to increase individual levels of self-determination in youth with

disabilities. Self-determination curriculum packages benefit students with disabilities, allowing for supported opportunities to act as the authors of their lives, directing and self-regulating their behaviors in order to meet their goals (Wehmeyer & Webb, 2012). This requires that students with disabilities know themselves, know their strengths and needs, and know their goals (Mithaug, 1991), the exploration of which may occur through self-determination instruction (Wehmeyer et al., 2004).

Recent studies have bolstered the literature base of transition education practices, as curricula and instructional models have demonstrated efficacy in increasing self-determination in students with disabilities (Lee et al., 2012). Federal law mandates that students with disabilities are to be provided transition education, the emphasis of which is preparation for a successful transition to postsecondary education, employment, and, when appropriate, independent living (IDEA, 2004). Wehmeyer and Webb (2012) identified key elements of transition planning and service development: (1) transition assessment and planning, (2) taking action on the plans, and (3) coordination between school and other agencies. Transition planning must take into consideration the individual preferences and needs of the student, requiring his or her input, as well as parent and other stakeholder participation in development of a comprehensive plan of services driven by the goals developed in the IEP.

In spite of the large body of research identifying the benefits of transition education for youth with disabilities, targeted instruction in preparing for postsecondary success is not happening enough (Karvonen, Test, Browder, & Algozzine, 2004), and it is happening even less in private schools. Private schools are often identified as institutions of rigorous instruction, but little is known of efforts being made to develop the whole student in both academic and nonacademic behaviors associated with strong postschool outcomes, especially for students with

disabilities. Although academic skills developed by attending a rigorous college-preparatory high school are extremely valuable, students with disabilities should also have organized opportunities to develop those identified nonacademic behaviors that will help them achieve success after graduation.

Research Purpose

The purpose of this study is to broaden the evidence base for *Whose Future Is It Anyway?* (WFA) (Wehmeyer & Lawrence, 1995; Wehmeyer et al., 2004), a self-directed transition curriculum package designed to increase individual levels of self-determination in youth with disabilities, and to measure its impact on students with disabilities in the private school setting. Study participants were 49 high school students receiving varied levels of academic support services in an urban private college preparatory high school in a midwestern state. Students ranged in age from 14 to 19 ($M = 16.23$, $SD = 1.42$) and were randomly assigned by class period to two intervention groups: group 1 ($n = 25$) and group 2 ($n = 24$). Student demographic information (age, grade level, gender, race/ethnicity, disability category, grade-point average, and reading level) was collected at the onset of the study through record review. After students were placed into two intervention groups, each group completed ten selected lessons of WFA successively. The lessons were edited for relevance in the private school setting. All students completed three rounds of assessment in an effort to measure self-determination before and after completion of WFA. Self-determination was measured by the (a) *AIR Self-Determination Scale* (AIR-S) and the (b) *Self-Determination Inventory: Self-Report* (SDI-SR). Seven students were randomly selected for individual qualitative interviews regarding self-determination and their experiences of participating in WFA. Responses were analyzed for common themes regarding self-determination, transition knowledge, and preparing for the future.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. Do intraindividual factors (age, race, disability category, reading level) yield statistically significant differences in levels of self-determination in private school students with disabilities?
2. Does participation in *Whose Future Is It Anyway?* increase levels of self-determination in private school students with disabilities?
3. What are student participants' perceptions of the effects of *Whose Future Is It Anyway?* on college-and-career exploration?

Chapter 2

Review of Literature

Outcomes for youth with disabilities have long been a focus for professionals in the field of special education. In a constant attempt to refine services for this population, revisions to laws and extensions of transition models have taken place. A brief discussion of the legislative history and model development is included here.

Legislative History

In 1975, Congress published The Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA) of 1975 (P. L. 94-142), which stated that children with disabilities are entitled to an education and accountability in services provided by State and local educational agencies (LEA) (Turnbull & Turnbull, 1997). The law provided procedural safeguards to protect the rights of children with disabilities who attend public schools and their families (Turnbull, Stowe, & Huerta, 2007).

Transition was first introduced in 1986 as part of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act Amendments (EHA), after which federal monies funded discretionary grants in an effort to

(a) strengthen and coordinate education, training, and related services to assist youth with disabilities in the transition process from school to employment, independent adult living, and/or a postsecondary education; and (b) strengthen special education programs with the goal of eventual transition. (P. L. 99-457).

A subsequent amendment in 1986 increased requirements of the law by adding vocational skills, curriculum and transition-related instruction, and parent and student participation in the planning process (Section 626) (Hardman & Dawson, 2010). In 1990, Congress reviewed and amended EAHCA, reenacting P. L. 94-142 as the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) (P. L. 102-119). IDEA was designed to improve educational outcomes for students with disabilities by providing

a free, appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE) (USDE, 2008), as well as provide related interagency services as defined in the IEP (Bradley, 2005). Three reauthorizations have occurred—1994 (P. L. 103-382), 1997 (P. L. 105-17), and 2004 (P. L. 108-466)—and the results of each iteration have further identified and defined necessary provisions for youth with disabilities. In its current iteration, IDEA requires that age-appropriate, regular assessment and evaluation occur by a team of professionals, the results of which are to be used in determining placement and coordinating related services that meet the unique needs of the student (Turnbull, 1993). IDEA also requires regular parental participation in any decision-making that should occur (20 U.S.C. 1400, Sec. 601(C)5) (Turnbull, 1993). Eligibility for services through IDEA requires that a student have a diagnosis of one or more of the thirteen disability categories and would benefit from services due to the nature of his/her disability (IDEA, 2004). Once identification has occurred, an IEP that is based on the student's unique needs is developed, including educational accommodations and modifications, placement, goal development, and an annual review and evaluation of academic progress (IDEA, 2004).

In 2004, IDEA was amended to IDEIA in an effort to better align the law with NCLB (2001), a federally mandated educational program meant to raise educational standards and, in kind, to improve academic outcomes for all students through federally funded services and programs. A key addition to the law introduced the inclusion of a results-oriented process of transition planning, including age-appropriate assessment, education, and related services for students with disabilities to be in place by the time of the child's sixteenth birthday, if not earlier, in an attempt to increase postsecondary preparedness and success in three key areas: independent living, postsecondary education or training, and employment (USDE, 2007). IDEA Part B (2004) presented a set of 20 indicators, including Indicator 13, which requires that the IEP include

appropriate measurable postsecondary goals that are annually updated and based upon age appropriate transition assessment, transition services, including courses of study, that will reasonably enable the student to meet those postsecondary goals, and annual IEP goals related to the student's transition services needs. There also must be evidence that the student was invited to the IEP Team meeting where transition services are to be discussed and evidence that, if appropriate, a representative of any participating agency was invited to the IEP Team meeting with the prior consent of the parent or student who has reached the age of majority. [20.U.S.C.1416(a)(3)(B)] (OSEP, 2009)

The National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center (NSTTAC) operationalized Indicator 13 for data-collection purposes and developed an eight-item checklist of transition-focused components useful for writing assessment-driven, measurable postsecondary goals for the IEP (NSTTAC, 2007; Mazzotti et al., 2009; NSTTAC, 2009). In spite of the inclusion of this mandate, there continues to be unclear practices related to transition assessment and goals generated upon their results for youth with disabilities in public schools (Mazzotti et al., 2009).

Students who attend private schools are not afforded the provisions of IDEA, as private schools are not required to adhere exactly to the mandates of the law (Cantillon, 2014). In the fall of 2013, 4,476,410 students in the United States were enrolled in 33,619 private elementary and secondary schools across the United States (Broughman & Swaim, 2016), with a growth rate similar to that of public schools (Alt & Peter, 2002). Five percent of the schools provide programs with an emphasis in special education (Broughman & Swaim, 2016), but these programs are not held to the same federal and state regulations as public schools (Eigenbrood, 2004; Wright & Wright, 2006; Turnbull et al., 2007). While students in public schools are guaranteed FAPE in the LRE under IDEA, students with disabilities who have been placed in

private schools at the discretion of their parents do not receive the same comprehensive services and benefits, even if identified as having a disability (Wright & Wright, 2006; Turnbull et al., 2007; Cantillon, 2014). Students in private schools may receive reasonable accommodations through Section 504 (34 C.F.R. § 104.3(j)(2)(i); 42 U.S.C.A. § 12102(1)), but the provisions of IDEA are limited, resulting in fewer services than if they attended public schools (34 C.F.R. § 300.137(a)). If the administration of a private school chooses to accept federal funding through Title I, there are increased services available to students with disabilities in attendance (Cantillon, 2014), but a strong concern is the inadequacy and inaccessibility of the identification process, as well as insufficient services under IDEA (Frangella, 2007). Child find conducted in private schools has been called “fragmented” (Cantillon, 2014), as teachers and administrators are woefully underprepared to identify students with disabilities in the classroom and are not aware of the steps to take if it is suspected that a student might need to be evaluated (Cantillon, 2014). Once a private school student has been identified as having a disability, the development of an Individualized Service Plan (ISP) by the LEA occurs, and a limited list of reasonable accommodations is reviewed and developed into a service plan, to be implemented by private school administration (34 CFR § 300.138). Additional requirements set forth by the USDE’s Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) (1995) require that students with disabilities are to be provided an equitable educational experience that is comparable to those enrolled in public schools (34 C.F.R. § 76.654(a)) (Osbourne, DiMattia, & Russo, 1998). Because the determination of accommodation lies squarely on the shoulders of administrators of private schools, students with disabilities are underserved academically through IDEA (Cantillon, 2014). In the absence of a traditional IEP, the Indicator 13 requirement of

concentrated transition-focused assessment, goal generation, and transition-focused education is not accomplished.

Although policy and practice have paved the way for educational reforms intended to increase postsecondary outcomes for youth with disabilities enrolled in both public and private schools (Osbourne et al., 1998; Bassett & Kochhar-Bryant, 2011), there is a responsibility for all stakeholders involved in the education process, including parents, general and special educators, administrators, community agencies, and employers, to ensure this population of students is afforded a meaningful education (Chadsey-Rusch, Rusch, & O'Reilly, 1991; Osbourne et al., 1998; Taylor, 2005). Previous studies of private schools indicate that inclusive education for students with disabilities has to do more with placement than services provided (Baker & Zigmond, 1995; Martin, 1995; Fuchs & Fuchs, 1998; O'Shea & O'Shea, 1998; Bricker, 2000; Taylor, 2005). The focus of investigations has been on educational practices that lead to academic achievement of students with disabilities in the private school setting (O'Shea & O'Shea, 1998; Taylor, 2005). Overall, there is little known about the limited services that students with disabilities receive in private schools (Taylor, 2005), thus underscoring the need for examination and continuation of initiatives focused not only on educational but transition-related practices for private school students with disabilities as they prepare for life after high school.

Conceptual Framework of Transition

Within the reiterations of laws that require provisions for students with disabilities is the inclusion of transition-focused programming. As a response to the uncertainty that youth with disabilities faced, IDEA was amended in 1983 to include transition as a focus of research and program development, and OSERS determined that a top priority was addressing the transition-

related needs of this population at the secondary level. Will (1984) defined transition as “a bridge between the security and structure offered by the school and the opportunities and risks of adult life” (p. 2). While in school, youth with disabilities should have built-in opportunities and services to prepare for life after high school, identified systems of support at the time of leaving, and a structure of postsecondary support (Will, 1984; Martin, n. d.). Will’s conceptualization of transition provided three varied levels of support for individuals with disabilities, the outcome of which was employment upon completion of high school (Will, 1984; Martin, n. d.). The model is depicted as a bridge, the foundations of which are high school and employment; it is the three levels of support services that vary, as depicted in the model. Although it can be seen as the basis for transition services, Will’s model was narrow in scope, as it focused on employment as the sole outcome of transition planning (Kohler & Field, 2003).

Wehman’s Three-Stage Model (1985). Wehman, Kregel, and Barcus (1985) presented a three-stage vocational transition model for youth with disabilities who are preparing to transition into adulthood. Similar to Will’s model, the focus was on employment; however, it included specific actions regarding service coordination (Trainor, 2017). The model depicted three stages through which youth with disabilities should work in order to achieve postsecondary success: school instruction, transition planning, and meaningful employment placement (Wehman et al., 1985). Building upon Will’s (1985) model, Wehman et al. (1985) emphasized the need for a functional curriculum in the general education setting, community-based instruction, a formal individualized transition plan as a component of the IEP, and coordination with and between parents and community agencies. As a result of Wehman’s model, the need for identification of key stakeholders and assignment of tasks was included, as well as interagency collaboration, so

that as the transition to employment occurred, there were continued supports in place that would contribute to the success of youth with disability (Trainor, 2017).

Halpern's Community Adjustment Model (1985). A study conducted by Halpern (1985) led to a suggested revision of Will's original model of transition that included the concept of "community adjustment" (Trainor, 2017). Halpern expanded the original to an interconnected model including employment, community living, and social connections, rather than the singular focus on employment, including a component of quality of life, as he believed that employment was not the sole indicator of quality of life for individuals with disabilities (Knight, 2018). He believed that if one outcome were to fail, it would be likely that the other two would fail (Martin, n. d.). Citing four areas for inclusion in transition preparation for youth with disabilities, Halpern emphasized the importance of the general curriculum, vocational education opportunities, transition planning, and characteristics of special education teachers as important elements of preparing youth with disabilities to have successful outcomes in employment, independent living, and social connection (Martin, n. d.). The result was a change of course for educators, whose focus should include numerous opportunities to teach skills that will contribute to positive outcomes, as well as parent attitudes and expectations for community adjustment (Martin, n. d.). An additional extension of Halpern's model was the expansion of the population of students who should participate in transition education, moving from targeting those with the most extensive disabilities to encompassing students with less severe needs (Trainor, 2017). As a result of Wehman et al.'s (1985) and Halpern's (1985) expansions of Will's (1984) model, the emphasis moved from one of simply planning for to actually teaching transition to a diverse array of students with disabilities in the general education setting.

Kohler's Taxonomy for Transition Programming (1996). Previous transition models were outcome-focused, providing a guide for development of planning for transition, but Kohler considered a more comprehensive scope of services (Martin, n. d) to include five key components: 1) student-focused planning, 2) student development, 3) interagency collaboration, 4) program structure, and 5) family involvement. The taxonomy “presents a comprehensive, conceptual organization of practices through which transition-focused education and services are developed and delivered” (Kohler & Field, 2003). In 2016, a revised model emerged, *Taxonomy for Transition 2.0* (Kohler, Gothberg, Fowler, & Coyle), to include identified predictors of postsecondary success for youth with disabilities (Wehman et al., 2015). Included in the revision of the model are suggested evidence-based activities that can be embedded in the general education curriculum to increase postsecondary outcomes for youth with disabilities, moving from “add-on” activities focused on preparing students with disabilities to “the perspective that ‘transition planning’ is the fundamental basis of education that guides development of students’ educational programs...the impact [of which] is greatly enhanced when service systems and programs connect and support the implementation and application of such learning” (Kohler, Gothberg, & Coyle, 2012, p. 7).

The evolution of early transition models has ultimately led to present-day practices, upon which researchers and policymakers are continually expanding to ensure that youth with disabilities are prepared to make successful transitions to postsecondary life. As the transition movement picked up momentum in the late 80s and early 90s, researchers began to investigate the outcomes for youth with disabilities. The determination was that, in spite of policy reform and federal mandates, students were not making successful transitions to adulthood (Wehmeyer & Webb, 2012):

The outcomes experienced by youth with disabilities for employment, residential status, and social and interpersonal relationships are disappointing. Although rates vary from state to state, most youths with disabilities are either not employed or underemployed. Few youths live independently, many are not well integrated into their communities, and some appear to be lonely. Overall, youths with disabilities face a very uncertain future that holds little promise of improving as they age. (Chadsey-Rusch et al., 1991, p. 26)

OSEP was determined to study the outcomes of youth with disability and conducted the National Longitudinal Transition Study of Special Education Students (NLTS). The study was commissioned to capture the impact of federal policy on outcomes of youth with disabilities (Wagner et al., 2005; Hicks & Knollman, 2014). Over 8,000 students with disabilities across the United States were examined in the longitudinal study to measure the impact of transition-focused initiatives in preparing the target population for life beyond high school. The findings documented the following areas of exploration: youths' disabilities and their functioning; their individual and household demographics; the characteristics of their schools, school programs, and classroom experiences; the experiences of youth in their non-school hours; and how youth with disabilities fare in the domains of school engagement, academic performance, social adjustment, and independence (National Center for Special Education Research [NCSE], 2006). These findings reinforced the need for increased attention to transition-related outcomes for youth with disabilities, as well as the identification and development of practices that lead to postsecondary success and self-sufficiency (Wehmeyer and Webb, 2012). A second wave of the study, the NLTS-2, was conducted from 2000 to 2010, updating findings of over 10,000 students with disabilities across the nation. An additional examination introduced results of student assessment data and postsecondary outcomes for students who participated in the initial study, as

well as parent and student interviews and school surveys (NCSER, 2006). Results indicated that postsecondary enrollment and employment rates had improved, but employment-related concerns persisted (Newman, Wagner, Cameto, Knokey, and Shaver, 2010; Wehmeyer & Webb, 2012). Results of NLTS-2 indicated further emphasis of how critical academic and nonacademic behaviors are developed in youth with disabilities.

Predictors of Postsecondary Success for Students with Disabilities

In considering what experiences and skills youth with disabilities need to achieve positive postsecondary outcomes, both academic and nonacademic predictors of success have been identified. In the IEP, academic and transition goals are designed based on student assessment, the results of which should direct instruction and experiential learning (McConnell et al., 2012). Based on Kohler’s seminal work, Test et al. (2009a) conducted an extensive literature review in partnership with NSTTAC and identified thirty-two evidence-based practices in secondary transition in five practice areas: (a) student-focused planning, (b) student development (life skills instruction), (c) student development, (d) family involvement, and (e) program structure. They extended the research and linked the evidence-based practices to sixteen predictors of postsecondary success in education, employment, and independent living for youth with disabilities, supporting development and implementation of transition-focused education that is embedded in the general education setting (Test et al., 2009a).

Table 1

Predictors of postsecondary success in education, employment, and independent living for youth with disabilities

Predictors	Outcome Areas
Career Awareness	Education, Employment

Community Experiences	Employment
Exit Exam Requirements/High School Diploma Status	Employment
Inclusion in General Education	Education, Employment, Independent Living
Interagency Collaboration	Education, Employment
Occupational Courses	Education, Employment
Paid Employment/Work Experience	Education, Employment, Independent Living
Parental Involvement	Employment
Program of Study	Employment
Self-advocacy/Self-determination	Education, Employment
Self-care/Independent Living	Education, Employment, Independent Living
Social Skills	Education, Employment
Student Support	Education, Employment, Independent Living
Transition Program	Education, Employment
Vocational Education	Education, Employment
Work Study	Employment

Note. Adapted from “Evidence-based secondary transition predictors for improving postschool outcomes for students with disabilities,” by Test, D. W., Mazzotti, V. L., Mustian, A. L., Fowler, C. H., Korterling, L., & Kohler, P. (2009a). *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals*, 32(3), 160-181.

The first investigation into nonacademic behaviors that predict positive postsecondary outcomes was conducted by Juan (2008). Through an extensive literature review, Juan identified 41 behaviors, each linked to at least one evidence-based reference, determined to be directly related to youth with disabilities’ transition. The behaviors were then organized into twelve

clusters: (a) desires, (b) goals, (c) strengths, (d) limits, (e) disability awareness, (f) persistence, (g) use of effective support systems, (h) coping skills, (i) social skills, (j) proactive involvement, (k) making positive choices, and (l) transition education involvement (Juan, 2008, p. 15).

McConnell et al. (2012) conducted a comprehensive literature review consisting of 83 studies, which led to the selection of ten constructs and corresponding exemplar behaviors determined to be associated with positive postschool outcomes for students with disabilities: (a) knowledge of strengths and limitations, (b) actions related to strengths and limitations, (c) disability awareness, (d) employment, (e) goal setting and attainment, (f) persistence, (g) proactive involvement, (h) self-advocacy, (i) supports, and (j) utilization of resources (p. 178). These studies indicate that secondary education should be two-pronged, including both academic and nonacademic skills that contribute to postsecondary success. As a requirement of the IEP, transition planning aids adolescent students with disabilities as they prepare to leave the safety of high school and begin life as young adults, the goals of which are developing behaviors associated with strong outcomes. Whether transitioning to postsecondary education or training, to living alone or continuing with parents or a roommate, students with disabilities benefit from understanding themselves, their disabilities, their strengths and needs, and their preferences and non-preferences, and from understanding how they fit into their larger contexts, all of which can be accomplished through thorough and effective transition planning guided by the seminal research of transition-focused education (Kohler, 1996; Field et al., 1998; Carter, Lane, Pierson, & Glasser, 2006; Juan, 2008; Test et al., 2009a; Test et al., 2009b; McConnell et al., 2012; Wehmeyer, Palmer, Shogren, Williams-Diehm, & Soukup, 2013).

Self-Determination

Self-determination is defined by Field et al. (1998) as “a combination of skills, knowledge, and beliefs that enable a person to engage in goal-directed, self-regulated, autonomous behavior. An understanding of one’s strengths and limitations, together with a belief in oneself as capable and effective, is essential to self-determination” (p. 115). When acting on the basis of these skills and attitudes, individuals have greater ability to take control of their lives and assume the role of successful adults (Field et al., 1998). Historically, the concept of self-determination was a result of “social movements such as self-advocacy, self-determination, disability rights, and independent living movement” (Rosser, 2010, p. 25) that were to increase quality of life for individuals with disabilities. Although IDEA (2004) does not explicitly call for self-determination development in students with disabilities, it does require that student preferences, needs, strengths, and interests guide the development of the IEP (Konrad et al., 2008) and that transition-focused assessment, goals, and instruction be accomplished, as required by Indicator 13 (20 U.S.C. 1416(a)(3)(B)) (OSEP, 2009). Self-determination has become part of the national dialogue regarding individuals with disabilities, necessitating a clearer definition of transition practices that include self-determination instruction (Algozzine, Browder, Karvonen, Test, & Wood, 2001; Field & Hoffman, 2002a; Field & Hoffman, 2002b; Shogren et al., 2007). Current policy mandates that individuals with disabilities be provided transition services, in which opportunities to increase their self-determination skills as they work toward reaching their goals should be included (Field, et al., 1998), as it is integral to postschool success (Field & Hoffman, 2002a). As a best practice for educating youth with disabilities, instruction in self-determination should be integrated into academic curriculum (Martin et al., 2003).

Two key elements contribute to strong postsecondary outcomes: strong academic skills and exceptional self-determination skills (Konrad et al., 2008). For various reasons, youth with disabilities do not exercise age-appropriate self-determination in terms of decision and choice making (Abery, Rudrud, Arndt, Schauben, & Eggebeen, 1995), although opportunities to do so can be presented through self-determination instruction that is easily integrated into general academic instruction (Konrad et al., 2008). There is a paucity of empirically validated theoretical models examining the personal characteristics of individuals with disabilities, the impact of their environments, and other factors that contribute to the development of higher levels of self-determination, although great strides have been made (Shogren et al., 2007). A common question among educators is how teachers can successfully and thoroughly teach their academic subjects while simultaneously teaching self-determination skills (Thoma, Nathanson, Baker, & Tamura, 2002; Konrad et al., 2008). There is a misconception that teachers must choose to focus on either academic instruction or transition education, including self-determination instruction (Lee, Wehmeyer, Palmer, Soukup, & Little, 2008). The question should not be *whether* self-determination instruction should be included in the general education curriculum, but *how* it should be integrated into everyday instruction. Should teachers drive self-determination instruction, or can it be student driven? What are best practices? In order to answer these questions, a closer look at the conceptualizations of self-determination is warranted.

Conceptualizations and Components

To provide a sound theoretical foundation that drives self-determination instruction practices of teachers, researchers in the field have striven to define the construct adequately (Wehmeyer, 1999). Rosser (2010) synthesized the four common conceptualizations of self-

determination, developed by experts in the field of special education: (a) causal agency, (b) ecological, (c) self-regulation, and (d) the individual in the environment.

Self-determination as a causal agency. Wehmeyer (1999) stated that having self-determination means an individual is “acting as the primary causal agent in one’s life and making choices and decisions regarding one’s quality of life free from undue external influence or interference” (p. 24), emphasizing that the choice lies within the individual. The individual does not wait for things to happen but, instead, based on his/her preferences, makes decisions and choices, acting as an agent of change (Wehmeyer, 1999), and they do so with autonomy, self-regulation, psychological empowerment, and self-realization (Agran, 1997). Causal agency theory was born out of the assertion that individuals with disabilities can themselves be responsible for acting on their own behalves, resulting in increased self-determination (Wehmeyer, Palmer, Agran, Mithaug, & Martin, 2000; Wehmeyer, 2004; Shogren et al., 2015). An extension of the functional theory of self-determination, causal agency theory “explains how people becomes self-determined...how they define the actions and beliefs necessary to engage in self-caused, autonomous action (e.g., causal action) in response to basic psychological needs and autonomous motivation as well as contextual and environmental challenges” (Shogren, Wehmeyer, & Palmer, 2017, p. 55). Causal events cannot be described in a single response class but are “are events, behaviors, or actions that function as a means for the person (the causal agent) to achieve valued goals, to exert control in his or her life, and, ultimately, to become more self-determined” (Wehmeyer, 2004, p. 352), meaning that the person acts independently, is self-regulated and self-realizing, and is empowered psychologically (Rosser, 2010). Plainly stated, there is not a checklist of behaviors that mean a person is self-determined but, instead, a

consideration of functions that lead an individual to acting in a self-determined way (Shogren et al., 2017).

According to Wehmeyer (2004), to act with self-determination is to have opportunities to have control; to make choices based on one's personal belief system, cultural belief system, and personal values; to solve problems with autonomy; and to be supported by others in doing so. In order for this to occur, individuals must have the opportunity to look introspectively and identify abilities, preferences, and interests, and to do so without influence from others. Individuals who act with causal agency are the catalysts of action in their lives (Wehmeyer, 2017). While traditional models of self-determination instruction are teacher-directed, causal agency places the student in the driver's seat, so to speak (Wehmeyer, 2004), and behaviors are self-regulated (Rosser, 2010), which can be difficult tasks for students with disabilities. Three concentrations have been born out of causal agency theory: (1) sharpen skills that increase self-determination, (2) create opportunities that require self-determined behavior, and (3) identify supports that encourage self-determined behavior (Wehmeyer, 2004). The theory driving this conceptual construct consists of a single domain, focusing on behavioral events that are initiated by the self rather than others, resulting in increased levels of self-determination through "causal events, causal behavior, or causal actions" (Wehmeyer, 2004, p. 352).

A primary characteristic of this theory is capability, or being able to do something successfully due to *causal capability*—having the mental and physical ability to make things happen—and *agentic capability*—having the mental and/or physical abilities to enact change (Wehmeyer & Bolding, 2001; Wehmeyer, 2004). Within *causal capability* is *causal capacities*, or having the knowledge and behavioral prowess to define one's causal capability (i.e., goal setting, problem solving, decision-making skills), and *causal perceptions*, which are how an

individual perceives and what he/she believes about himself/herself and his/her environment (i.e., psychological empowerment) (Wehmeyer, 2004). Having the mental and/or physical abilities to direct one's behavior to accomplish a certain end is known as *agentic capability* and is comprised of two components: *agentic capacity* (i.e., needed knowledge and skills for directing causal action) and *agentic perceptions* (i.e., the things in the person and in the environment that facilitate acting) (Wehmeyer, 2004). Wehmeyer (2004) defines two challenges in one's environment that provoke self-determination—opportunity and threat—as the impetus for action. Those individuals with strong self-determination respond to opportunity and threat by making decisions and choices, then by taking action, circularly increasing levels of self-determination through its application. In a sense, self-determination begets self-determination, as more opportunities to exert self-determination result in increases in self-determination, emphasizing the importance of self-determination intervention for students with disabilities.

A model that employs the concept of *causal agency*, *The Self-Directed Learning Model of Instruction* (SDLMI) (Mithaug, Wehmeyer, Agran, Martin, & Palmer, 1998), leads students through activities designed to increase self-determination through problem solving, leading to stronger postsecondary outcomes. The SDLMI “involves the use of self-regulated problem solving leading to the establishment of self-set goals, action plans to achieve those goals, and self-monitoring and self-evaluation activities to enable students to adjust plans and goals to attain the goal” (Lee, Wehmeyer, & Shogren, 2015). Numerous studies have been conducted to determine the efficacy of the SDLMI for students with disabilities, the results of which are positive (McGlashing-Johnson, Agran, Sitlington, Cavin, & Wehmeyer, 2003; Benitez, Lattimore, & Wehmeyer, 2005; Lee, 2008; Agran, Wehmeyer, Cavin, & Palmer, 2010; Kim & Paik, 2011; Park & Kang, 2011; Jung & Lee, 2012; Mazzotti, Test, & Wood, 2012; Kim & Park,

2012; Shogren et al., 2012; Wehmeyer et al., 2012; Lee et al., 2015). In spite of its limitations, a meta-analysis of single-case design studies of the SDLMI (Lee et al., 2015) bolstered the efficacy of the model for promoting academic and functional goal attainment in students with disabilities. Through organized activities, students with disabilities who engage in self-directed learning strategies focused on increasing self-determination become more aware of and in charge of themselves, increasing their abilities to set goals, self-monitor, self-evaluate, and reinforce their own actions (Agran, Blanchard, Wehmeyer, & Hughes, 2001).

Self-determination: An ecological framework. Investigation of youth with disabilities and contributing environmental factors has led to the development of a theoretical ecological framework for developing self-determination (Shogren et al., 2007). Abery et al. (1995) examined ecological factors in the life of the individual that promote the development of self-determination:

Self-determination can be conceived as a by-product of an ongoing interaction between individuals and the environments within which they function...influenced by personal characteristics as well as the environments in which one lives and develops, including the family, school, peer group, and community. (p. 171)

The environment in which the individual functions is referred to as the “ecosystem,” in which the individual should possess a strong understanding of self, including disability awareness, and have a strong understanding of how the self functions within the ecosystem (Abery et al., 1995). Key features of the ecological framework include (a) social skills, (b) knowledge of competencies and skills, (c) environmental contributions, and (d) motivational factors (Abery et al., 1995). Considering the ecological implications for youth with disabilities and their levels of self-determination is especially critical for those of low socioeconomic status or culturally

diverse backgrounds (Trainor, 2007). Multicultural studies in special education have highlighted sociocultural impact on preferences, abilities, and goals, which are key elements of transition (Trainor, 2007).

For students with disabilities, the opportunity to exercise and increase levels of self-determination is influenced by placement: more restrictive environments limit opportunity to make choices based on ability and preferences, while less restrictive environments readily promote the freedom to choose (Wehmeyer & Bolding, 2001; Wehmeyer & Garner, 2003; Schwartz, 2016). How do others in the environment impact the individual in making decisions, choices, and in setting and reaching goals (Wehmeyer & Garner, 2003)? A study conducted by Wehmeyer and Bolding (1999) examined the impact of environment on levels of self-determination among individuals with disabilities ($N = 273$) and determined that the environment in which they lived and worked had significant impact; the less restrictive the environment, the more opportunities for demonstrating self-determination (Wehmeyer & Bolding, 2001; Wehmeyer & Garner, 2003). Self-determination occurs as a product of the interaction of the individual and elements in his/her ecosystem (Wehmeyer & Bolding, 2001; Field & Hoffman, 2012). Without opportunities in one's ecosystem to develop and apply social and interpersonal skills, to identify preferences, to make thoughtful decisions, to communicate well with others, and to exercise self-control, self-determination cannot develop (Rosser, 2010). The key difference between this framework and others is the impact of ecology, thereby placing responsibility for the development of self-determination on the individual and on the environment as well (Rosser, 2010).

Self-determination: A self-regulation framework. Individuals with strong self-regulation are able to engage in self-regulated learning, requiring “skills such as planning, using

strategies, monitoring progress, correcting errors, and persisting until the goal is reached successfully” (Bronson, 2000). Grounded in self-determined learning theory, self-regulation creates self-determined learners (Mithaug & Mithaug, 2003; Shogren, 2006) through person-environment interactions (Rosser, 2010). This conceptualization, developed by Mithaug, Campeau, and Wolman (1994), focuses on the individual and how he/she interacts with opportunities that improve his/her chances for goal attainment (Shogren, 2006), free from the external influence of others (Mithaug, 1998). A key difference in this theory is the influence of the environment on the individual, while the self as a causal agent is less influenced by the environment, similar to that of Wehmeyer’s causal agency framework (Shogren, 2006). Mithaug posits that individuals are in a state somewhere between powerlessness and learned helplessness and motivation and confidence in their abilities, hence the need for opportunities to increase self-determination in a supported environment, and to do so by finding congruence between abilities and existing opportunities (Wehmeyer & Bolding, 2001).

Self-determination: An individual framework. Field and Hoffman (2002b) defined self-determination as “the ability to define and achieve goals based on a foundation of knowing and valuing oneself” (p. 113). In the development of their framework, the authors recognize the impact of the environment and the importance of internal factors of the individual that contribute to self-determination (Field & Hoffman, 2002b; Rosser, 2010). The student must have a sound understanding of himself/herself. Field and Hoffman’s (2002b) model of self-determination includes “know yourself; value yourself; plan, act, and experience outcomes; and learn” (p. 113). These can occur through opportunities integrated into the curriculum in both explicit and implicit self-determination instruction that develops knowledge, skills, and attitudes characteristic of self-determined individuals (Field & Hoffman, 2002b). Their curriculum, *Steps to Self-*

Determination, is designed for students in general or special education (Hoffman & Field, 1996), the purpose of which “is to help students develop the knowledge, beliefs, and skills that they need to become more self-determined” (Field & Hoffman, 2002a, p. 91). A curriculum designed for secondary students, *Steps to Self-Determination* can be used to assist students with disabilities in defining their goals and identify the steps needed to reach them. The curriculum tracks progress using the *Self-Determination Knowledge Scale* as a measure of pre- and posttest knowledge, then helps students identify their individual strengths and needs. An emphasis is placed on decision making, goal setting, and increasing nonacademic skills, such as creativity, communication, and negotiation. Detailed lesson plans guide instructors through lessons designed to increase self-determined behavior in students with disabilities. Results from a field test by Boyer (1997) indicated a significant increase of student internal locus of control between pre- and posttest after participating in the curriculum (Field & Hoffman, 2002a), and other studies have shown efficacy for increasing self-determination among at-risk children (Hoffman, Field, & Sawilowsky, 1996; Field & Hoffman, 2002b).

Curricula of Self-Determination

As the foundation for decision making and goal setting for youth with disabilities, age-appropriate transition is a vital part of IEP development. A combination of formal and informal assessments can be used to inform goal development of the IEP (McConnell et al., 2012). Formal self-determination assessments (vocational, aptitude, quality of life, adaptive behavior, transition knowledge, and social skills) assist in the development of measurable postsecondary goals and in the identification of needed assistance and supports (McConnell et al., 2012; Neubert & Leconte, 2013). Policy initiatives have addressed the needs of students with disabilities by requiring transition planning and preparation, and an integral part of that planning and preparation is

administration of age-appropriate transition assessments, including self-determination assessments (Neubert & Leconte, 2013). This is addressed by IDEA 2004's Indicator 13, which requires that the IEP should contain

appropriate measurable postsecondary goals updated annually and based upon an age appropriate transition assessments, transition services, including courses of study, that will reasonably enable the youth to meet those postsecondary goals, and annual IEP goals related to the youth's transition services needs. (20 U.S.C. 1416(a)(3)(B))

The Division of Career Development and Transition (DCDT) (Sitlington, Neubert, & Leconte, 1997; Neubert & Leconte, 2013) defined "transition assessment":

Age-appropriate transition assessment is an ongoing process of collecting information on the youth's needs, strengths, preferences, and interests as they relate to measurable postsecondary goals and the annual goals that will help facilitate attainment of postsecondary goals. This process includes a careful match between the characteristics of the youth and the requirements of postsecondary environments along with recommendations for accommodations, services, supports, and technology to ensure the match. Youth and their families are taught how to use the results of transition assessment to drive the transition requirements in the IEP process, develop the SOP [Summary of Performance] document, and advocate for needed or desired supports to succeed in meeting postsecondary goals. (p. 70-71)

Following the assessment, decision-making, and goal-setting process in the IEP, triangulation should occur to ensure that congruence exists between what the student has identified as wanting and needing, the results of the assessments, and the plans for moving forward (Neubert & Leconte, 2013). Research has determined that intervention in self-determination is efficacious in

increasing postsecondary outcomes for youth with disabilities, as it is possible to teach self-determination skills (Algozzine et al., 2001); however, a key to successful planning is the involvement of the student, who is consistently left out of the equation (Wehmeyer & Schwartz, 1998; Wehmeyer & Palmer, 2003).

As a component of transition planning, self-determination assessment should be utilized by special education professionals as a tool for developing an effective IEP that matches the unique needs of individual students. For students in public schools, a common goal is to increase student participation in the IEP, and developing self-determination skills by identifying needs through assessment is critical (Wehmeyer, Palmer, Soukup, Garner, & Lawrence, 2007). Self-determination assessment should occur before and after instruction, and this can occur through assessment checklists administered by teachers or other professionals and self-reporting completed by students with disabilities (Martin & Sale, 2012). Assessment results can then inform the selection of a conceptual framework for driving instruction and intervention in self-determination.

Instruction for Increasing Self-Determination

Increasing opportunities for students to gain personal insight into who they are, what they want to achieve, and how they plan to reach their goals is imperative. Activities emphasizing student development and self-determination skills, as well as instructional experiences that increase understanding of postsecondary education, employment, and independent living, contribute to positive postschool outcomes (Kohler & Field, 2003). Learning activities focused on increasing self-determination in youth with disabilities can be infused into general and special education classes and varied content areas (Wehmeyer, Field, & Thoma, 2012). A brief discussion of self-determination curricula is included here.

The ChoiceMaker curriculum. Martin and Marshall (1995) developed *The ChoiceMaker Curriculum*, a lesson package for students with disabilities consisting of three strands with corresponding teaching goals and modules for instruction. The curriculum package is intended to be implemented into academic coursework and is appropriate for general and special education classrooms and in a variety of content areas (Zarrow Center for Learning Enrichment, n. d.). Research studies have yielded efficacious results in increasing levels of self-determination, goal-setting and leadership behaviors, and involvement in educational planning in youth with disabilities (Wehmeyer et al., 2012).

Steps to Self-Determination. Hoffman and Field (2005) developed *Steps to Self-Determination: A Curriculum to Help Adolescents to Achieve Their Goals*, designed to help youth ages 14 to 21 “develop the knowledge, beliefs, and skills that they need to become more self-determined” (Field & Hoffman, 2002a, p. 91). Students work through eighteen experiential sessions focused on five components that can be integrated into existing coursework in general or special education classrooms: (a) Know Yourself, (b) Value Yourself, (c) Plan, (d) Act, and (e) Experience Outcomes and Learn (Field & Hoffman, 2002a). Some empirical evidence exists for the curriculum (Field & Hoffman, 2002a).

ME! Lessons for Teaching Self-Awareness and Self-Advocacy. Cantley, Little, and Martin (2010) developed the *ME! Lessons for Teaching Self-Awareness & Self-Advocacy*, a curriculum focused on increasing self-advocating behavior and self-awareness, two important components of self-determination. Consisting of ten instructional lessons, students work through self-directed transition-focused lessons. Studies conducted to determine the effectiveness of the *ME! Lessons* in increasing nonacademic behaviors associated with positive postsecondary outcomes, particularly through developing self-awareness and self-advocacy skills, have yielded

positive results (Cantley, 2011; Mazzotti, Cease-Cook, & Bradley, 2012; Cantley & Martin, 2016).

Next S.T.E.P. Curriculum. *Next S.T.E.P.* (Halpern et al., 1997) is a self-determination-focused curriculum that guides students through planning for employment, education, independent living, and leisure. Zhang (2001) examined the effects of the curriculum on the self-determination of high school students with learning disabilities and found that intervention significantly improved the self-determination scores on the Arc Self-Determination Scale (SDS) (Wehman & Kelchner, 1995) of a treatment group when compared with those of a control group.

Whose Future Is It Anyway? Wehmeyer and Lawrence (1995) developed *Whose Future Is It Anyway?* (WFA), a curriculum developed for secondary-aged students with disabilities in preparation for successful transition. The intent of WFA is to increase levels of self-determination by preparing students to lead their IEP meetings. The curriculum package consists of six sections: (1) Getting to Know You, (2) Making Decisions, (3) How to Get What You Need, (4) Goals, Objectives, and the Future, (5) Communicating, and (6) Thank You, Honorable Chairperson. In each section, there are six sessions that include student materials for student-directed learning in these areas: (a) self-awareness and disability awareness; (b) making decisions about transition-related outcomes; (c) identifying and securing community resources to support transition services; (d) writing and evaluating goals and objectives; (e) communicating effectively in small groups; and (f) developing skills to become an effective team member, leader, or self-advocate (Lee, 2007, p. 12). Student outcomes will vary depending on the student, ranging from leading the IEP meeting to participating but not leading, but the overall goal is increased participation in academic planning and decision making (Wehmeyer & Lawrence, 1995; Wehmeyer et al., 2004). A brief description of the sections is included here.

Sections. Section 1, *Getting to Know You*, introduces students to planning meetings and the decision-making process involved with academic planning. It is comprised of six student-directed sessions. Relevant acronyms and terms are defined, as well as the concept of transition and the services included in the IEP. Students are introduced to desired postsecondary outcomes. Session 2, *Getting to Know You: Choosing People to Attend*, prompts students to consider the stakeholders involved in the transition planning meeting through the development of a “support circle.” Session 3, *Getting to Know You: Your Preferences & Interests*, prompts students to consider their preferences and interests to inform identification of transition-related needs. Session 4, *Getting to Know You*, is a student investigation of the specific learning needs and/or supports related to their disability. Session 5, *Getting to Know You: Your Unique Learning Needs*, is a continuation of identification of disability-related learning needs. Students expand their knowledge of what it means to have a disability and learn about well-known individuals who have become successful in spite of having disabilities. Session 6, *Getting to Know You: Supports*, prompts students to identify the supports needed to achieve success.

Section 2, *Making Decisions*, is comprised of six student-directed sessions focused on making informed decisions by working through a decision-making strategy. Session 7, *Making Decisions: Introduction to DO IT!*, introduces the *DO IT!* decision-making process, the focus of subsequent sessions 8, *Making Decisions: Steps 1 & 2 of DO IT!*; 9, *Making Decisions: Steps 3 & 4 of DO IT!*; 10, *Making Decisions: Using DO IT!*; and 11, *Making Decisions: Real Life Stories to Use DO IT!* The culminating activity in session 12, *Making Decisions: Giving Informed Consent*, encourages students to apply the *DO IT!* Strategy to make a decision regarding giving informed consent in the IEP and transition planning meetings.

Section 3, *How to Get What You Need*, is comprised of six student-directed sessions that guide students through identification of resources that align with desired postsecondary outcomes. Session 13, *How to Get What You Need*, helps students identify community resources listed in the IEP and how they contribute to positive outcomes by connecting students to needed resources. Session 14, *How to Get What You Need: Community Resources for Work*, continues exploration of community resources by discussing the types of employment available for individuals with disabilities. Session 15, *How to Get What You Need: Community Resources for More School*, describes the types of postsecondary education students can pursue and the varied levels of support available for individuals with disabilities. Session 16, *How to Get What You Need: Community Resources for Living*, guides students through the identification of residential and independent living outcomes. Session 17, *How to Get What You Need: Community Resources for Fun*, prompts students to identify community resources for recreation and leisure based on personal interests. Session 18, *How to Get What You Need: Community Resources You Want*, directs students through summarizing their desired outcomes and making connections to community resources that will assist in goal attainment. A summarizing outcomes sheet is the culminating activity of Section 3.

Section 4, *Goals, Objectives, and the Future*, is comprised of six student-directed sessions in which students identify goals and objectives to be included in the IEP that will assist in postsecondary-goal attainment. Session 19, *Identifying Goals in Your Plan*, ensures students understand the process for identifying desired goals and objectives, including criteria for setting goals and objectives. Session 20, *Identifying Goals in Your Plan*, guides students through identifying their employment-related goals and desired outcomes. Session 21, *Identifying Goals for More School*, prompts students to set goals for postsecondary education. Session 22,

Identifying Goals for Living, helps students identify residential goals. Session 23, *Identifying Goals for Fun*, focuses on recreation-related goals and outcomes for leisure time. Session 24, *Keeping Track of Your Goals*, provides a guide for self-monitoring goal achievement related to objectives in the IEP.

Section 5, *Communicating*, is comprised of six student-directed sessions focused on increasing communication skills in various settings and situations. Session 25, *Communicating in Small Groups*, guides students through effective communication for working with small groups of people. Session 26, *Body Language and Assertiveness*, prompts students to consider how one's body language and assertiveness can contribute to effective communication with others. Session 27, *Advocating and Appealing*, guides students through considering their communication styles and how assertiveness, or lack thereof, may impact communication with others. Session 28, *Timing and Persuasion*, prompts students to consider the importance of effective communication, timing of communication, and the intricacies of persuasion. Session 29, *Keeping Your Ideas Out There*, guides students through appropriate use of compromise in communication. Session 30, *Listening and the Team*, emphasizes the importance of listening as an element of good communication with others, particularly as one prepares to meet with the members of the IEP team.

Section 6, *Thank You, Honorable Chairperson*, is comprised of six student-directed sections and a review, the focus of which is being an effective member of the IEP team. Session 31, *Different Kinds of Meetings*, summarizes the types of meetings in which students might participate. Session 32, *Being a Good Team Member*, guides students through planning for effective participation in a scheduled meeting, including planning details and anticipated outcomes. Session 33, *Being a Good Team Member*, focuses on personal characteristics that

contribute being a good team member, including positivity, follow-through, and timeliness. Session 34, *Managing the Meeting*, guides students through management techniques that will help them lead their meetings effectively. Sessions 35 and 36 guide students through a review of all sessions of WFA in preparation for the culminating activity of the curriculum package, which is participating in the IEP meeting as an effective, contributing team member.

Evidence of effectiveness. In 1995, Wehmeyer and Lawrence implemented the curriculum into instruction of high school students ($n = 52$) diagnosed with cognitive disabilities.

Participation in the process increased students' perceptions of their abilities to make plans, have positive expectations, and anticipate success for their futures. Lee (2007) conducted an investigative study of WFA used in combination with a computer-based reading-support program, *Rocket Reader*, on levels of student self-determination, self-efficacy and outcome expectancy, and knowledge of transition planning. A two-group pre-post measure of 168 student participants with disabilities was utilized. Lee selected relevant sessions of WFA to use in conjunction with the reading program and measured students' knowledge of transition planning using *WFA Knowledge Test* and student levels of self-determination using SDS (Wehmeyer & Kelchner, 1995) and the AIR-S (Wolman, Campeau, DuBois, Mithaug, & Stolarski, 1994). Overall results indicated that "instructional, knowledge, and dispositional factors predicted students' self-determination over personal predictor variables" (Lee, 2007, p. iv).

Wehmeyer, Palmer, Lee, Williams-Diehm, & Shogren (2011) conducted a randomized-trial, placebo control group study of 493 students with a range of disabilities categories to determine the impact of WFA in intervention of transition knowledge and skills. As pre- and post-measures of self-reported levels of self-determination, students completed the SDS (Wehmeyer & Kelchner, 1995), the AIR-S (Wolman, Campeau, DuBois, Mithaug, & Stolarski,

1994), and the WFA Knowledge Test (Wehmeyer & Lawrence, 1995; Wehmeyer et al., 2004). The results indicated strong positive differences in levels of self-determination among students who received instruction using the curriculum package.

Lee et al. (2012) examined individual and instructional-related predictors levels of self-determination of transition-aged student with disabilities ($N = 168$). Students were randomly assigned to two groups: (a) technology and (b) no technology. Students in the technology group received instruction using the *Rocket Reader*, described as a “cognitively accessible e-reader” (Lee et al., 2012, p. 152). The second group received instruction without the use of technology. Pre- and post-measures of levels of self-determination were collected from students using SDS and the AIR-S, while pre- and post-measures of transition-related knowledge was collected through the WFA Knowledge Test. The authors selected 10 relevant lessons for completion by the students, who were guided by trained teachers. The general findings of the study indicated instructional, knowledge, and dispositional or belief factors predicted students’ self-determination over personal predictor variables, such as age, gender, and IQ level...[and] self-efficacy scores, student-directed transition planning instruction using WFA lessons, and students’ pre-intervention transition planning knowledge predicted higher self-determination scores. (Lee et al., 2012, p. 157)

Although the research base for the WFA curriculum package is limited, there is evidence of its efficaciousness in increasing transition-aged students’ levels of self-determination. Whether participating in instruction of the full curriculum or in a selected number of sessions, students benefited from transition-related instruction. Support for the use of curricula in teaching transition-related skills is growing, and the benefits are recognized among researchers and practitioners.

Chapter 3

Methodology

In order to understand how best to prepare students with disabilities for the future, ongoing investigation of instructional materials aimed at increasing characteristics related with successful postsecondary outcomes must continue. The purpose of this study is to broaden the evidence base for *Whose Future Is It Anyway?* (Wehmeyer & Lawrence, 1995; Wehmeyer et al., 2004), a self-directed transition curriculum package designed to increase individual levels of self-determination in youth with disabilities, and to measure its impact on students with disabilities in the private school setting. Both quantitative and qualitative analyses were conducted in a mixed-methods design to determine if self-determination instruction implemented in the WFA curriculum affects levels of self-determination in the sample population, as measured by self-determination assessments, the AIR-S and the SDI-SR. Open-ended interview questions followed to determine individual impact of the experiences of a small subset of students who participated in self-determination instruction.

As a best practice in the field of transition, student involvement in the planning process for the future is linked to more positive postsecondary outcomes, supported by a robust literature base (Wehmeyer et al., 2011). As an intervention for increasing levels of self-determination in students with disabilities, WFA (Wehmeyer & Lawrence, 1995; Wehmeyer et al., 2004) has shown efficacy in several studies (Wehmeyer & Lawrence, 1995; Lee, 2007; Wehmeyer & Lawrence, 2008; Lee, 2011; Wehmeyer et al., 2011). When students have opportunities in school to gain and practice self-determined behaviors, they are more likely to experience positive education outcomes (Palmer, Wehmeyer, Gipson, & Agran, 2004; Lee et al., 2011). WFA (Wehmeyer & Lawrence, 1995; Wehmeyer et al., 2004) is a self-directed curriculum package for

students with disabilities, the overall goal of which is increased participation in academic planning and decision making. Prior studies indicate that whether participating in instruction of the full curriculum or in a selected number of sessions, students with disabilities benefited from transition-related instruction in secondary settings (Wehmeyer & Lawrence, 1995; Weymeher et al., 2004; Lee, 2007; Wehmeyer & Lawrence, 2008; Lee, 2011; Wehmeyer et al., 2011).

The following research questions guided this study:

1. Do intraindividual factors (age, race, disability category, reading level) yield statistically significant differences in levels of self-determination in private school students with disabilities?
2. Does participation in *Whose Future Is It Anyway?* increase levels of self-determination in private school students with disabilities?
3. What are student participants' perceptions of the effects of *Whose Future Is It Anyway?* on college-and-career exploration?

Research Design

The purpose of this study is to broaden the evidence base for *Whose Future Is It Anyway?* (Wehmeyer & Lawrence, 1995; Wehmeyer et al., 2004), a self-directed transition curriculum package designed to increase individual levels of self-determination in youth with disabilities, and to measure its impact on students with disabilities in the private school setting. Through a two-pronged data collection, the study attempted to accomplish two tasks: first, to collect quantitative data that measured differences in and follow-up scores for students' levels of self-determination after participating in WFA, and, second, to understand student perspectives of self-determination and planning for transition after completing the self-determination curriculum. Descriptive statistics and qualitative responses were collected in order to gain deeper

understanding of the impact of self-determination instruction on levels of self-determined behavior in students with disabilities. Therefore, a mixed-methods explanatory sequential design was utilized, as this allows for quantitative and qualitative statistics collection, analysis, and triangulation to provide rich results that may inform future practices for this population of students and their unique perspectives relative to the phenomenon of participation in self-determination instruction (Creswell, Hanson, Plano Clark, & Morales, 2007; Fetters, Curry, & Creswell, 2013; Wisdom & Creswell, 2013).

Setting and Participants

An urban private school in a midwestern state served as the site of this study. Approximately 700 students attend the school, ranging from 9th grade to 12th grade. Students attend six 55-minute general education classes per day on a rotating seven-class schedule. The school does not provide traditional special education services, such as those provided in public schools, but approximately 7% of the student population participate in an academic support program for 9th- through 12th-graders with diagnosed learning disabilities or other qualifying diagnoses ($N = 50$) as one of their seven daily courses. The academic support program was developed in the 1980s to support students with “learning differences” who were admitted to the school. Eligibility for enrollment in the academic support program requires a documented diagnosis of one or more of the following disability categories: (a) autism, (b) emotional disturbance, (c) hearing impairment, (d) orthopedic impairment, (e) other health impairment, (f) specific learning disability, (g) speech or language impairment, or (h) traumatic brain injury. Students with significant intellectual disabilities or behavior concerns are not enrolled in the school. In addition to their regular tuition fees, students pay for the academic support program. Typically, students who enroll in the academic support program continue throughout the duration

of their high school career, with levels of support fading as they progress. They receive service plans with limited accommodations for their general education courses, such as (a) extended time for testing (time-and-a-half), (b) testing in a separate location, (c) reading of tests, and (d) preferential seating. Additionally, their foreign language requirement is waived. In the academic support program class, students work independently or in small groups with three certified special educators to remediate foundational skills through evidence-based learning interventions, such as math or reading intervention, as well as instructional support and reteaching of content covered in their general education courses. Students are supported in the development of academic skills and nonacademic behaviors to increase their opportunities for success. Instruction on time management, organization, study skills, and note-taking skills are provided. Students enrolled in the academic support program were the targeted population of this study.

School-level permission was granted by the head principal, and two informational parent meetings were scheduled to provide details of the study and the potential benefits of participation in WFA, as evidenced by research. Additional information sessions were presented to each of the six periods of students, and parent and student consent/assent forms were distributed. Of the 50 students in the academic support program, 49 participants returned consent/assent forms. Participants ranged in age from 14 to 19 years ($M = 16.23$, $SD = 1.42$). Females comprised 42.3% ($n = 23$) of the sample, while males comprised 57.7% ($n = 26$). Eighteen students were in 9th grade (36%), 11 students were in 10th grade (22%), 6 students were in 11th grade (14%), and 14 students were in 12th grade (28%). Thirty-four of the participants were Caucasian (69.4%), 3 students were Black (6.1%), 4 students were Asian (8.2%), 4 students were Native American (8.2%), 3 students were Hispanic (6.1%), and 1 student identified as Other (2%). Students were randomly assigned in a delayed-treatment design by class periods (1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7) to two

experimental groups: group 1 (periods 1, 3, 7) ($n = 25$) and group 2 (periods 2, 5, 6) ($n = 24$). Individual student demographics were collected by conducting a record review of age, grade level, gender, race/ethnicity, disability category, grade-point average, and reading level.

At the beginning of a spring semester, students were asked to identify pseudonyms to ensure anonymity. Second, all students were asked to select a current teacher and a parent to complete pretests and posttest of the *AIR Self-Determination Scale Educator Form* (AIR-E) and the *AIR Self-Determination Parent Form* (AIR-P), respectively. Consent forms were distributed to the selected teachers and parents. Both the AIR-E and the AIR-P were transcribed into Google Forms, which were then emailed to teachers and parents for completion. All participating students then completed pretest administrations (Time 1) of the AIR-S and the SDI-SR to collect measures of levels of self-determination. The AIR-S was transcribed into a Google Form, and the SDI-SR is an online assessment, accessed at <https://sdiprdwb.ku.edu/consent.php?rf=ot&sg=s>. Students completed both Time 1 pretests on their individual iPads. Questions on the AIR-S are scored on a five-point Likert scale, and subscores of *Capacity* and *Opportunity* are combined for an overall *Level of Self-Determination*. Student scores were transferred to a paper copy of the *AIR Self-Determination Profile Student Form*, which provided a visual representation of scores of *Capacity*, *Opportunity*, and *Level of Self-Determination*. Scores on the SDI-SR are presented as an overall composite score of self-determination. Upon completion of the pretests (Time 1) by groups 1 and 2, the first round of instruction began with group 1.

Materials. The materials needed for the study included the selected, edited lessons of *Whose Future Is It Anyway?* (Wehmeyer & Lawrence, 1995; Wehmeyer et al., 2004), *AIR Self-Determination Scale Student Form* (AIR-S) (Wolman et al., 1994), *AIR Self-Determination Scale Parent Form* (AIR-P) (Wolman et al., 1994), *AIR Self-Determination Scale Educator Form*

(AIR-E) (Wolman et al., 1994), and the *Self-Determination Inventory: Student-Report* (SD-SRI) (Shogren, Wehmeyer, Burke, & Palmer, 2015). Because assessments were given in an online format in Google Forms, students needed their personal iPads. The selected WFA lessons were provided to students in printed format; each student received one copy of each lesson, which were then compiled to create a student portfolio of WFA. Instruction took place in the academic support program classroom during the following periods: 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7. The classroom design provided space for small-group instruction, discussion, and work, as well as individual desks for independent study, and was furnished with marker boards, five desktop computers, and a mobile projector and screen.

Whose Future Is It Anyway? Wehmeyer & Lawrence (1995, 2004) was selected based on relevancy to the private school setting. The target age for participants is 14 to 21. It was developed as a self-directed program, appropriate for students who can drive some or all of the related tasks, with or without support from an instructor. When reading through the lessons, it was determined that the identified sequence would be appropriate, as it encompasses the recommended components of traditional transition planning in the IEP, as well as matches the characteristics of the target population of this study. It is believed that the process students work through in WFA will (a) more wholly involve them in planning for their future, which will increase participation in educational activities; (b) learn the skills necessary to increase involvement in their planning, regardless of ability; and (c) believe they will be heard as a member of planning and decisions made regarding their educational plan (Lee, 2007). The selected lessons were edited to remove the mention of IEPs and leading meetings as the culminating activity of the lessons. Additionally, due to administrative request, the term “disability” was excluded from the lessons and class discussions; rather, the acronym

M.U.L.E.S., or “My Unique Learning and Educational Supports,” defined in WFA as “student learning needs and supports,” was used (Wehmeyer et al., 2004, p. 13).

Instructional periods lasted ten weeks, and students completed one lesson per week, so as not to interfere with instruction and remediation time. Lessons lasted approximately 15 to 30 minutes. Instructional sessions took place at the beginning of each period. Students were given the instructional packet for the day, introduced to the topic, and told the learning objectives of the lesson. Then, students were given time to read through the text of the lessons. During their reading, students were encouraged to ask for help if there was unfamiliar terminology or questions arose about the content. After reading through the lesson, students engaged in a short group discussion of what they read. Students then answered questions individually on their papers and performed related tasks using their iPads, followed by a discussion of their results and expanded discussion in the small group. The following lessons were selected and sequenced, as the literature base for self-determination and its behaviors indicates that students need opportunities to identify their preferences and interests (e.g., session 1); to discuss their unique learning needs and how they may direct their future goals (e.g., session 2); to practice asking for assistance of supports to be successful (e.g., session 3); to experience the steps of goal identification and the goal-setting process (e.g., sessions 4, 5, and 6); to identify goals for independent living, postsecondary education, and careers (e.g., sessions 7, 8, and 9); and to understand how to monitor progress while working toward goal attainment (e.g., session 10). The selected sessions align with Wehmeyer’s causal agency theory, as the students direct themselves through the self-directed lessons of WFA. According to Wehmeyer (2004), to act with self-determination is to have opportunities to have control; to make choices based on one’s personal belief system, cultural belief system, and personal values; to solve problems with

autonomy; and to be supported by others in doing so. In order for this to occur, individuals must have the opportunity to look introspectively and identify abilities, preferences, and interests, and to do so without influence from others. Individuals who act with causal agency are the catalysts of action in their lives (Wehmeyer, 2017). The following lessons were selected and edited for relevance.

Table 2

Selected WFA sessions

Program Areas	Session	Topic
Getting to Know You	1	Your Preferences and Interests
Getting to Know You	2	Your Unique Learning Needs
Communicating	3	Advocating and Appealing
Goals, Objectives and the Future	4	Identifying Goals in Your Plan
Making Decisions	5	Steps 1 and 2 of DO IT!
Making Decisions	6	Steps 3 and 4 of DO IT!
Goals, Objectives and the Future	7	Identifying Goals for Living
Goals, Objectives and the Future	8	Identifying Goals for More School
Goals, Objectives and the Future	9	Identifying Goals for Work
Goals, Objectives and the Future	10	Keeping Track of Your Goals

The first ten weeks (Session 1) of the semester, group 1 (periods 1, 3, 7) ($n = 25$) completed one lesson per week. At the end of Session 1, group 1 completed the AIR-S and SDI-SR (Time 2) to collect two posttest measures of levels of self-determination. At this time, group 2 (periods 2, 5, 6) ($n = 24$) also completed the AIR-S and SDI-SR (Time 2). Group 2 then began ten weeks of instruction (Session 2) in the same manner as group 1. Upon completion, group 2 completed the

AIR-S and SDI-SR (Time 3), and group 1 completed a second administration of the AIR-S and SDI-SR (Time 3).

Instrumentation

To measure levels of student self-determination, the AIR-S and the SDI-SR were used as pretests prior to instruction and posttest upon completion of instruction. Additional measures of self-determination were obtained using the AIR-P and the AIR-E as pretests directly prior to instruction and posttest at the culmination of instruction.

AIR Self-Determination Scale. Wolman et al. (1994) developed the AIR-S to measure levels of self-determination among youth with disabilities of all ages. The scale was designed “to (a) assess and develop a profile of a student’s level of self-determination, (b) determine strengths and areas for improvement to increase self-determination, (c) identify goals and objectives, and (d) develop strategies to increase a student’s capacities and opportunities” (Field et al., 1998, p. 46). The AIR-S is appropriate for kindergarten-aged students to 21-year-olds (Wolman et al., 1994). The authors state that students of all ages need to make decisions, and self-determination is key to making informed choices based on what one likes. The scale provides four forms, including Student (AIR-S), Parent (AIR-P), Educator (AIR-E), and a Research scale, which can be administered in order to develop a “big picture” view of youth with disabilities. The results are transferred to a graphic profile, which provides a visual representation of the student’s scores in two subscales, *Capacity* and *Opportunity*, and an overall score of the student’s current *Level of Self-Determination*. *Capacity* is defined as “ability, knowledge, and perceptions,” and *Opportunity* that occurs in the context of school or home (Field et al., 1998, p. 46). Based on the results, appropriate goals and objectives can be developed during the IEP planning process, followed by focused transition education utilizing corresponding curriculum. Through responses

to a five-point Likert scale, measurement ratings are provided for three components—*thinking*, *doing*, and *adjusting*—and each component consists of two steps that include identifying/expressing needs, preferences, and abilities; setting goals; choice making; taking steps to complete plans; self-evaluating results; and making necessary adjustments to promote more effective goal attainment (Wolman et al., 1994). The results are designed to function as a starting point for developing strategies to increase self-determination and develop goals and objectives for the IEP that address the individual needs of the student, and the scores can be used as a baseline for comparison of progress made during self-determination instruction (Wolman et al., 1994).

For validation purposes, the AIR-S was normed on a sample of 450 students with and without disabilities, ranging in ages from 6 to 25 (Wolman et al., 1994). Reliability was conducted using an alternative-item correlation to test item consistency (.91 to .98), a split-half test to determine the assessment's internal consistency (.95), and a test-retest measure of result stability over time (.74) (Wolman et al., 1994). In order to determine its validity, the authors examined relationships between the constructs—*capacity-opportunity*, *home-school*, and *knowledge-ability-perception*—and the instrument's item scores. Using factor analysis, results parsed out two components: (1) *capacity to self-determine*, addressed in items 1-18, and (2) *opportunity to self-determine*, addressed in items 19-30 (Wolman et al., 1994). Three substructures emerged, including *knowledge* (items 1-6), *ability* (items 7-12), and *perception* (items 13-18). Overall, the factor analysis yielded results explaining 74% of variance in the measure, while *capacity* yielded a score of 42.4%, *home-school* yielded 17.25%, *opportunity* 10.3%, and *knowledge-ability-perception* 4.1% (Peper, 2009). Mithaug et al. (2003) determined that the four identified factors account for most of the variance in scores, indicating that the

assessment is effective in providing a valid measure of a student's capacity and opportunity to act in a self-determined way. The AIR-S was chosen to collect measures of student levels of self-determination due to (1) alignment of concepts covered in WFA and (2) recommendation by Dr. Michael Wehmeyer, author of WFA. As an additional measure of self-determination, each student participant selected a teacher who would complete the AIR-E. Students were encouraged to select current teachers who they believed could provide a valid measure of level of self-determination.

Self-Determination Inventory: Self-Report. The second measure of self-determination, the SDI-SR, provides insight into the skills transition-aged youth need to learn and achieve (SDI-SR, 2015, p. 1). Undergirded by causal agency theory, self-determination as a psychological construct posits that agentic individuals “engage in self-regulated and goal-directed action, navigating challenges in the social and ecological environments they encounter” (Shogren et al., 2017, p. 93). Students who act as causal agents in their own lives are said to demonstrate three essential characteristics that develop across the lifespan: (1) volitional action, (2) agentic action, and (3) action-control beliefs. Volitional action, defined as “making intentional, conscious choices based on one's preferences and interests” (SDI-SR, 2015, p. 2), is characterized by autonomy, or “acting based on one's preferences, interests, and abilities without undue outside influence” (SDI-SR, 2015, p. 2), and self-initiation, or “initiating action to achieve a goal, using past experiences to guide you” (SDI-SR, 2015, p. 2). Agentic action, defined as “self-directing and managing actions toward goals” (SDI-SR, 2015, p. 3), is characterized by pathways thinking, or “identifying many different ways to solve problems that you encounter in working to reach...goals” (SDI-SR, 2015, p. 3); self-direction, or “directing the actions that you take toward your goals and responding to challenges and opportunities” (SDI-SR, 2015, p. 3); and self-

regulation, or “managing and evaluating the actions that you take to reach your goals” (SDI-SR, 2015, p. 3). Action-control beliefs, defined as “recognizing your own abilities and believing they will help you achieve your goals,” is characterized by control-expectancy, or “believing that you can use your skills and the resources (i.e., people, supports) around you to reach a goal” (SDI-SR, 2015, p. 4); psychological empowerment, or “believing that you have what it takes to reach your goals and that you can reach your goals when you try” (SDI-SR, 2015, p. 4); and self-realization, or “using what you know about your personal strengths and weaknesses to act in ways that lead to your goals” (SDI-SR, 2015, p. 4). These characteristics enable individuals to be self-aware and self-knowledgeable, goal-oriented, and empowered (Shogren et al., 2017).

The online inventory consists of 50 Likert-type questions. The assessment may be accessed on a desktop or laptop computer, as well as tablets. As a self-report measure, the SDI-SR was designed for youth with and without disabilities, ranging in ages from 13 to 22. A preliminary investigation of validity and reliability of students scores was conducted by Shogren et al. (2017). They determined, based on student scores, that the inventory is valid and reliable for detecting differences in self-determination scores. Additionally, the authors confirmed the usability of the SDI-SR as a tool for examining the differences of students in classrooms of varied ability, the results of which can potentially inform differentiated instruction and serve as a baseline for achievement. As an extension of this study, Shogren et al. (2018) attempted to establish a more robust, efficient item set for the SDI-SR. Approximately 5,000 students with and without disabilities across all regions of the United States participated in a validation study to determine a set of items that would best assess levels of self-determination in students with and without disabilities (Shogren et al., 2018). The results of the study led to identification of 21 robust items that fit well within the model, leading to a more theoretically aligned self-

determination assessment. The SDI-SR was used because (1) it reflects the updated theoretical model of self-determination and (2) was recommended by Dr. Michael Wehmeyer, author of WFA.

Data Collection

Quantitative analysis. Students in group 1 completed two pretests (Time 1) focused on student levels of self-determination: (a) AIR-S and (b) SDI-SR, followed by ten weeks of WFA instruction (Session 1). At the end of Session 1, students in group 1 completed both assessments again (Time 2), followed by a second posttest at the conclusion of group 2's instruction (Time 3). Group 2 students completed both assessments as pretests (Time 1) at the beginning of group 1's instruction (Session 1), followed by a second administration of the assessments (Time 2) directly prior to participation in instruction (Session 2). At the conclusion of instruction of Session 2, group 2 completed a final set of the assessments as posttest. Parents were asked to complete the AIR-P as a pretest measure of their child's level of self-determination directly prior to beginning Session 1. Selected teachers were asked to complete a pretest administration of AIR-E directly prior to Session 1 and as a posttest measure at the end of Session 2 to provide an additional measure of student levels of self-determination.

Qualitative analysis. Upon completion of participation in WFA, seven students were randomly selected to complete individual qualitative interviews. Students were randomly selected to avoid researcher bias in selection and to ensure adequate representation of students. A semi-structured interviewing protocol was utilized for this study. A set of four core research questions, listed below, was developed, from which eleven interview questions were written for the interview.

1. What is the student perception of participating in self-determination instruction?

2. What individual characteristics do students identify as impacting the transition process?
3. Does participating in *Whose Future Is It Anyway?* impact students' perceptions of what it means to be self-determined, and how does that impact their perceptions of the transition-planning process?
4. What are the student participants' perceptions of the effects of *Whose Future Is It Anyway?* on college-and-career exploration?

Additional probing questions emerged organically throughout the course of the interviews (Hong, 2010). Sample interview questions included: "In your own words, what is self-determination?" and, "In what way, if any, did participation in *Whose Future Is It Anyway?* lessons impact your level of self-determination?" Interviews lasted approximately fifteen minutes to twenty minutes and were conducted in a small classroom at the school site during the students' academic support hours.

Data Analysis

Treatment Fidelity

To ensure treatment fidelity during instruction of WFA, each lesson was observed by a teacher who had received training on the curriculum before instruction began. The observing teacher was one of three certified special educators of the academic support program and is familiar with each of the student participants, as she has worked with them on an individual basis and in small-group settings. The observing teacher read through the 10-lesson sequence in its entirety, and each lesson was discussed to ensure understanding of the learning objectives, relevance of lessons for the student population, and appropriateness of the sequence of the lessons. The teacher was then provided a guiding document, *Assessing Fidelity of Implementation at the Classroom Level* (National Center on Response to Intervention [NCRI],

2010). The teacher read through the document and identified specific behaviors related to the five teacher actions included in the guiding document that ensure instruction is given with fidelity: (1) adherence, (2) exposure, (3) quality of delivery, (4), program specification, and (5) student responsiveness (NCRI, 2010). During instructional periods, the observing teacher attended each of the 20 lessons and provided evidence of the expected behaviors, as well as feedback on implementation of instruction, student engagement, and suggestions for subsequent instruction for each lesson. An additional measure of fidelity is consistency of instructor, as I guided student groups through their ten-lesson sessions.

Power analysis. A power analysis was conducted to estimate the sample size of student participants to yield statistically significant effect sizes using G*Power: Statistical Power Analyses (Faul, Erdfelder, Lang, & Buchner, 2007). Based on previous research of the impact of WFA as measured by the WFA Knowledge Test (Cohen's $d = .43$), a value of .40 (Cohen's d) was used to estimate the sample size needed to ensure detectable differences between the control and intervention groups (Lee, 2007). Results of the power analysis indicated a sample size of 35 was needed; forty-nine students participated in the study, ensuring adequate sample size.

Mixed-Methods Analysis

To address the research questions, this mixed-methods study employed a randomized, delayed-treatment design, consisting of two intervention groups, utilizing a pretest and posttest model (Slavin, 2007; van der Scheer & Visscher, 2016). Creswell (2015) defined mixed-methods research as “an approach to research...in which the investigator gathers both quantitative (closed-ended) and qualitative (open-ended) data, integrates the two, and then draws interpretations based on the combined strengths of both sets of data to understand research problems” (p. 2). Klingner and Boardman (2011) state that mixed-methods studies in special

education research allow for a broader understanding of the questions at hand, the results of which are not limited to small sample sizes or insignificant effect sizes. An explanatory sequential design was utilized in this study, “the intent of [which] is to begin with a quantitative strand and then conduct a second qualitative strand to explain the quantitative results” (Creswell, 2015, p. 38). Because it was necessary to know more about individual student perspectives of self-determination to planning for life after high school, open-ended research questions were most appropriate. Therefore, after completing quantitative data collection and analysis, one-on-one interviews were conducted with a randomly selected subset of participants.

Quantitative analysis. Research questions 1 and 2 were answered using quantitative analysis. The questions are: (1) Do intraindividual factors (age, race, disability category, reading level) yield statistically significant differences in levels of self-determination in private school students with disabilities? and (2) Does participation in *Whose Future Is It Anyway?* increase levels of self-determination in private school students with disabilities? To determine if intraindividual variables (age, race, disability category, reading level) lead to statistically significant differences in student levels of self-determination through the use of, as well as explain mean differences in scores of self-determination, two pretest and posttest measures of self-determination were completed by students and their teachers. Using SPSS, a statistical analysis software, a variety of statistical tests were run to provide descriptive statistics in relation to the research questions. Exploratory analyses of self-determination scores were conducted. The results of these statistical analyses are included in the following chapter.

Qualitative analysis. Qualitative analysis was used to answer research question 3: What are student participants’ perceptions of the effects of *Whose Future Is It Anyway?* on college-and-career exploration?

Participants. Seven participants were randomly selected for one-on-one interviews to collect qualitative data following experiences receiving self-determination instruction. Data were collected through semi-structured, face-to-face interviews, which lasted approximately 15 to 20 minutes. The interviews were recorded using a password-protected iPhone. The interviews were transcribed, students were asked to review transcriptions to ensure accuracy, and then transcripts were analyzed for emergent themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Ezzy, 2002; Shank, 2002).

Member checking. Great care was taken to ensure students felt comfortable during the interview process by continuing to build rapport throughout the sessions. The semi-structured interview format allowed for interviews to have loose structure, in which students provided answers to the specific questions but were able to expound on their perceptions through additional probing questions. Students were given the option to review transcripts, if desired, to ensure that the transcription adequately captured their true responses.

Inductive analysis. An inductive approach to analyzing the data was utilized. Inductive reasoning is defined as “start[ing] with examination of a phenomenon and then, from successive examinations of similar and dissimilar phenomena, develop[ing] a theory to explain what was studied” (LeCompte & Preisle, 1993, p. 42). It allows for researchers to comb through large amounts of data through repeated reviews, then identify and interpret emerging themes (Thomas, 2003). The data was segmented, and responses were grouped as they connected to the four research questions. Data that did not appear to correspond to a specific research question were grouped as “miscellaneous.” In order to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomena, line-by-line coding was accomplished by reading through each of the interviews multiple times, as inductive analysis is an iterative process (Ezzy, 2002). Coding the data is a process of reading and rereading the data, then breaking it down, or “refracting,” then rearranging the data into

categories that allow for comparison and connection of common statement and phraseology (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Glaser, 1992; Kendall, 1999; Maxwell, 2005), followed by thematic analysis, or the emergence of patterns found in the data (Shank, 2002). Thematic analysis allows for the researcher to make sense of the data by what is directly observable and what meaning may emerge (Hartman & Conklin, 2012). Boyatzis (1998) defined theme as “a pattern found in the information that at a minimum describes and organizes the possible observations and at a maximum interprets aspects of the phenomenon” (p. 4). The usefulness of thematic analysis is that it provides a way to glean similarities and differences of participant responses, identifying themes that fit the data rather than the research questions, allowing for a richer understanding of the phenomenon at hand (Nowell, Norris, White, & Moules, 2017). In order to complete a thematic analysis, the steps recommended by Nowell et al. (2017) were followed, consisting of six phases: (1) familiarizing oneself with the data, (2) generating initial codes, (3) searching for themes, (4) reviewing themes, (5) defining and naming themes, and (6) producing the report.

Summary

The intent of this research study was to be able to generalize findings to the larger population of private school students with disabilities. Therefore, the results of the quantitative and qualitative data were analyzed separately, followed by synthesis of results through data convergence in order to report findings relative to the research questions.

Chapter 4

Results

Overview and Research Questions

This mixed-methods study was aimed at determining if a set of variables lead to statistically significant differences in scores of self-determination on two measures, *AIR Self-Determination Scale* and *Self-Determination Inventory: Self-Report*, in students with disabilities at a private school. A second goal was to determine what, if any, impact the *Whose Future Is It Anyway?* curriculum had on levels of self-determination of students, as measured by scores of self-determination collected from students and teachers in a delayed-treatment intervention study with pre- and posttests. Additionally, open-ended one-on-one interviews with student participants were conducted, in order to understand to a greater extent how students perceived the instruction of *Whose Future Is It?* The questions that guided this study are as follows:

1. Do intraindividual factors (age, race, disability category, reading level) yield statistically significant differences in levels of self-determination in private school students with disabilities?
2. Does participation in *Whose Future Is It Anyway?* increase levels of self-determination in private school students with disabilities?
3. What are student participants' perceptions of the effects of *Whose Future Is It Anyway?* on college-and-career exploration?

Forty-nine high school students receiving academic support services in an urban private college-preparatory high school in a midwestern state participated in this research study. Students ranged in aged from 14 to 19 ($M = 16.4$, $SD = 1.37$) and were randomly assigned to two intervention groups, group 1 ($n = 25$) and group 2 ($n = 24$). Student demographic information

(age, grade level, gender, race/ethnicity, disability category, grade-point average, reading level) was collected at the onset of the study through academic record review. After students were placed in intervention groups 1 ($n = 25$) and 2 ($n = 24$), the students in intervention group 1 (periods 1, 3, 7) completed ten selected lessons of WFA, a self-directed transition-focused curriculum for youth with disabilities. Lessons were edited to reflect the setting of the students. Upon completion of the lessons, group 2 (periods 2, 5, 6) received instruction in the same set of lessons. At the onset of the study period, groups 1 and 2 completed two pretests (Time 1) to collect two measures of self-determination: (a) AIR-S and (b) SDI-SR. Group 1 began instruction in the ten lessons and, upon completion, groups 1 and 2 completed a second administration (Time 2) of the (a) AIR-S and (b) SDI-SR. Then, group 2 participated in the ten WFA lessons, followed by a third and final administration (Time 3) of the (a) AIR-S and (b) SDI-SR, completed by both groups 1 and 2. Upon completion of instruction of WFA lessons, seven students were randomly selected for individual interviews regarding self-determination and the college-and-career exploration and choice-making process. Qualitative responses were analyzed for common themes regarding self-determination, transition knowledge, and preparing for the future.

Table 3

Demographics of student participants

Variable	Group 1 (N = 25)		Group 2 (N = 24)	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Gender				
Female	10	42.3	13	54.4
Male	15	57.7	11	45.8
Disability				
ADD/ADHD	8	30.8	3	12.5
SLD	13	53.8	20	83.3
OHI	1	3.8		
ASD	3	11.5	1	4.2
Ethnicity				
Caucasian	19	76.9	15	62.5
African American	1	3.8	2	8.3
Hispanic/Latino			3	12.5
Asian	3	11.5	1	4.2
Native American	2	7.7	2	8.3
Other			1	4.2
Age	16.23 (SD = 1.42)		16.58 (SD = 1.32)	
Grade-point Average	3.01 (SD = .52)		2.7 (SD = .66)	
Reading Level	8.60 (SD = 2.45)		8.73 (SD = 2.09)	

Results**Research Question 1**

Quantitative analysis was used to answer research question 1: Do intraindividual factors (age, race, disability category, reading level) yield statistically significant differences in levels of self-determination in private school students with disabilities?

Age. A one-way ANOVA is an appropriate statistical test used for comparing means of two or more independent samples (Lomax, 2007) and was used to determine if levels of self-determination obtained on the Time 3 administration of the AIR-S were different for students with disabilities grouped by age. Participants were classified into three groups: Under 15 ($n =$

16), 16-17 ($n = 17$), and 18 and Older ($n = 14$). There were no outliers, as assessed by boxplot; data were normally distributed for each group, as assessed by Shapiro-Wilk's test ($p > .05$); and there was homogeneity of variances, as assessed by Levene's test of homogeneity of variances ($p = .281$). Self-determination scores increased from the Under 15, to 16-17, to 18 and Older, in that order, but the differences between these age groups were not statistically significant, $F(2, 44) = 1.308, p = .281$. The group means were not statistically significant in difference ($p > .05$) and, therefore, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected, nor can the alternative hypothesis be accepted.

Table 4

Age differences for time 3 AIR-S and SDI-SR scores

Group	AIR-S 3		SDI-SR 3	
	<i>n</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>
Under 15	16	94.89 (12.17)	16	80.06 (18.59)
16-17	17	96.33 (14.52)	17	85.94 (12.05)
18 and Older	14	102.64 (10.97)	14	90.27 (8.08)

A second one-way ANOVA was conducted to determine if levels of self-determination obtained on the Time 3 administration of the SDI-SR were different for students with disabilities grouped by age. Participants were classified into three groups: Under 15 ($n = 16$), 16-17 ($n = 17$), and 18 and Older ($n = 14$). There were two outliers, as assessed by boxplot. The presence of outliers is likely representative of what would be discovered in the general population, as there are often individuals who score outside, either higher or lower, in comparison to the general population (Grubbs, 1969). Data were not normally distributed for each group, as assessed by Shapiro-Wilk's test ($p > .05$); and there was homogeneity of variances, as assessed by Levene's test of homogeneity of variances ($p = .112$). Self-determination scores increased from Under 15

to 16-17 to 18 and Older, in that order, but the differences between these age groups were not statistically significant, $F(2, 44) = 1.854, p = .169$. The group means were not statistically significant in difference ($p > .05$) and, therefore, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected, nor can the alternative hypothesis be accepted.

Race. An independent-samples t-test was used to compare scores of two independent groups (Lomax, 2007) to determine if there are differences in self-determination scores on the AIR-S Time 3 administration of students grouped by race. There were 33 “white” and 14 “other” participants. There was one outlier in the data, as assessed by inspection of a boxplot; however, when running the statistical analysis without the outlier, results indicated there were not appreciable differences in results, supporting the decision to retain the sole outlier in the sample. Scores of self-determination for each group were normally distributed, as assessed by Shapiro-Wilk’s test ($p > .05$), and there was homogeneity of variances, as assessed by Levene’s test for equality of variances ($p = .57$). The difference in scores for “white” and “other” was not statistically significant, $M = 2.38, 95\% \text{ CI}[6.01, 10.78], t(45) = -.572, p = .57$.

Table 5

Race differences for time 3 AIR-S & SDI-SR scores

Group	AIR-S		SDI-SR	
	<i>n</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>
White	33	96.55 (12.41)	33	85.64 (12.56)
Other	14	85.64 (12.56)	14	82.50 (18.82)

An independent-samples t-test was used to compare scores of two independent groups to determine if there are differences in self-determination scores on the Time 3 administration of SDI-SR to students grouped by race. There were 33 “white” and 14 “other” participants. There was one outlier in the data, as assessed by inspection of a boxplot; however, when running the

statistical analysis without the outliers, results indicated there were not appreciable differences in results, supporting the decision to retain the sole outlier in the sample. Scores of self-determination for each group were not normally distributed, as assessed by Shapiro-Wilk's test (white, $p = .004$, other, $p = .003$); however, the independent-samples t-test is fairly robust to violations of normality, so analysis continued. There was homogeneity of variances, as assessed by Levene's test for equality of variances ($p = .22$). The difference in scores for "white" ($M = 85.64$, $SD = 12.56$) and "other" ($M = 82.50$, $SD = 18.82$) was not statistically significant, $M = 3.14$, 95% CI[12.55, 14.65], $t(45) = .671$, $p = .51$.

Disability category. A one-way ANOVA was conducted to determine if scores of self-determination on the Time 3 administration of the AIR-S were different for groups with different disability categories. Participants were classified into three groups: ADD/ADHD ($n = 10$), SLD ($n = 32$), and ASD/Other ($n = 5$). There were outliers present, as assessed by boxplot; however, as the statistical test is considered to be robust against the effects of the presence of outliers (Blanca, Alarcon, Arnau, & Bendayan, 2017), analysis continued. Data were not normally distributed for each group, as assessed by Shapiro-Wilk's test ($p > .05$), thus the assumption of normality was violated; there was homogeneity of variances, as assessed by Levene's test of homogeneity of variances ($p = .553$).

Table 6

Disability category differences for time 3 AIR-S and SDI-SR scores

Group	AIR-S 3		SDI-SR 3	
	<i>n</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>
ADD/ADHD	10	92.5 (13.98)	10	79.90 (15.50)
SLD	32	99.88 (12.55)	32	85.63 (14.96)
ASD/Other	5	90.00 (9.90)	5	88.40 (9.07)

Differences of scores of self-determination on administration of the Time 3 AIR-S were not statistically significant, $F(2, 44) = 2.217, p = .121$. The group means were not statistically significantly different ($p > .05$) and, therefore, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected, nor can the alternative hypothesis be accepted.

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to determine if levels of self-determination obtained on the Time 3 administration of the SDI-SR were different for students with disabilities grouped by disability category. Participants were classified into 3 groups: ADD/ADHD ($n = 10$), SLD ($n = 32$), and ASD/Other ($n = 5$). Outliers were present in the data, as assessed by boxplot. Data were not normally distributed; therefore, the assumption of normality was violated. There was homogeneity of variances, as assessed by Levene's test of homogeneity of variances ($p = .579$). Differences of scores of self-determination between the disability groups were not statistically significant, $F(2, 44) = .761, p = .473$. The group means were not statistically significant in difference ($p > .05$) and, therefore, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected, nor can the alternative hypothesis be accepted.

Reading level. A simple linear regression was run to determine if reading level impacts scores of self-determination (Lomax, 2007), as reported by students on the Time 3 administration of the AIR-S. To assess linearity, a scatterplot of self-determination against levels of self-determination with a superimposed regression line was plotted. Visual inspection of these two plots indicated that a linear relationship between the variables did exist. There was independence of residuals, as assessed by a Durbin-Watson statistic of 2.345. There was homoscedasticity, as assessed by visual inspection of a plot of standardized residuals versus standardized predicted values. Residuals were normally distributed, as assessed by visual inspection of a normal probability plot. Reading level accounted for .7% of the variation in scores of self-determination

on the Time 3 administration of the AIR-S, with adjusted $R^2 = .000$, indicating that reading level does not lead to statistically significant differences in scores of self-determination on the Time 3 administration of the AIR-S, $F(1, 39) = .268, p = .608$.

A second linear regression was run to understand the effect of reading level on levels of self-determination, as reported by students on the Time 3 administration of the SDI-SR. To assess linearity, a scatterplot of self-determination against levels of self-determination with a superimposed regression line was plotted. Visual inspection of these two plots indicated that a linear relationship between the variables did not exist. The results were negatively skewed. At this point, the variables were transformed to avoid skewness; however, this had little impact on the results, indicating that reading level does not lead to statistically significant differences in scores on the Time 3 administration of the SDI-SR; thus, further analysis did not occur.

Research Question 2

Quantitative analysis was used to answer research question 2: Does participation in transition-focused instruction increase levels of self-determination in private school students with disabilities?

Self-determination. A one-way MANOVA was run to determine the effect of self-determination instruction on student-reported levels of self-determination, as indicated on two measures, the AIR-S and SDI-SR. Students were randomly assigned by class to two groups: (a) group 1 ($n = 25$) (periods 1, 3, 7) and (b) group 2 ($n = 24$) (periods 2, 5, 6). Each group completed the two assessments at three points (Time 1, Time 2, Time 3) during the instructional period. Prior to instruction, group 1 and group 2 completed pretests (Time 1). Group 1 then received ten weeks of instruction of WFA, followed by a posttest (Time 2). At this point, group 2 completed a second round of pretests (Time 2) to determine if growth occurred over the time in

which group 1 participated in self-determination instruction. Immediately after, group 2 participated in ten lessons of self-determination instruction of WFA. Upon completion, both group 1 and group 2 completed posttest administrations of the two assessments (Time 3). Preliminary data indicated the presence of univariate outliers, based upon visual inspection of boxplots. In spite of their presence, the univariate outliers were not removed from the data set, as they indicated there were students in the sample who may have lower or higher levels of self-determination in comparison to the larger sample at a given time during the intervention, the scores of which may provide valuable insight into the individuals and their levels of self-determination in relation to their peers (Orr, Sackett, & Dubois, 1991; Osborne & Overbay, 2004). An initial analysis of distribution of the Shapiro-Wilks test ($p > .05$) indicated the data were normally distributed, with the exception of results for group 1 on SDI-SR Time 1 ($p = .028$) and group 2 on SDI-SR Time 2 ($p = .003$). In spite of these abnormalities, analysis continued, as MANOVAs are robust to deviations from normality (Blanca, Alarcon, Arnau, Bono, & Bendayan, 2017). There were no multivariate outliers in the data, as assessed by Mahalanobis distance ($p > .001$). There were linear relationships among all variables, as assessed by scatterplot. An initial check indicated multicollinearity existed in the data, so the offending variable was removed (Time 2 SDI-SR) (Kock & Lynn, 2012) and a second analysis completed, which indicated no multicollinearity for the remaining variables, as assessed by Pearson's correlation. There was homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices, as assessed by Box's M test of Equality of Covariance Matrices ($p = .010$). The differences between the groups on the combined dependent variables were not statistically significant, $F(5, 40) = 1.842, p = .127$; Wilks' $\Lambda = .813$; partial $\eta^2 = .187$.

Group 1 AIR-S. A one-way repeated measures ANOVA was conducted to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference in scores of self-determination for group 1 participants on the AIR-S over the course of a 20-week period. As assessed by scatterplot, there were outliers present in the data set. A Friedman test was run to determine if there were differences in scores of self-determination on the AIR-S for group 1. Pairwise comparisons were performed with a Bonferroni correction for multiple comparisons. Scores of self-determination on the AIR-S were statistically significantly different at the different time points during the intervention period, $\chi^2(2) = 10.419, p < .005$. Post hoc analysis revealed statistically significant differences in scores of self-determination from Time 2 ($Mdn = 91.00$) to Time 3 ($Mdn = 100.00$) ($p = .010$). Mauchly's test of sphericity indicated that the assumption of sphericity had been violated, $\chi^2(2) = 10.155, p = .006$. Epsilon (ϵ) was .094, as calculated according to Greenhouse & Geisser (1959), and was used to correct the one-way repeated measures ANOVA. Self-determination instruction did not lead to any statistically significant changes in levels of self-determination scores on the AIR-S for group 1 over time, $F(1.446, 31.805) = 2.278, p = .132$.

Table 7

Group mean differences

Group	<i>n</i>	AIR-S			SDI-SR	
		Time 1	Time 2	Time 3	Time 1	Time 3
		<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>
1	23	94.30 (11.56)	92.65 (12.67)	97.30 (12.98)	80.52 (14.6)	89.43 (8.38)
2	24	91.74 (12.34)	91.30 (15.47)	96.74 (13.34)	65.48 (25.55)	80.87 (17.74)

Group 2 AIR-S. A one-way repeated measures ANOVA was conducted to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference in scores of self-determination for group 2 participants on the AIR-S over the course of a 20-week period. As assessed by scatterplot, there were outliers present in the data set. A Friedman test was run to determine if there were

differences in scores of self-determination on the AIR-S for group 2. Scores of self-determination on the AIR-S were statistically significantly different at the different time points during the intervention period, $\chi^2(2) = 10.419, p < .005$. Analysis revealed statistically significant differences in scores of self-determination from Time 2 ($Mdn = 91.00$) to Time 3 ($Mdn = 100.00$) ($p = .010$). Mauchly's test of sphericity indicated that the assumption of sphericity had been violated, $\chi^2(2) = 10.155, p = .006$. Epsilon (ϵ) was .094, as calculated according to Greenhouse & Geisser (1959), and was used to correct the one-way repeated measures ANOVA. Self-determination instruction did not lead to any statistically significant changes in levels of self-determination for group 1 over time, $F(1.446, 31.805) = 2.278, p = .132$. Pairwise comparisons were performed with a Bonferroni correction for multiple comparisons, revealing there was a decrease in self-determination scores from Time 1 to Time 2, a statistically insignificant mean decrease of .435, 95% CI [-4.076, 4.946], $p = 1.000$. There was an increase in self-determination scores from the Time 2 to Time 3, a statistically significant mean increase of 5.435, 95% CI [.977, 9.893], $p < .05$. There was also an increase in self-determination scores from Time 1 to Time 3, a statistically significant mean increase of 5.000, 95% CI [.977, 9.893], $p < .05$.

Group 1 SDI-SR. A one-way repeated measures ANOVA was conducted to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference in scores of self-determination for group 1 participants on the SDI-SR over the course of a 20-week period. As assessed by scatterplot, there were outliers present in the data set; therefore, a Friedman test was run to determine if there were differences in scores of self-determination on the SDI-SR for group 1. Scores of self-determination on the SDI-SR were statistically significantly different at the different time points during the intervention period, $\chi^2(2) = 8.769, p < .05$. Analysis revealed statistically significant differences in scores of self-determination from Time 1 ($Mdn = 82.5$) to Time 3 ($Mdn = 90.000$)

($p = .015$). The assumption of normality was violated; however, the ANOVA is fairly robust in regard to normality (Blanca, Alarcon, Bono, & Bendayan, 2017), thus, analysis continued. Mauchly's test of sphericity indicated that the assumption of sphericity had been violated, $\chi^2(2) = 8.738, p = .013$. Epsilon (ϵ) was .0753, as calculated according to Greenhouse and Geisser (1959), and was used to correct the one-way repeated measures ANOVA. Self-determination instruction resulted in statistically significant changes in levels of self-determination for group 1 over time, as indicated by scores on the SDI-SR, $F(1.506, 34.644) = 8.131, p < .005$, partial $\eta^2 = .261$. Pairwise comparisons with a Bonferroni correction for multiple comparisons revealed there was an increase in self-determination scores from SDI-SR Time 1 to SDI-SR Time 3, a statistically significant mean increase of 10.208, 95% CI[2.092, 18.324], $p = .011$.

Group 2 SDI-SR. A one-way repeated measures ANOVA was conducted to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference in scores of self-determination for group 2 participants on the SDI-SR over the course of a 20-week intervention. As assessed by scatterplot, there was an outlier present in the data set; therefore, a Friedman test was run to determine if there were differences in scores of self-determination on the SDI-SR for group 2. Scores of self-determination on the SDI-SR were statistically significantly different at the different time points during the intervention period, $\chi^2(2) = 12.356, p < .005$. Analysis revealed statistically significant differences in scores of self-determination from Time 1 ($Mdn = 72.000$) to Time 2 ($Mdn = 86.000$) ($p = .001$). The assumption of normality was violated; however, the ANOVA is fairly robust in regard to normality (Blanca, Alarcon, Arnau, Bono, & Bendayan, 2017), thus, analysis continued. Mauchly's test of sphericity indicated that the assumption of sphericity had been met, $\chi^2(2) = 4.404, p = .111$. Self-determination instruction resulted in statistically significant changes in levels of self-determination for group 2 over time, as indicated by scores on the SDI-SR, $F(2,$

44 = 7.696, $p = .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .259$. Pairwise comparisons with a Bonferroni correction for multiple comparisons revealed there was an increase in self-determination scores from Time 1 to Time 3, a statistically significant mean increase of 15.391, 95% CI[3.885, 26.898], $p = .007$.

Teacher ratings of student levels of self-determination: AIR-E. A paired-samples t-test was used to determine whether there was a statistically significant mean difference between educator scores of students' levels of self-determination, as measured by the AIR-E. Two outliers were detected, as assessed by visual inspection of a boxplot. Inspection of their values did not reveal them to be extreme, and they were kept in the analysis. The assumption of normality was not violated, as assessed by Shapiro-Wilk's test ($p = .112$). Teachers scored students higher on the posttest ($M = 114.34$, $SD = 19.61$) than the pretest ($M = 107$, $SD = 22.26$), a statistically significant mean increase of 7.34 points, 95% CI [2.49, 12.19], $t(49) = 3.039$, $p < .005$, $d = .43$.

Table 8

AIR-E ratings of student levels of self-determination

Scale	<i>n</i>	Pretest	Posttest	95% CI
		<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	
AIR-E	49	107 (22.26)	114.34 (19.61)	[2.49, 12.19]

Table 9

Differences of student levels of self-determination

Variable	Group	<i>n</i>	AIR-S	SDI-SR
			<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>
Age				
	Under 15	16	94.89 (12.17)	80.06 (18.59)
	16-17	17	96.33 (14.52)	85.94 (12.05)
	18 and Older	14	102.64 (10.97)	90.27 (8.08)
Race				
	White	33	96.55 (12.41)	85.64 (12.56)
	Other	14	85.64 (12.56)	82.50 (18.82)
Disability Category				
	ADD/ADHD	10	92.5 (13.98)	79.90 (15.50)
	SLD	32	99.88 (12.55)	85.63 (14.96)
	ASD/Other	5	90.00 (9.90)	88.40 (9.07)

Table 10

Group differences in student levels of self-determination

Group	<i>n</i>	AIR-S			SDI-SR	
		Time 1 <i>M (SD)</i>	Time 2 <i>M (SD)</i>	Time 3 <i>M (SD)</i>	Time 1 <i>M (SD)</i>	Time 3 <i>M (SD)</i>
1	23	94.30 (11.56)	92.65 (12.67)	97.30 (12.98)	80.52 (14.60)	89.43 (8.38)
2	24	91.74 (12.34)	91.30 (15.47)	96.74 (13.34)	65.84 (25.55)	80.87 (17.74)
Educator	49	107.00 (22.26)			114.34 (19.61)	

Research Question 3

Qualitative analysis was used to answer research question 3: What are student participants' perceptions of the effects of *Whose Future Is It Anyway?* on the college-and-career research process? A set of four core questions, open-ended questions guided one-on-one interview sessions with seven students, and additional probing questions emerged organically through the course of the interviews.

Question 1: What is the student perception of participating in self-determination instruction? Students with disabilities perceive there to be value in participating in self-determination instruction during high school. The value is found in having opportunities to identify goals for the future, to consider the many options that are possible, and to create a plan for reaching those goals. The emphasis on having time to identify and develop goals was common among all participants. During instruction, students elaborated on the goal-setting process they worked through during instruction, including determining their wants for the future, identifying their strengths and needs, considering their options, constructing a plan, identifying steps for achieving their goals, and developing a back-up plan. Jack stated,

It really teaches kids how to construct a goal, figure out what they need to do in order to achieve that goal, give themselves the time they need to complete that goal, find the right tools, develop their own self-confidence, and I think that was really important.

Students had time to consider their individual plans for attending college, for choosing a major, and for brainstorming potential careers. For example, Scarlet stated, "It helped me a lot with knowing the college that, like, knowing that college and, like, knowing this, if I wanted to go to some career path through it, it helped me find that." After completing the lessons, Cecile stated

she has thought more about what she wants to do with her life: “It just helped me understand that there’s more to going to college, like, you need to have a plan of what you want to do or have some idea.” Each of the participants indicated that they plan to attend college after graduation, and now they are thinking more explicitly about their plans for the future.

After working through the lessons of WFA, some students cited an increase in self-confidence as they considered the steps they would take in an attempt to reach their goals.

Scarlet stated,

It helped me a lot, because it made me more, like, assertive of my decisions. It helped me understand, like, this is what I have to get to know; it’s not gonna be easy, but if I plan it out now, I can probably get to where I need to be in the future for college, and that’s what I liked about the self-determination lessons. It helped me a lot to understand how to get there.

Additionally, Jack stated, “It gave me the confidence to kind of get myself out there and find something that I really want to work towards and setting that goal and working on it.” When students have a chance to make plans that are meaningful to them, they experience increases in self-confidence. Overall, the perception of the seven students who participated in the interviews following self-determination instruction in WFA was positive and meaningful.

Question 2: What individual characteristics do students identify as impacting the transition process? I was curious to know how students perceived their individual characteristics and the impact on their transition-planning process, so I asked focused questions to learn what, if anything will help or hinder their planning. Overall, students identified areas for improvement and strengths. For example, Katherine stated, “It made me realize that I need to be really organized,” but she cited “working hard” as a strength that will aid her. When asked how

she approaches challenges, Katherine stated, “I’m hard working, I know what I want, and I like to meet the goals I set...[I ask] my parents, or a teacher, or whoever can help me with that goal.” Michelle identified a personal characteristic that she cites as having a negative effect on her future-planning process, stating,

Overthinking, like, overthinking a lot, or maybe like second-guessing and just being negative... I don’t know, I really think, like, “Oh, is this the right decision?” or, “Oh, is this really where I want to be?” and I just, it really gets to me, so it makes me not want to continue...

However, Michelle identified strengths, such as eagerness, listening, and asking questions as qualities that will help her make a successful transition after high school. Jack also cited overthinking and procrastination as areas for improvement, saying, “Procrastinating, um, being hesitant in big decisions that have a deadline and overthinking it too much,” but believed that increasing self-confidence will aid him in his planning and future success. Shantel stated, “Pushing through, like, strengths and weaknesses,” as well as “a positive mind-set” and “being responsible” as characteristics that will help her. When faced with challenges, Jack stated, “You have to work around it, find a way to work around it, um, finding out and assessing that challenge and trying to find the best course of action.” Scarlet mirrored Jack’s response, stating that she recognized the challenges that come with planning and preparing for the future and cited awareness and assertiveness as key to the process:

For me, I think it’s to be kind of, like, to challenge yourself to know, like, this is something that will be hard, but if you do it well and you plan it out easier, then it will help you a lot through basically your whole entire life, to like be able to be challenged and know that it is okay...I like to know that, how I will figure it, like how, like what I

want to do for my life. I would like to be at least assertive on my decisions, and I want to be somebody who knows what they want, instead of not knowing.

Finally, some students cited self-advocacy as being important to future success. For example, Ella stated that asking for help in school is important for her success, as it “makes me feel more confident in what I’m doing.” Cecile stated that, when faced with challenging material in class, she will “ask questions...and usually get a book or something and kind of teach myself.”

Question 3: Does participation in *Whose Future Is It Anyway?* impact students’ perceptions of what it means to be self-determined, and how does that impact their perceptions of the transition-planning process? In order to answer this question, I asked students to define self-determination, the understanding of which is an objective of the WFA curriculum. Repeated phrases can be summarized as making choices, knowing one’s strength and weaknesses, working to improve, asking for help, and following through. Ella stated that being self-determined meant “making choices about colleges and things like that.” To Michelle, being self-determined meant “knowing who you are as a person, using it in the world, like, using it to your advantage, making choices...where you want to live and how you want your life to go in the future.” Katherine stated that self-determination is “knowing what you can and can’t do, working to improve your skills.” Jack defined self-determination as “the choices you make, what your goals are, your drive to do something to hit a goal, where you want to go, the things you need to get there.”

A consistent theme across interviews was the opportunity to exercise making choices based on the individual, a key to which is knowing oneself and making connections between self and the next step. Within WFA there are numerous opportunities for students to make choices regarding next steps in their futures. Michelle stated that the WFA curriculum and instruction

impacted her transition-planning process by illustrating how her individual needs inform her college-selection process, saying,

It helped me know what colleges I want to attend or apply to, and it also helped me, like, focus on what I need and how I need to prepare for college...[I need] time. Extra time and help. I don't, I don't want to be rushed. I want to, just, you know, enjoy college and not have to worry about, like, not having enough time to finish an assignment or a test or whatever...[I need to] look into the schools who have extra time or who have a helping session.

Ella stated that, as she worked through the lessons, she began to understand the importance of making her own choices, rather than following along with the choices of others:

I've learned that you shouldn't do what all your friends are doing, because I have thought about colleges, and there's some colleges I want to go to because all my friends always talk about it, and there's many other options out there that I should consider, so that'll probably be better for me.

Scarlet stated that WFA lessons are beneficial in helping students with "unique learning needs" identify who they are and what they can do, especially in regard to their future goals,

Some people may not know where they stand in life, and they might not have the people who will, like, tell them, "Hey, you're good at this," or something, so they can understand what that is, what they need to do to help them achieve the goal that they want to, so having a huge lesson about self-determination will help a lot of students and other people outside this to understand how they want to go throughout their life, so I think it's a good reason to know, this is who you are, and this is what you would go through to help you get to the future that you want to go to.

Finally, some students stated that participating in the curriculum increased their levels of self-confidence in planning for the future. For example, Jack stated, “Afterwards, it gave me the confidence to kind of get myself out there and find something that I really want to work towards and setting that goal and working on it.” Michelle also stated, “I’m really kind of more confident in myself, like in who I was.” Overall, students perceived WFA curriculum to be beneficial, citing how the lessons impacted their individual levels of self-determination, their choice-making processes, and their self-confidence in regard to their transition-planning processes.

Question 4: What are student participants’ perceptions of the effects of *Whose Future Is It Anyway?* on the college-and-career research process? Finally, I wanted to know how, if at all, participation in WFA impacted students’ career-and-college research processes and future plans that occurred in WFA and individually. Jack stated that the lessons were beneficial, as they set future planning into motion earlier for participants:

I think it would help with foresight to set these goals in the future so they can plan ahead of time and start working on them earlier, so once they get to that point in time, they know what they’re doing and they have all the right tools, and they’re not panicking at the last minute to see what they want to do.

Ella stated,

It made me realize how close college is, so I think it’s pushing me to start trying harder and working for things that I want to accomplish...I feel like this opened me up to different opportunities I could get if I tried different things and focused on myself and not what other people were doing.

Scarlet stated,

It made me a lot less stressed out on like where I want to go, because I've narrowed it down to two places, so it helped me a lot to be a little bit more, like, okay with where I want to go...it helped me a lot with knowing the college that, like, knowing that college and knowing this, if I wanted to go to some career path through it, it helped me find that. Students indicated that participating in the curriculum also helped them identify and strategize for the logistical side of attending college, such as narrowing down colleges, choosing a major, and determining where to live on campus. For example, Michelle stated that, after participating in WFA, she knows "where I want to go for college and how to know where to go on websites and stuff and how to, where I want to go for college and where I want to, like, if I want to be in an apartment or dorm and who to go to." Cecile stated, "It's made me think about more than just what college, like, there's more to it, like where I'll live, and how much everything costs and stuff, and what I'm gonna do." Michelle stated that she is now preparing both academically and monetarily, saying,

It helped me see, like, and prepare for college. Like, it helped me see where I need to go and what I need to do, from high school to college, and how I need to prepare myself for college and, you know, how I am going to pay for my books or pay for my meals or pay for, just, my dorm or whatever.

Overall, students who participated in the college-and-career-focused activities of WFA appeared to perceive the instruction as beneficial and informative to their personal college-and-career research processes.

Summary

This chapter described the results of both quantitative and qualitative analyses as an investigation into self-determination in students with disabilities. A discussion of the results, as well as implications for future research, are included in the following chapter.

Chapter 5

Discussion

A large body of research indicates that students with disabilities benefit from opportunities to plan for transition while in high school. The importance of self-determination while preparing for transition during high school is important, especially when considering the link to postsecondary outcomes for students with disabilities (Agran, 1997; Kohler & Field, 2003; Lee et al., 2012; McConnell et al., 2012). The purpose of this study is to broaden the evidence base for *Whose Future Is It Anyway?* (Wehmeyer & Lawrence, 1995; Wehmeyer et al., 2004), a self-directed transition curriculum package designed to increase individual levels of self-determination in youth with disabilities, and to measure its impact on students with disabilities in the private school setting. This mixed-methods study aimed to determine if a set of variables lead to statistically significant differences in scores of self-determination of students with disabilities at a private school on two measures: (a) AIR-S and (b) SDI-SR. A second goal was to determine what, if any, impact the *Whose Future Is It Anyway?* curriculum had on levels of self-determination of students, as measured by scores of self-determination collected from students and teachers in a delayed-treatment intervention study with pre- and posttest. Additionally, open-ended one-on-one interviews with student participants were conducted, in order to understand to a greater extent how students perceived the instruction of WFA.

Findings

Research Question 1

Quantitative analysis was used to answer research question 1: Do intraindividual factors (age, gender, disability, reading level) yield statistically significant differences in levels of self-determination in private school students with disabilities?

Age. It was hypothesized that older students may have higher levels of self-determination than their younger counterparts, as they have had more opportunity to make choices, identify their individual strengths and weaknesses, and develop self-advocacy skills in the classroom. As students with diagnosed disabilities in a school that does not provide traditional special education services, it seems likely that this group of students would develop the skills associated with self-determination, particularly self-advocating behaviors, because they are not afforded the same supports as they may receive under an IEP in the public school setting. It was anticipated that scores by age would increase from youngest to oldest. In the first test, participants were grouped by age: Under 15 ($n = 18$), 16-17 ($n = 18$), and 18 and Older ($n = 11$). In these groups, neither scores on the AIR-S nor the SDI-SR yielded statistically significant results, indicating that age does not lead to significant differences in scores of self-determination on the AIR-S; however, self-determination scores on the AIR-S increased across groups, from Under 15, to 16-17, to 18 and Older, in that order, indicating that there was an increase in scores when grouped by age, although not statistically significant. On the SDI-SR, self-determination scores increased across groups, from Under 15, to 16-17, to 18 and Older, in that order, although the differences between these age groups were not statistically significant. Shogren et al. (2017) determined that the SDI-SR is sensitive to differences in scores on essential characteristics of self-determination (volitional action, agentic action, action-control-beliefs) in students with disabilities when compared to scores of nondisabled peers. The differences in the mean scores between age groups could simply be attributed to the confounding variable of maturation, as there is not evidence that they have had the opportunities to increase self-determination through the hypothesized experiences. Older adolescents may have had higher levels of self-determination prior to self-determination instruction, as they have had more chances to identify and consider options for

their lives, anticipate the results of decisions they may choose, and evaluate and adjust based on their experiences (Ormond, Luszcz, Mann, & Beswick, 1991; Doll, Sands, Wehmeyer, & Palmer, 1996). In a study conducted by Wehmeyer et al. (2011), the role of age and maturation and the effects on self-determination were considered, and the researchers concluded that further investigation of the effects are warranted. Ultimately, the results of this analysis indicated that age does not result in statistically significant differences in student levels of self-determination.

Race. In order to determine if race leads to differences in self-determination scores on the AIR-S and SDI-SR, students were divided into two groups: “white” ($n = 33$) and “other” ($n = 14$). Results of two independent-samples t-tests indicated that race does not lead to statistically significant differences in self-determination scores for each of the assessments. Racial-ethnic background has been a subject of exploration in current research of self-determination among students with disabilities, the results of which indicate that Hispanic or Latino(a) youth often score the lowest on measures of self-determination, and African American or black youth diagnosed with intellectual disabilities received higher self-determination scores, yet the converse occurred among youth with sensory disabilities (Shogren et al., 2014; Cavendish, 2017; Shogren, Shaw, Raley, & Wehmeyer, 2018). The results of this study indicate that, in private school students, race does not impact scores of self-determination among youth with disabilities. Mean scores indicated that students who identified as “other” scored higher in levels of self-determination than those in the “white” group, although the difference was not statistically significant. It may be hypothesized that the private school setting and socioeconomic status could contribute to this lack of difference in scores of self-determination. According to self-determination theory, socio-environmental factors enhance self-determination (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2008; Wehmeyer & Palmer, 2003; Cavendish, 2017), and an additional impact is the

interaction between students with disabilities' interactions with teachers and other personnel in the school and levels of self-determination (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Research conducted in public schools cites racial-ethnic background as a factor due to lack of resources and access to rich instruction provided by high-quality instructors (Mason-Williams, 2015; Papay, Murnane, & Willett, 2015; Shogren et al., 2018). In a validation study of the SDI-SR, Shogren et al. (2018) indicated that the additional factor of student participation in free-and-reduced lunch programs had a significant impact on scores of self-determination among youth of diverse racial-ethnic backgrounds who had been diagnosed with disabilities. It could be hypothesized that socioeconomic status of attendants of the private school could contribute to higher levels of self-determination in students with disabilities, regardless of racial-ethnic background, an estimation that warrants further investigation. A third component to consider is the effect of family on students with disabilities enrolled in private schools, as research indicates that family support of youth goals supports academic motivation and successful transitions for youth with disabilities (Cavendish, 2017). Future research among this population of students could further investigate racial-ethnic background and socioeconomic status and their impact on self-determination in students with disabilities in the private school setting; interactions between students with disabilities and teachers in the private school setting; and individual and familial expectations for and goal development of students with disabilities who enroll in private schools.

Disability category. In order to determine if disability category leads to differences of self-determination scores on the AIR-S and SDI-SR, students were divided into three groups: ADD/ADHD ($n = 10$), SLD ($n = 32$), and ASD/OHI ($n = 5$). Differences in scores on levels of self-determination on the AIR-S and the SDI-SR were not statistically significant, nor were the differences in group means, indicating that disability category does not lead to differences in

scores of self-determination among students with disabilities in the private school setting. Cavendish (2017) conducted a study in which results indicated that disability and gender, when controlling for the variable of race-ethnicity, were statistically significant predictors of students levels of self-determination. These results support further investigation of the connection of students' intraindividual characteristics to levels of self-determination, but as a stand-alone variable, disability category does not lead to differences in scores. A study conducted by Shogren et al. (2017) suggests that the SDI-SR was sensitive to variability in scores related to agentic action, volitional action, and action-control beliefs in students with and without disabilities, which could account for contextual factors that may contribute to the expression of self-determined behaviors. This could potentially mean that students with disabilities experience more variability in contextual experiences that allow for the development of self-determination (Shogren et al., 2017). Although the results in this study are insignificant, the SDI-SR may be appropriate to use with a larger sample of heterogeneous students who are being educated in the general education classroom to determine differences in levels of self-determination between students with and without disabilities and instructional efforts for increasing self-determination (Shogren et al., 2017).

Reading level. In order to determine if reading level leads to differences in scores of self-determination on the AIR-S and SDI-SR, data were analyzed by a simple linear regression. Results suggest that reading level accounted for .7% of variation in scores of self-determination on the AIR-S, categorizing reading level as having little impact on scores. Scores on the SDI-SR resulted in a negative skew, indicating that reading levels did not lead to differences in scores of self-determination on the SDI-SR. The results of these analyses mirror findings reported by Lee et al. (2012), who determined that instructional, knowledge, and dispositional or belief factors

have a stronger impact on scores of self-determination than personal factors, including age, gender, and IQ level. For future research purposes among this population of students, the variable of reading level should be excluded.

Research Question 2

Quantitative analysis was used to answer research question 3: Does participation in transition-focused instruction increase levels of self-determination in private school students with disabilities? To determine the effect of self-determination instruction on student-reported levels of self-determination on the AIR-S and SDI-SR, a series of one-way ANOVAs were run.

Group scores. As indicated by scores on the AIR-S, group 1's scores of self-determination did not yield statistically significant changes over time; however, results of the SDI-SR garnered statistically significant results between administrations at Time 1 and Time 2 and Time 1 and Time 3. Group 2's scores of self-determination on the AIR-S indicated a statistically insignificant mean decrease from Time 1 to Time 2. There was a statistically significant increase in self-determination scores from Time 2 to Time 3. There was also a statistically significant mean increase in self-determination scores from Time 1 to Time 3. Group 2's scores on the SDI-SR indicated a statistically significant mean increase from Time 1 to Time 2. There was a statistically insignificant increase in levels of self-determination from Time 2 to Time 3. Finally, there was a statistically significant mean increase in levels of self-determination from Time 1 to Time 3.

The difference in scores of levels of self-determination on the AIR-S and the SDI-SR may be attributed to differences in what is being measured in each of the assessments related to the respective theoretical perspectives from which the assessments were developed (Shogren et al., 2008). According to Wolman et al. (1994), self-determined individuals

express their own needs, interests, and abilities. They set appropriate goals and expectations for themselves. They make choices and plans in pursuit of these goals. They follow through with actions, and if necessary, they change course or adjust to achieve their desired goals effectively. Self-determined people also act more independently and more freely in pursuit of their goals than others do. They are less influenced by other people and their environments in choosing what goals to pursue and how to pursue them. (p. 5)

Shogren et al. (2018) state that self-determined individuals

[act] as the causal agent in one's life. Causal agents have the skills and attitudes that enable them to make or cause things to happen in their lives...[they] self-initiate and self-regulate their actions to solve problems, make decisions, and set goals that impact their lives. Adolescents become more self-determined as they identify their interests and preferences, set and work toward goals aligned with those interests and preferences, engage in problem solving and decision making as they encounter barriers in working toward their goals, and advocate for themselves and their needs. (p. 3)

The theoretical framework for the AIR-S is the self-determined learning theory (Mithaug, Mithaug, Agran, Martin, & Wehmeyer, 2003), which identifies two essential characteristics, *capacity* and *opportunity*: “When opportunities are just-right challenges, meaning that they are well aligned with capacities and opportunities for gain, they are pursued by self-determined learners...[who] learn to adjust and regulate their thoughts, feelings, and actions, enhancing future goal pursuit” (Chou, Wehmeyer, Shogren, Palmer, & Lee, 2017). As an assessment of self-determination, the AIR-S was developed to “operationalize self-determined learning theory” as a measure of *capacity* (e.g., “knowledge, abilities, and perceptions that enable students to

become self-determined)” and *opportunity* (e.g., “chances provided to students to apply their knowledge and abilities related to self-determination”) (Chou et al., 2017, p. 164).

Reconceptualizations of Wehmeyer’s (1999) functional model of self-determination evolved into causal agency theory, the framework for the SDI-SR, which identified volitional action, agentic action, and action-control beliefs as three essential characteristics of a self-determined person (Shogren et al., 2015). In its original form, causal agency theory identified four essential characteristics of self-determined individuals: (a) acting autonomously, (b) self-regulating behaviors, (c) initiating and responding to event(s) in a psychologically empowered manner, and (d) acting in a self-realizing manner (Chou et al., 2017), with corresponding behaviors and skills related to choice making, decision making, problem solving, goal setting, goal attainment, self-monitoring, self-advocacy, internal locus of control, perceptions of self-efficacy and outcome expectancy, self-awareness, and self-knowledge (Wehmeyer, 1996; Chou et al., 2015). The first assessment developed to measure Wehmeyer’s functional theory of self-determination was the SDS (Chou et al., 2017). As an extension of Wehmeyer’s original theory, the functional model of self-determination ((a) volitional action, (b) agentic action, and (c) action-control beliefs and attitudes), upon which the SDI-SR was developed, is extended to include an additional domain: (a) autonomy, (b) self-regulation, (c) psychological empowerment, and (d) self-realization (Shogren et al., 2017). In a study of the SDI-SR’s reliability and validity conducted by Shogren et al. (2017), results indicate that the assessment measured students with disabilities as having lower levels of self-determination, suggesting that the assessment can “potentially be used to detect differences and to better understand the influence of environmental opportunities (e.g., access to inclusive opportunities) for self-determination” (p. 101).

This discussion suggests that, essentially, the assessments are measuring two different sets of specific behaviors in relation to a global score of self-determination, which may account for differences in mean scores of students on the administrations across time of the AIR-S and SD-ISR. In an investigation into self-determination instruction and measures of self-determination on the AIR-S and the SDS, Wehmeyer et al. (2013) determined the AIR-S “may be more sensitive to short-term changes in skills, attitudes, and environmental opportunities for self-determination” (p. 207). Additional explorations by Shogren et al. (2006, 2007) indicated that, although related ($r = .50$), the two assessments were measuring distinctly different characteristics of the construct of self-determination, delineating the differences in the constructs of self-determination that each assessment measures. Although preliminary studies have described validity and reliability of the SDI-SR (Shogren et al., 2017; Shogren et al., 2018), additional studies will lead to more robust findings, thus supporting the exact identification of how the assessment measures behaviors in relation to other measures of self-determination. Additional examinations of the measure may further identify the way in which intraindividual characteristics, such as age, race/ethnicity, disability category, and ecological factors, may or may not contribute to student-reported levels of self-determination.

Educator scores. A final exploration of educator ratings of student levels of self-determination were collected using the AIR-E as pretest and posttest measures. Students were asked to identify one of their current teachers who would complete the AIR-E before and directly after WFA instruction. Results indicated that teachers scored students higher on the posttest than the pretest at a statistically significant level. This is an interesting finding when compared to student-reported levels of self-determination in this study, as one study indicated that students with disabilities often scored themselves higher than their teachers (Shogren et al., 2008). While

students' score increases were not at a statistically significant level, educators' ratings of student levels of self-determination mirror student scores, which increased on the AIR-S and SDI-SR overall, indicating that participation in WFA may have led to more evident self-determined behaviors in their classrooms. The WFA lessons selected emphasized student understanding of their learning needs, and students were given opportunities to discuss how to self-advocate for what they need in class, such as extended time for a project or test or help with a complicated problem. Additionally, students practiced composing emails to fictitious professors on college campuses that allowed them to introduce themselves, outline their learning needs, and request a time to discuss with the professor the support that will help them to achieve success. It is possible that, after participating in the WFA lessons, students applied strategies in their everyday interactions with teachers, which could account for the statistically significant increase in self-determination scores reported by teachers on the AIR-E. In order to fully understand the expression of self-determined behavior of students in the classroom, follow-up qualitative interviews with the participating educators would be valuable, as well as further investigation into the the relationship between student demographic factors and levels of self-determination.

Research Question 3

Qualitative analysis was used to answer research question 4: What are student participants' perceptions of the effects of *Whose Future Is It Anyway?* on the college-and-career research process? Individual student interviews were conducted, and thematic analysis was completed, after which overarching themes across responses were identified. Overall, student participants indicated that self-determination instruction was valuable, as it provided opportunities to identify goals for their futures. Specifically, three themes emerged from the analysis.

Opportunities to set goals for the future are important. Best practices in transition indicate that students with disabilities need opportunities to prepare for the future while in high school. Agran (1997) posited that goal-setting and self-monitoring progress are the first two behaviors that comprise self-regulation, while the third is self-evaluation (Lee, Palmer, & Wehmeyer, 2009). Setting goals empowers individuals to achieve what they envision for themselves (Wehmeyer, Agran, & Hughes, 1998), requiring an individual to be able to think abstractly about future outcomes, a skill that typically develops in early adolescence (Williams-Diehm, Palmer, Lee, & Schroer, 2010). When students are provided explicit opportunities to consider their goals, they are likely to experience greater postsecondary outcomes. The results of students' interviews emphasize the importance of exploration of and goal setting for the future that are embedded in daily instruction, as each cited the opportunities to conduct research, to consider options, and to set goals for the future as valuable aspects of participation in WFA. Although participants each anticipated attending college, they had not spent much time considering more than where they might attend. Participation in WFA allowed for more in-depth consideration of which colleges they might attend, the majors they might pursue, and the careers they would enjoy. Throughout the process, participation in WFA increased student confidence in considering plans for the future.

Opportunities to exercise choice-making based on the individual are important. Students with learning disabilities are enrolling in college at increasing rates, comprising one of the largest and fastest-growing populations entering postsecondary education (Newman et al., 2010; Snyder & Dillow, 2010; Raue & Lewis, 2011), underscoring the importance of preparation and planning opportunities for students while in high school. Two areas of concern for high school students with learning disabilities are poor self-efficacy, or "individuals' judgments of

their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances” (Lackaye, Margalit, Ziv, & Zeman, 2006, p. 111), and self-concept, or “a description of an individual’s own perceived self, accompanied by an evaluative judgment of self-worth that reveals how positively or negatively the individual views one’s self” (Lackaye et al., 2006, p. 112; Grella, 2014). This ties to Wehmeyer’s (1995) definition of self-determination, or “the attitudes and abilities required to act as the primary causal agent in one’s life and making choices and decisions, regarding one’s quality of life, free from undue external influence or interference” (p. 17) (Grella, 2014). After participating in WFA lessons, students indicated that opportunities to discuss their strengths and weaknesses were important as they considered the options for their futures, and the opportunities to discuss unique learning needs, strengths, weaknesses, and preferences in self-determination instruction allowed for deeper consideration of these areas and what one might need to be successful in attaining future goals. One student, Ella, stated that her choices will be based on her own needs and interests, rather than following the paths of her friends—a characteristic of Wehmeyer’s self-determined behavior.

A key component of transition planning and participation in the IEP that occurs in public schools is disability awareness, or understanding how one’s individual strengths and weaknesses may shape the path to academic and nonacademic success. One must have self-awareness and understanding to self-advocate, a key component of self-determined behavior and a predictor of postsecondary success. While participating in WFA, students were asked to consider strengths and areas for improvement, to identify unique learning needs, and to discuss supports they might need to succeed. Students identified areas of strength and weakness in relation to preparing for the future and identified the ways in which they might improve now, as well as identifying characteristics that will contribute to their success. Theoretically, the skills comprising self-

determination include problem solving, goal setting, decision making, self-monitoring, self-awareness, and self-advocacy (Wehmeyer, 1999; Wehmeyer, 2007; Schwartz, 2016). In their interviews, students identified specific behaviors of problem solving, goal setting, decision making, self-monitoring, self-awareness, and self-advocacy and credited participation in WFA as increasing these characteristics, as they were able to consider how they might make adjustments now in order to mitigate the effects of perceived weaknesses on their future plans.

Overthinking and procrastination emerged as weaknesses in some students, while strengths included organization, asking questions, perseverance, and identifying and utilizing resources. When students with disabilities have opportunities to identify their strengths and weaknesses, they are able to make more informed choices, especially as they pursue their future goals for postsecondary education and employment. Instruction in self-determination allows for this to occur, with feedback and encouragement from a trusted individual who may help with strategizing for success. Overall, students were able to articulate the individual characteristics they possess that will contribute to goal attainment, resulting in increased self-confidence in their abilities and the goals they are setting, as well as the actions needed to help them achieve their short- and long-term goals.

Self-determination instruction is valuable. A number of studies indicate that classroom-based self-determination curricula is efficacious in increasing characteristics of self-determination (Hoffman & Field, 1995; Fullerton & Coyne, 1999; Algozzine et al., 2001; Powers et al., 2001; Zhang, 2001; Lee, 2007; Wehmeyer et al., 2013). In order to explore how students perceived their participation in WFA, probing questions were asked. Students reported they found the experience to be valuable, citing the activities and discussions contributed to their goal-setting processes for the future.

I also wanted to know if participation in WFA had an effect on how students conducted career-and-college research, both during instruction and individually. The discussions appeared to impact the research that students conducted, as they thought more deeply about matching colleges and careers with who they are and what they want to achieve in the future, as well as having a back-up plan in place should their original plans not come to fruition. Participation in WFA aided students in their understanding of the logistics of attending college, such as identifying how one will pay for the various expenses that come with attending college and the importance of early preparation. Overall, students indicated that participation in WFA was valuable, as they were allowed opportunities to discuss their futures, identify interests based on preferences, and begin the choice-making process for colleges and careers.

Implications and Limitations

The wealth of literature on self-determination and youth with disabilities emphasizes its importance, but in comparison there are few studies indicating a causal relationship between self-determination instruction leading to more self-determined individuals, a reality that supports the need for studies such as this (Algozzine et al., 2001; Shogren et al., 2008; Wehmeyer et al., 2013; Shogren et al., 2015). Researchers in the field should seek to investigate students with disabilities and self-determination in both public and private school settings, as well as explore the impact of self-determination instructional curricula used as tools for preparing this population for postsecondary success. A continued investigation of transition-focused instruction and self-determination for students with disabilities in nontraditional settings is necessary. Students with disabilities and the individual characteristics that may contribute to levels of self-determination should be explored more deeply, as this will guide instructional decisions for both general and special educators of diverse student groups. Particularly in private schools, general educators

would benefit from professional development regarding self-determination instruction, as the lessons found in WFA may be modified and taught in the general education classroom, benefitting both students with and without disabilities as they prepare for life after high school.

Although private schools are limited in the requirement of adherence to IDEA, students with disabilities would benefit from a formal service plan that includes the traditional elements of the IEP, including goal development with a team of educators, regular meetings to discuss progress, and opportunities to lead meetings. This would allow for the development of transition goals as well, followed by explicit transition-focused instruction so that students may act in self-determined ways in the general education classroom. Continuing investigation of the effects of self-determination-focused instruction in earlier years of high school would allow researchers to understand what, if any information learned during instruction, impacts how students with disabilities conduct their college-and-career research and, ultimately, selection. An extension of the research should track students with disabilities who have participated in self-determination instruction longitudinally, with follow-up interviews to determine if the skills learned in self-determination instruction are sustainable over time.

A number of limitations merit discussion as part of the interpretation of results from this study, as they inform future practice and research. It should be noted that, in spite of weak correlational results, this study may inform future studies of private school youth with disabilities and self-determination. As with all research studies, a large, equal sample size is desirable for results to have greater significance and generalizability to the general population. In this study, a sample of 49 students participated. In a traditional setting, this size of a sample would be considered a weakness; however, in the private school setting, in which little research is currently being conducted regarding self-determination, this sample size was deemed adequate.

Students were randomly assigned to two groups by class periods (1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7): group 1 ($n = 25$) and group 2 ($n = 24$). The demographics of the student participants reflect the overall student demographics of the school, which is fairly homogeneous. If this study were to be replicated or extended, a larger, more heterogeneous sample size is recommended, as are equal groups.

Participants in the study are not the traditionally targeted population of students. WFA was designed for students in special education programs that provide IEPs, and the goal of WFA is to increase student self-determination through exploration of self and disability; the activities are designed around delving into the IEP and understanding how disability impacts the individual, then equips the student with strategies and understanding that will increase self-determination skills. Although this population of students does not have IEPs in place, the skills and activities selected appeared to have value, as indicated by participants in one-on-one interviews. In its entirety, WFA consists of 36 lessons, to be completed independently over the course of a year, the culminating experience of leading the IEP meeting as an indicator of content mastery; therein lies a major limitation, as the scope and sequence of WFA was not followed, although this allowance is made by the authors. The study was conducted in a private school that does not afford traditional special education support for students with disabilities; therefore, students were exposed to ten carefully selected lessons, with activities and discussion tied to the IEP omitted for relevance. Although implemented with fidelity, the lessons were not executed as intended by the author, a major limitation of this study. Additionally, the selected lessons were edited to reflect what was deemed appropriate for the sample population in the setting. As requested by administration, “disability” as a topic was not wholly discussed; rather, “unique learning needs” was the phraseology used. It is possible that this is reflective of the culture of private schools, particularly those classified as college preparatory, as a whole, as

there is a limited requirement of adherence to IDEA and the provisions for students with disabilities, thus providing limited allowances for accommodations and modifications. This lack of adherence reduces the diversity of student populations, as individuals with more extensive needs often do not attend college-preparatory private schools. The lack of diversification lessens the requirement of teachers and administrators who are well versed in special education practices. The implementation of transition-focused education could aid in reducing the reticence of discussing disability in the private school setting, allowing for “a shift from disability-focused, deficit-driven programs to an education and service-delivery approach based on abilities, options, and self-determination” (Kohler & Field, 2003, p. 176). As a component of self-awareness and self-advocacy, two characteristics of self-determined behavior that contribute to postsecondary success, students need to be aware of their disabilities and how they may impact their future goals.

A final limitation to the study is lack of parent participation in completing the AIR-P, which would have provided an additional measure of student levels of self-determination. The AIR-S and SDI-SR include components of self-determined behaviors demonstrated at home. Although students responded to these questions, providing a measure of self-determination at home, the singular perspective is limiting. The lack of parental participation would have been anticipated in a public school of low socioeconomic status; however, in this private college-preparatory high school, parent participation is typically high. It is hypothesized that parents may have been uncomfortable in assigning a quantitative measure of the impact of disability on their children, resulting in the choice not to complete the parent measure of self-determination. Parent meetings were scheduled on different days and at varied times to discuss the study, and a small percentage of parents attended to understand the purpose of the study and ask clarifying

questions; however, parents allowed their children to participate in the study. In the future, more effort should be made to understand administrative and parental perspectives of disability, so that self-determination instruction may consist of the best practices indicated in the literature.

Disability awareness training should take place as well, in an effort to change the discussion from one of limitations and stigma to possibilities and success. In spite of the aforementioned caveats, the results of this research study provide information about the importance of transition-focused instruction for students with disabilities in private schools.

Conclusion

As the researcher in this study, I was inspired to explore self-determination in students with disabilities in private schools. I was especially curious about the transition-planning process for students with disabilities in a setting where the general expectation is college attendance, as well as determining what individual characteristics may impact the process. In settings in which students with disabilities do not receive the traditional supports of special education, there is a need for considering the future, conducting research, and setting goals, so that students may feel confident in the choices they are making for their futures (Martin & Huber-Marshall, 1995; White-Hector, 2012). Regardless of whether measured student levels of self-determination increase at statistically significant levels, providing opportunities for discussing the behaviors that comprise self-determination are valuable.

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Appendix A: Selected Lessons of *Whose Future Is It Anyway?*

Name _____

Class Period _____

WFA Session 1

Getting to Know You: Your Preferences and Interests

Learning Objective: You will identify some of your own transition needs that are based on your preferences and interests.

As you prepare for the transition to live beyond high school, it is important to make goals that are based on your **needs**, taking into account your **preferences**, and your **interests**.

You are going to spend some time thinking about your interests and preferences.

Take a minute and answer these questions:

1. What is your favorite food?
2. What was the last movie you saw?
3. Who is your favorite musician?
4. What do you like best about yourself?
5. How many cousins do you have?
6. What would you change about yourself?
7. What has been your greatest accomplishment so far?
8. What makes you feel guilty?
9. What makes you feel angry?
10. What do your friends say about you?
11. What is a new skill you have learning in the last six months?
12. If you were 21 today, what would you be doing?
13. Who taught you to swim?
14. Who taught you to tell time?
15. Who taught you to count money?
16. How old do you feel?
17. Who is the person you admire most?
18. What are you most afraid of?
19. Would you like to get married someday?
20. Name six people you would invite to dinner, if you could.

Now think about it: Would anyone else's answers look exactly the same? Oh sure, some of your friends might have the same musician, and a lot of people like the same food. But you are the only person who will answer exactly the way you did on all the questions.

Let's consider how you can start developing an individualized plan; first, what do you "need" to have a successful transition from school to adulthood? Why? (allow discussion)

That's easy to answer! Because, someday, in the not-too-distant future, you are going to be out of school. Done. Finished. Kaput. When that day arrives, you need to be ready. It gets really boring living at home with your parents, with no money and nothing to do. So, you need to be ready to be independent and satisfied with what you're doing.

Your school program is supposed to get you ready for that day. Let's think through this a little more. First, figure out that glorious day you won't have to get up and go to high school any more.

That day is: May 31, 20_____

Now, on June 1 of the year you graduate, where do you want to live? Be specific.

A house, an apartment, in a tent in the rainforest?

Jot your ideas down now.

Where I want to live:

In what city?

Do you want to live alone, or with someone else, like a friend, sibling, cousin, or roommate? _____

What do you want to be doing during most days? Working? Where? Doing what? Going to school? Where? Learning to do what?

How do you want to spend your free time?

Now those are the things you want to do. The question is, what do you have to know or learn to make them happen? That's what you have to figure out so that on June 1 of the year you graduate, you can begin to do those things. Instead of sitting at home. Bored. With no money and nothing to do.

Those are your TRANSITION NEEDS. Look back at how you answered the questions about where you would like to live; what do you need to make that happen?

Lots of things, right? Like money. You have to have money to pay for any place to live. Maybes that why you have a roommate or live in a smaller apartment. You need some money of your own when you graduate. There are many ways to get money, but the way almost everyone has to get it is to earn it. Work for it.

Which takes you to your second area--what to do with yourself during the day. You will probably need to work. What did you list for working? Do these jobs pay enough money to let you live independently? Are there enough jobs like that in the real world? Do you have the abilities to do that job? What do you have to learn to do that job? How will you learn it?

This is why you need a lot of people to help you make good decisions about your future. There are a lot of questions to ask here. You can see that figuring out what your transition needs are, so you can become more independent when you leave school, will require a lot of people who know things about things. You are going to need a lot of help planning for your transition!

Let's talk a little more about this "interests and preferences" stuff. Your transition planning must be based on your interests and preferences. What does that mean, really?

First, it doesn't mean that everything in the world that you are interested in or your prefer (like) will become a transition need. I mean, you might prefer Fudge Brownie ice cream from Baskin & Robbins. That doesn't mean that you will want to write a transition goal to learn more about ice cream just to enjoy it. However, you may have been to Baskin & Robbins store so many times, and you've watched how things work there that

you think you might want to one day be a manager at Baskin & Robbins. Learning what you would need to know to manage a store would be your transition activities.

When we talk about your transition needs based on interests and preferences, we are talking about interests and preferences about what you want to do as an adult.

So how do you figure out your interests and preferences? Good question. You think about them.

First, start with what you do well. What you do the very best. Not necessarily what you like to do the best, but what you really do the best. These are your abilities. These might be school things, like math, science, or reading. They might be things you learned at home, like gardening, fixing a car, or playing a musical instrument. They might be hard to learn and complicated, like working on computers, or easy to do but require lots of practice to do well, like shooting a basketball.

List the ten things you do best. Don't worry; this is what you do best. That doesn't mean you have to do it better than everyone else. Just because you list tennis doesn't mean you think you play better than Venus Williams.

What are the ten things you do BEST?

I'll wait while you list them. And don't give me that stuff about not having ten things. I know you do. Think hard.

My Abilities

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

Once you started working on it, you probably figured out a lot more than ten, right?

Okay, now look at another list of things. List things you really like to do. These are things that you do just because you want to, not necessarily because you are good at them. Oh, you can be good at them. That's no problem. But don't leave something that you like to do off the list just because you aren't that great at it. These should be things you do because you like them. These are your interests.

I'll give you an example. I like to sing, especially in the car, with the radio cranked up loud. I really like to sing, but other people don't like to listen to me sing, and that's because I'm really not very good at it. But it is still something that I like to do. I prefer it, so I would put it on this list, but not on the list of things I'm really good at. Okay, now list ten things that you really like to do.

My Interests

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

Okay, now look at the two lists. Are there some things that are in both lists? If so, maybe you should think about transition planning and help you need to get your ready for all parts of your adult life, not just your job. Some of your planning may help you be able to do more fun things as an adult. Let's talk more about that. Look at my lists.

My Abilities

1. Writing
2. Teaching others
3. Listening to others
4. Decorating
5. Planning activities
6. Being a good friend
7. Learning new skills
8. Speaking in front of large groups
9. Reading

10. Helping others

My Interests

1. Traveling
2. Reading about a variety of topics
3. Yoga
4. Going to concerts
5. Writing
6. Spending time with friends and family
7. Learning new skills
8. Being outdoors
9. Art museums
10. Studying other languages

One item that is on both my abilities list and my interests list is writing. I really like to write, and people have told me I'm pretty good at it. Maybe I should have a transition goal to look at jobs that include writing. I mean, I like writing, and I'm pretty good at it. What do you think? Yes? No?

When I started researching it, there are only a few jobs for writers, and those people are really, really good. I'm good, but probably not that good. So I have some options. I could work really hard to get good enough to get one of those jobs. I checked with my school counselor about a career in writing, and I found out that I would probably have to go to school for journalism or creative writing when I leave high school. It will take at least four years to learn how to write, and I will have to beat out other fantastic writers to get into graduate school for journalism or creative writing. I'm not sure I can do that. And even if I get in and get out, there are still not a ton of jobs for writers.

So should I give up this idea? It depends on how badly I want it. It depends on whether I'm willing to work three times harder than anyone else to do well in writing classes, and if I'm willing to take other jobs I don't really like to pay bills while I try to find a journalism job. You know, I don't really think that I want it that badly, but I don't have to give up on becoming a writer altogether.

I can talk to my school counselor about other jobs that require writing skills. Or I can decide to write as a hobby. Maybe a transition goal I might set could be to use local resources to enroll in writing courses or apply for an internship in writing. I could become a better writer, have fun, and meet people who like writing, like I do.

So, we need to look at what we're good at and what we like, then explore. We need to find out what kinds of jobs or college majors that combine our likes and what we're good at, then find out what is out there for working, living, and playing as an adult, then see how well things match.

You can have big dreams, like being a famous musician or athlete or actor, but you also have to consider what's available in the real world.

Let's review what we've learned.

1. You learned that you need a goal that is based on your needs, your preferences, and your interests.
2. You saw that your interests and preferences will be different from other peoples' and that you bring a unique viewpoint to your planning for the future.
3. You figured out when you will leave school and thought about some things you would like to be doing then.
4. You learned that transition planning is made up of identifying activities for you that help you move from school to the adult world.
5. You listed your abilities and your interests.
6. You began thinking about how these abilities and interests can lead to transition goals.

Before the next activity, you should:

1. Think about your abilities and interests. Write down those interests and abilities that were on both lists. Which ones might make good transition goals for where you want to work? Where you want to live? What you want to do for fun?
2. Talk with someone who can help you plan for the transition from high school to your next step about your interests and abilities.

Name _____
Class Period _____

WFA Session 2

M.U.L.E.S: My Unique Learning Needs

Learning Objective: You will identify your M.U.L.E.S.

In the last lesson, you learned about being unique and how important it is for you to know about your unique abilities and interests. We also considered some of the goals you have for your life. In the next few sessions, you will think about your own unique learning needs and the supports you need to do your very best in school.

First thing, let's talk about outcomes. What is an outcome? An outcome is what you will expect to happen.

So if I turn up my music really loud in my car, what is the outcome? The music will play really loud. Now, let's say I'm driving around my neighborhood with the music playing really loud; what will the outcome be then? Someone may complain and tell me to turn the music down.

Now, when I go to my car in the morning and put my car key in the ignition, what outcome can I expect? That my car will start.

When you think about life beyond high school, what outcomes do you anticipate?

- An employment outcome is what you expect to do about work.
- A residential or living outcome is where you expect to live.
- A postsecondary education/training outcome is what you expect to do about more school after you graduate.
- A recreation/leisure outcome is what you expect to do with your free time (and money).

Take some time and jot down your anticipated outcomes.

What is your expected outcome for postsecondary education/training outcome?

What is your expected outcome for employment?

What is your expected outcome for living?

What is your expected recreation/leisure outcome?

Please share some of your postsecondary education goals. Do you want to go to college? What do you want to study?

Now, think about the first day of class. You have an opportunity to talk to your professor, and she says, "Tell me about you as a student."

What do you say?

If I were a student, I might say, "I am really good at completing my work, I love to read, but I know I am going to need some extra help with my math homework. I have to work really hard when it comes to math, and when I take tests, I get really nervous."

So the extra help you get at school or from your tutor or other teachers, those are your M.U.L.E.S., or you unique learning needs. Sometimes we need a little bit of extra help, like I need step stool in my kitchen or extra time to take math tests.

So what are your unique learning needs? Jot them down right here.

Review

1. Today we talked about outcomes for postsecondary education and training, employment, and living.
2. We identified academic strengths and unique learning needs, or the things we might need a little help in when we go to college.

Name _____
Class Period _____

WFA Session 3

Communicating: Advocating and Appealing

Learning Objective: You will learn to communicate effectively.

What's the difference between being assertive and aggressive? Think of some examples.

Sometimes you have to advocate for yourself, which takes an assertive attitude. Advocating means to speak up for or to support. When you advocate for yourself, you speak up for yourself and stand up for things that are important to you. To be able to advocate for yourself, you need to:

1. Know what you want.
2. Know what other people want for you (like your parents, teachers, etc.).
3. Know how to communicate why it is important to do what you want.

Now you have a good idea of your learning strengths, some outcomes you prefer, the support you need to reach your goals, and goals that you can set to succeed. In order to do this, good communication is key.

So being assertive means standing up for yourself, being confident, and making sure your ideas and opinions are heard. To be a good advocate and to communicate what you want to other people, you have to be assertive. How assertive are you?

Here's a little quiz you can take to see if you know how an assertive person should act.

Circle **TRUE** or **FALSE** box under each statement.

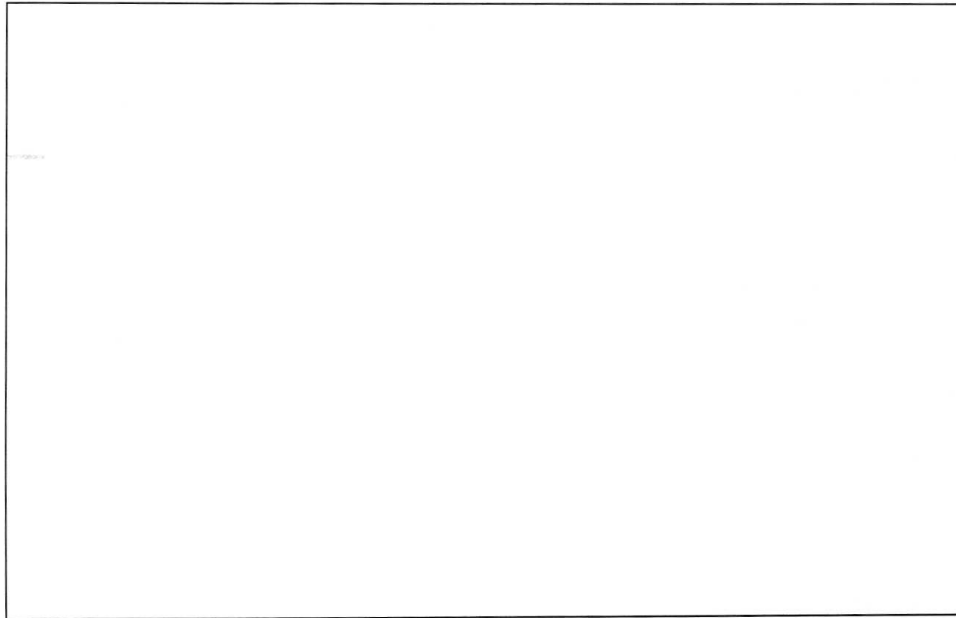
If you are assertive, you should...

1. Make eye contact with the person who is speaking. T F
2. Talk with a firm, clear, friendly, direct voice. T F
3. Hide your face so you won't be embarrassed. T F
4. Stand up or sit up straight. T F
5. Yell or scream so you get everybody's attention. T F
6. Be prepared to talk about what you need. T F
7. Start crying if you don't get your way. T F
8. Find out who you need to talk to about your problem. T F
9. Take a friend with you if you feel afraid or nervous. T F
10. Not take no for an answer. T F
11. Ask for help if you can't solve the problem yourself. T F

12. Give up and go home. T F

If you got the majority of these right, it's safe to say you're a pretty assertive person. Now, take that assertion and apply it. Imagine it's your first day of college, and you would like to speak one-on-one with your professor so you can make sure he/she understands who you are and what you need to be successful (your unique learning needs). Draft an email here, where you introduce yourself, list your academic strengths, and then list the things you might need a little bit of help with--your M.U.L.E.S. Then ask for a time when you may visit for a one-on-one conversation, which is where you'll apply the assertive qualities we just discussed.

Draft Email to Professor:



Review:

1. You learned that it is important to advocate and speak up for yourself and for the things that are important to you.
2. You practiced communicating your unique learning needs to someone in authority.

Name _____

Class Period _____

WFA Session 4

Identifying Goals in Your Plan

Learning Objective: You will identify goals for transition.

What's a goal? A goal is something you aim for or something that you set out to do. Goals can be long-term or short-term. Long-term means a long way away, so long-term goals are goals that you will reach a long time from now. Short-term goals are goals you want to reach in a shorter time.

Example: Maybe you've had a problem staying awake in class lately. You may have a short-term goal to stay awake for the whole class period today. That's a short-term goal because you will know at the end of the class whether you reached that goal. Probably as you are startled awake by the class bell and you life your head off the desk where you slobbered all over your notebook.

You may also have a goal to finish high school. That is a longer-term goal. You won't know if you have reached that goal until after you are supposed to graduate. And if you keep falling asleep in class, you might not reach that goal.

Objectives are the steps you take to reach your goal. For example, if your goal is to stay awake in class, the objectives you set might be to go to bed on time the night before, drink some caffeine before class starts, and maybe stand up or stretch every time you feel like you might nod off.

Objectives for reaching the goal of graduating from high school might be passing each class you take, studying at least 10 hours per week, and staying awake in class.

You probably have set goals for yourself. Think about our earlier session, when you thought about the day after graduation and what that will look like for you. Remember? Where you want to live, work, go to school, and do for fun? What outcomes do you want to reach?

Now we are going to spend some time setting goals so that you can reach your desired outcomes. Outcomes are what you expect to happen, and goals are what you will do to make those outcomes a reality. How do we get from this point to where you want to be in the future? Set goals.

You are going to learn how to set goals to reach the outcomes you have identified. Goals are important in every aspect of your life. Goals help you become more independent and give you something to work on, something to do to get what you want. Here is an example illustrating the importance of goals:

We are going to use an acronym to help us set some goals and objectives, and then we'll go over the rules of goal-setting.

Have you ever heard the phrase "wig out"? In this case, we are going to use it as an acronym to mean:

Writing
Instructional
Goals &
Objectives for
Use in
Transition planning

Here are the **WIGOUT** rules:

Rule 1. Goals and objectives for your school coursework should be written to reach outcomes you have helped decide on that are based on your unique interests and abilities.

Before you write any goals, you need to think about your interests and abilities. Consider the supports you identified that you might need to learn best. Make decisions about the types of outcomes you want as an adult.

Rule 2. You have to write goals that you can reach and that you have control over achieving.

Write goals that are achievable. I may write that I want to play in the WNBA, but is that realistic for me? Definitely not. Or I can say that I want my favorite football team to win the Super Bowl, but that's not something that I have any control over, right? I have zero control over how well the team plays, even if I cheer as hard as I can.

Rule 3. Goals and objectives have to be measurable. That means you have to be able to tell how you are doing in your progress.

You have to figure out a way to know when you've met your goal; otherwise, you may just keep going and going and have no idea where you are in terms of your goal. So let's consider two goals, and you tell me which one is measurable:

Goal A: Ryan Adams will do really, really well in math.

Goal B: Ryan Adams will get at least a B on all of his math papers.

Which goal is measurable? Goal B, right. Try another one.

Goal A: Amanda will swim three laps in the pool without drowning.

Goal B: Amanda will learn to swim better.

Which one? Right, Goal A. Make sure your goal is realistic and measurable and helps you reach your outcomes.

Rule 4. Goals and objectives should have a time to start and a time to end.

Usually when you set a goal, you also set a time period in which you will reach that goal. When you put a time on a goal, it helps you avoid procrastination, or putting off the work until later. You should have a time when you start working on your goal and when you plan to finish. The time you start is easy. For example, if you are writing a goal for the next school year, you will begin working on it in the first semester of that school year. The finishing date is the tricky part. You don't want to set the date so you can't reach the goal, because then you just have to set a new date. On the other hand, you don't want to set the date too far away.

Examples:

One goal Jack has is to learn to type quickly and accurately on a keyboard so he can become a computer programmer. He wants to move out of his parents' house after graduation because he is ready for some independence. If Jack decides to set the goal period for one week, he will probably not reach that goal, because typing takes time to learn. If he sets the goal for five years from now, it will be too long. In five years, he probably won't even remember that he set that goal. So he decides to set the goal to learn to type in one semester. Is that more realistic?

Look at these goals. Put an "S" on the line if you think the goal is too short, and put an "L" if it is too long. Put an "R" if it seems about right.

___ Learn the Cotton-Eyed Joe (a dance) in three years

___ Move into a mansion by the age of 22

___ Learn to skateboard in six weeks

- Learn to repair a car in one month
- Move into an apartment one year after graduation
- Learn to ride the bus in one year

What do you think? Your answers may be different from mine, but depending on the person, each might be right. You'll get an idea about what might be too long and too short.

- Learn the Cotton-Eyed Joe (a dance) in three years
- Move into a mansion by the age of 22
- Learn to skateboard in six weeks
- Learn to repair a car in one month
- Move into an apartment one year after graduation
- Learn to ride the bus in one year

You don't have to be exactly right on when you reach the goal, but the finishing date should be how long you think it will really take to reach the goal.

Rule 5. Goals and objectives should be written in terms of expected outcomes.

This sounds a little like rule 1, which said that goals and objectives should be written to reach outcomes based on your interests and goals. But the point of Rule 1 is that you need to be involved in writing the goals, and it should talk about outcomes, not processes. Remember, outcomes are what you expect to happen, like getting a job as a computer programmer or owning your own interior design company, or living in a college dorm with a roommate.

A process is part of decision-making, and it means there are a lot of steps that have to happen before everything is finished. Another process is what we've been talking about in all our sessions, which is the transition process, or planning for life beyond high school. So goals and outcomes are part of the process of preparing for life beyond high school.

Review:

1. You learned a goal is something you aim for or something you set out to do.
2. You saw that there are long-term and short-term goals. Long-term goals are goals you will reach a long time for now, while short-term goals will be met in a shorter time.
3. You learned that objectives are steps you take to reach your goal.

4. You learned that five rules for writing good goals are:
 - a. They work on outcomes you have helped decide on based on your interests and abilities.
 - b. You can reach them and have control over working on them.
 - c. They are measurable.
 - d. They have a starting and ending point.
 - e. They are written in terms of outcomes.

Name _____
Class Period _____

WFA Session 5

Making Decisions: Using DO IT! Steps 1 and 2

Learning Objective: You will learn to make decisions using DO IT!

Before you can set goals, we need to discuss the decision-making process. We'll use another acronym to help us work through the process of making decisions about our future.

Define your problem.

Outline your options.

Identify the outcome of each option.

Take action.

Remember the outcomes we discussed earlier in our discussions?

Employment outcomes are what you expect to do about work.

Living outcomes are where you expect to live.

Postsecondary outcomes are what you expect to do for college.

Recreation outcomes are what you expect to do with your free time.

We'll use the DO IT! process to help you make decisions for your future.

Step 1 is define your problem. You have to figure out what you have to make your decision about. So, where do you want to live? That's the problem, in this case. Make a statement:

"I am going to make a decision about where I might want to live when I graduate from school."

Step 2 is outline your options, which is everything you have to choose from. Why do we need options? These may be called alternatives. They help us compare things we want so we can get the things that are most important to us.

The next step is to come up with a list of things you can choose from when making your decision, and you're going to do this based on your individual needs, preferences, and abilities.

Using this framework, outline your options for living:

1. Where you want to live
 - a. In the same city or town where I live now.
 - b. In a different city or town: _____
2. Who do you want to live with: _____

- a. Alone
 - b. With my family
 - c. With roommate(s)
3. What kind of place you want to live in:
- a. An apartment
 - b. A house
 - c. A dormitory
 - d. Other:

-
4. How you will pay for where you live:
- a. Rent
 - b. Lease
 - c. Buy

5. What you will need to be near:
- a. Relatives
 - b. Shopping
 - c. Leisure activities
 - d. School
 - e. Exercise
 - f. Work
 - g. Transportation
 - h. Worship
 - i. Restaurants
 - j. Other:

So here's what mine looks like:

1. Where you want to live
- a. In the same city or town where I live now.
 - b. In a different city or town: _____
2. Who do you want to live with:
- a. Alone
 - b. With my family
 - c. With roommate(s)
3. What kind of place you want to live in:
- a. An apartment
 - b. A house
 - c. A dormitory
 - d. Other:

-
4. How you will pay for where you live:

- a. Rent
 - b. Lease
 - c. Buy
5. What you will need to be near:
- a. Relatives
 - b. Shopping
 - c. Leisure activities
 - d. School
 - e. Exercise
 - f. Work
 - g. Transportation
 - h. Worship
 - i. Restaurants
 - j. Other: volunteer site, nature
-
-

Now, if any of this was difficult to do, you may need to spend some time and do some research about the different options available to you. As you gather more information, your list may change; you may remove some options, and you may add as you learn more. This list is a breathing document, and it will probably change a hundred times between now and when it's time to set things in motion, but the important thing is that you've started the process, and you have lots to consider.

Review:

1. You learned about the DO IT! Process for decision-making.
2. Step 1 is to define the problem you have, which means figuring out what you want to make a decision about.
3. Step 2 in the process is to outline your options, or make a list of things to choose from.
4. In order to outline your options, you may need to gather some more information.

Name _____
Class Period _____

WFA Session 6

Making Decisions: Steps 3 & 4 of DO IT!

Learning Objective: You will learn to make decisions using DO IT!

Remember our process for making decision-making?

Define your problem.

Outline your options.

Identify the outcome of each option.

Take action.

Step 1 is to define your problem. Step 2 is to outline your options, which you did in our last session. Let's review what you did last session.

Step 3 is to identify the outcome of each option you've come up with. Choice-making comes with a lot of options. Think about your last visit to an ice cream or frozen yogurt shop. You have lots of choices to make before you have your final outcome, or your favorite ice cream combination. You have to decide what you want and don't want, and sometimes you have to make choices between two things that sound good. It's a process.

Here's my list of choices:

1. Where you want to live
 - a. In the same city or town where I live now.
 - b. In a different city or town: _____
2. Who do you want to live with:
 - a. Alone
 - b. With my family
 - c. With roommate(s)
3. What kind of place you want to live in:
 - a. An apartment
 - b. A house
 - c. A dormitory
 - d. Other:

4. How you will pay for where you live:
 - a. Rent
 - b. Lease
 - c. Buy
5. What you will need to be near:
 - a. Relatives
 - b. Shopping

- c. Leisure activities
 - d. School
 - e. Exercise
 - f. Work
 - g. Transportation
 - h. Worship
 - i. Restaurants
 - j. Other:
-
-

Step 4 is to take action! In our next session, we'll start to get that ball rolling, which is actually identifying the steps you will take next.

Review:

1. You learned steps 3 and 4 in the decision-making process of DO IT!, which is to identify the outcome of each option you selected and then take action on those decisions.
2. You learned that gathering information through research is an important part of identifying possible outcomes.
3. You learned that one good decision usually leads to another.

Name _____
Class Period _____

WFA Session 7

Making Decisions: Identifying Goals for Living

Lesson Objective: You will identify goals for residential and living outcomes.

A residential or living outcome is where you expect to live: at home, with a roommate, in a house, or an apartment. In working through the DO IT! process, you identified potential outcomes for transitioning to the next step. Remember your choices?

1. Where you want to live
 - a. In the same city or town where I live now.
 - b. In a different city or town:

 2. Who do you want to live with:
 - a. Alone
 - b. With my family
 - c. With roommate(s)
 3. What kind of place you want to live in:
 - a. An apartment
 - b. A house
 - c. A dormitory
 - d. Other:

 4. How you will pay for where you live:
 - a. Rent
 - b. Lease
 - c. Buy
 5. What you will need to be near:
 - a. Relatives
 - b. Shopping
 - c. Leisure activities
 - d. School
 - e. Exercise
 - f. Work
 - g. Transportation
 - h. Worship
 - i. Restaurants
 - j. Other:

- _____
- _____

So now we'll use the WIGOUT! process to help write a goal for independent living after high school.

1. Outcome identified in the DO IT! Process:
2. Skills that I need to work on to achieve this outcome:
3. Which skills seem most important?
4. What would show I had learned this skill?
5. How long would it take me to learn this skill?

GOAL:

I will

(Write in the skill you will learn as an outcome, like in question 4)

By

(Write in the date when you will be finished or how long it will take you to learn that skill, as in question 5).

1. Outcome identified in the DO IT! Process: Move into a dorm with a roommate.
2. Skills that I need to work on to achieve this outcome: identifying how to pay rent, budgeting, paying bills.
3. Which skills seem most important? Identifying how to pay for rent
4. What would show I had learned this skill? Researching the cost of my desired living outcome and researching scholarships, grants, etc.
5. How long would it take me to learn this skill? By the end of the semester.

GOAL: I will conduct research on the Internet to identify the costs of my desired living outcome (in a dorm with a roommate) and identify costs, living options, and proximity to campus by the end of the semester.

Now I'm going to figure out what on-campus living options there are for the University of Oklahoma, because I want to live in the dorms. I'm going to start by Googling "University of Oklahoma freshman dorms." That takes me to OU's Residence Hall site, where I can get an idea of what the options are:
http://www.ou.edu/housingandfood/residence_halls.html.

Now, based on your preferences identified in earlier sessions, conduct some research to answer the following questions. Some common search terms you might use are “University of _____ dorm costs” or “walking/driving distance from _____ to address” or “apartments close to University of _____”:

1. How much does it cost to live here?
2. What is the roommate policy, if any?
3. Can I get to the places I need to go easily if I live here?
4. How close to campus or my job am I?

You may need to do some additional research, which may mean looking around further on the internet, talking to someone I know who lives there, or making a phone call to someone on campus.

Here are the answers to the questions I have:

1. How much does it cost? Suite Style (Adams, Couch and Walker Centers) for a Double: \$5,294/semester; \$10,588/year, while a Single: \$6,900/semester; \$13,800/year
2. What is the roommate policy, if any? I can have a roommate, live alone, or share a community-style suite, where I live close to three other people.
3. Can I get to the places I need to go easily if I live here? Yes, there is parking for my car, on-campus transportation, and city transportation; plus, there are lots of options on campus for exercising, eating, working out, and having fun.
4. How close to campus or my job am I? If I live in the dorms, I am a five- to ten-minute walk from my classes.

Based on these results, it seems like living on campus in a dorm sounds like a great option for me.

So the next step in the process is to Take Action. How can I get this process started? First, I have to get accepted to OU, then I can apply for living on campus, and I'll have taken action for meeting my goals. We'll talk about postsecondary education in our next session, but first, here's a quick review of what we've discussed today.

Review:

1. You identified residential and living goals.
2. You used a set of rules to look at them more completely.
3. You used a decision-making process to identify the residential and living outcomes you might want to work on.
4. You wrote another residential and living goal.

Name _____

Class Period _____

WFA Session 8

Identifying Goals for More School

Learning Objective: You will identify goals for postsecondary education outcomes.

In our activities, you've listed what your goal is for postsecondary education. What are some of the goals you have?

A postsecondary outcome is what you expect to do about more school after you graduate, whether that's a traditional 4-year public or private university, a 2-year technical college, or maybe enrolling in the military and joining a university's ROTC program. One of the things you can do is take an interest assessment for a potential major, which may be a guiding factor for which college you choose.

Take a few minutes to set up a profile and work through the University of Oklahoma Majors Assessment: <https://ou.mymajors.com/quiz/>

My Top Majors:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

Read through the descriptions of each of the majors you identified and learn more about them.

Now that we've worked through the DO IT! process for identifying an outcome for living, we'll use the WIGOUT! Process for postsecondary education.

So I identified that I want to live on campus at the University of Oklahoma, a public four-year university. That's the outcome I want to achieve, which is to go to college and live in a dorm. Then, I used OU's Majors Assessment to determine that I want to major in psychology. So how do I get there? Let's use the WIGOUT process to write a goal that will help us reach our desired outcomes.

So here's my example:

1. Outcome identified in the DO IT! Process: Go to the University of Oklahoma to major in Psychology and graduate with a Bachelor's degree.
2. Skills I need to work on to achieve this outcome: Graduate from high school with a minimum GPA of 3.0 and ACT of 26; job shadow a psychologist; gain confidence in talking to people.
3. Most important skills: raise my ACT score from a 24 to a 26; raise my GPA from a 2.8 to a 3.0.
4. What would show I have learned this skill? Earn a 26 on the ACT and a 3.0 GPA
5. How long will it take me to learn this skill? Seven weeks (until the end of the semester)

GOAL: I will raise my ACT to a 26 and GPA to a 3.0 by May 23, 2018.

Now it's your turn to work through the process.

1. Outcome identified in the DO IT! Process:
2. Skills I need to work on to achieve this outcome:
3. Which skills seem most important?
4. What should show I have learned this skill?

5. How long will it take me to learn this skill?

GOAL

I will _____

by _____

Review:

1. You identified postsecondary education goals.
2. You used a set of rules to look at them more completely.
3. You used a decision-making process to identify the postsecondary education outcome you might want to work on.
4. You wrote a postsecondary education goal.

Name _____

Class Period _____

WFA Session 9: Identifying Goals for Work

Learning Objective: You will identify goals for employment outcomes.

A postsecondary education outcome is what you expect to do about more school after you graduate, whether that's a traditional 4-year public or private university, a 2-year technical college, or maybe enrolling in the military and joining a university's ROTC program. In our last session, you completed an assessment that gave you ten potential majors you might be interested in studying. You read the descriptions and learned about the possible jobs you could have from those majors. Now, your going to use the WIGOUT! process to write a goal for employment.

In the last few sessions, I identified that I want to live on campus at the University of Oklahoma, a public four-year university. That's the outcome I want to achieve, which is to go to college and live in a dorm with a roommate. I identified some of the skills that I need to help me get there, and then I began considering what I might want to study as a major. I used OU's Majors Assessment to find out how my interests translate to potential majors, and I figured out that I want to major in psychology. Now I need to consider what I might want to do as a job. Review the top 3 majors you selected; what are some of the jobs you might consider based on those majors? Complete the table listed below.

Example

My Majors and Possible Jobs

Major	Possible Jobs to Consider
1. Psychology	Behavior Assessment

Now, fill in your possibilities, with your favorite option listed at number 1.

My Majors and Possible Jobs

Major	Possible Jobs to Consider
1.	
2.	
3.	

So now you've identified the top job that you might consider, or your outcome. Now you'll use the WIGOUT process to write a goal that will help you reach your desired outcome.

Here's my example:

1. Outcome identified in the DO IT! Process: Graduate from the University of Oklahoma with a bachelor's degree in Psychology and obtain additional training to become a school psychologist.
2. Skills I need to work on to achieve this outcome: People skills, computer skills, reading skills, statistical analysis/math skills, understanding of foundations of psychology.
3. Most important skills: Foundations of psychology
4. What would show I have learned this skill? I was able to raise my psychology grade from an 89 to a 92 after attending tutorials twice per week for a month.
5. How long will it take me to learn this skill? Seven weeks (until the end of the semester)

GOAL: I will raise my Psychology grade to a 95 by May 23, 2018.

Your Goal:

1. Outcome identified in the DO IT! Process:
2. Skills I need to work on to achieve this outcome:
3. Which skills seem most important?
4. What should show I have learned this skill?
5. How long will it take me to learn this skill?

GOAL

I will _____

by _____

Review

1. You identified an employment outcome based on majors of interest.
2. You used a set of rules to look at them more completely.
3. You used a decision-making process to identify the employment outcome you might want to work on.
4. You wrote an employment goal.

Name _____
Class Period _____

WFA Session 10

Keeping Track of Your Goals

Learning Objective: You will learn to keep track of goals and objectives.

Review of last session: WIGOUT! Rules

1. Goals and objectives should be written to reach outcomes.
2. Goals should be realistic and achievable.
3. Goals must be measurable.
4. Goals and objectives need a start/end time.
5. Goals and objectives should be written in terms of expected outcomes.

So you know the rules of writing goals, but the next step involves tracking your progress toward reaching your goals. This is why measurable goals are so important. Taking responsibility in tracking your goals can make you work harder at reaching your goals.

For example, let's say you have a goal of walking 10,000 steps a day, which is the recommended amount for a healthy lifestyle. So let's say you start walking outside, and it's hot, and your feet hurt, you're thirsty. You think you have to be close to hitting your goal, but you're not sure, so pretty soon you lose steam and start walking toward home. If you had some way to measure your progress, like a FitBit or another fitness tracker, you could look down and realize that you've already walked close to 8,000 steps, so that means you have just a little farther to go to reach your goal; would you keep walking? I would.

So by measuring your progress, you're more likely to reach your goal. It works this way with most other goals too. Now, let's say that you were very ambitious, and you set a goal of walking 15,000 steps in a day, about 7.5 miles. You start walking, and soon you're exhausted and just don't see how it's possible to walk 15,000 steps in a day. What should you do? You may need to revise your goal to 10,000 steps. Or you may decide that walking isn't your deal, and you decide to ride your bike 7.5 miles instead of walking; that's okay. You can revise your goal or totally change it, because remember, your goal has to be realistic, in addition to being measurable.

There are a few different ways that you can track your goals. Let's look at some examples.

Check-a-Box Method

Bart Simpson has written a goal for his math class.

Here's his goal: **Bart Simpson will make a B or better on six math tests by the end of the semester.**

Is this a good goal? It's realistic, it's measurable, and it has a specified time. So how can Bart track how well he's doing? First, he knows he has to get at least 6 B's on math tests. Let's say he takes on math test a week, on Fridays. Bart's teacher grades the tests over the weekend, and Bart gets his grade on Monday. When he gets his test back, he can look at the grade; if it is an A or a B, he can make a checkmark in a box that shows he got a B or better.

His tracking sheet might look like this:

Check-a-Box

Times I have earned a B or better:

1	2	3	4	5	6
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The first time Bart earned a B, he would turn to his tracking sheet and mark it like:

1	2	3	4	5	6
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The next week, Bart earned a C, so his tracking sheet will look like:

1	2	3	4	5	6
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

But for the next two weeks, Bart got a B and an A, so he should mark his sheet to look like:

1	2	3	4	5	6
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

He could look and see that he only had three more tests to go before he reached his goal. After seven more weeks, Bart's reached his goal, so his tracking sheet look like this:

1	2	3	4	5	6
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

This is called the **Check-a-Box** method. Every time you meet the criteria you've set, you check a box, and that's how you monitor the progress you're making toward achieving your goal.

Check-a-Row Method

What if the goal looked like this:

Bart Simpson will make a B or better on six math tests in a row by the end of the semester.

What's the difference?

On the last goal, Bart wanted to get a B or better on six tests, and it didn't matter when he did that. But on this goal, he has to get six in a row, which is a lot harder, and he can't use the Check-a-Box method in this case. Instead, Bart will have to use a tracking sheet that uses a lot of boxes to track, like this, called a **Check-a-Row**:

Check-a-Row

Times in a row I have earned a B or better:

W1.	1	2	3	4	5	6
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
W2.	1	2	3	4	5	6
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
W3.	1	2	3	4	5	6
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
W4.	1	2	3	4	5	6
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
W5.	1	2	3	4	5	6
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Check-a-Row

Okay, so Bart starts working on this the first week of school, and he gets an A right off. His sheet should look like:

Times in a row I have earned a B or better:

W1.	1	2	3	4	5	6
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
W2.	1	2	3	4	5	6
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
W3.	1	2	3	4	5	6
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
W4.	1	2	3	4	5	6
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
W5.	1	2	3	4	5	6
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Now, say the next two weeks Bart gets at least a B. His tracking sheet should look like:

Check-a-Row

Times in a row I have earned a B or better:

W1.	1	2	3	4	5	6
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
W2.	1	2	3	4	5	6
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
W3.	1	2	3	4	5	6
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
W4.	1	2	3	4	5	6
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
W5.	1	2	3	4	5	6
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Now he's halfway there. Three in a row he got a B or better, but let's suppose the fourth week Bart gets a C. He had three in a row, but that ended with his C. On the fifth week he got another C, but on the sixth week he got an A. Now his sheet should look like this:

Check-a-Row

Times in a row I have earned a B or better:

W1.	1	2	3	4	5	6
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
W2.	1	2	3	4	5	6
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
W3.	1	2	3	4	5	6
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
W4.	1	2	3	4	5	6
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
W5.	1	2	3	4	5	6
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

This means he's starting to count the times in a row he gets a B or better again. You see how this works? It may take a few tries, but eventually he will get six in a row. Bart got it on the fourth try, and his final tracking sheet should look like this:

Check-a-Row

Times in a row I have earned a B or better:

1.	1	2	3	4	5	6
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	1	2	3	4	5	6
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	1	2	3	4	5	6
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.	1	2	3	4	5	6
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.	1	2	3	4	5	6
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

This is called the **Check-a-Row** method because you check how many right you got in a row.

Check-a-Box Method

One last type of tracking and then you can decide what the best option for you is for tracking your goals.

Let's say that Bart is a really lucky guy and he takes a math quiz every day at school. Bart's goal might read like this:

Bart Simpson will make a B or better on 100 math tests by the end of the year.

If you chose to **Check-a-Box** to track progress, your sheet would look like this:

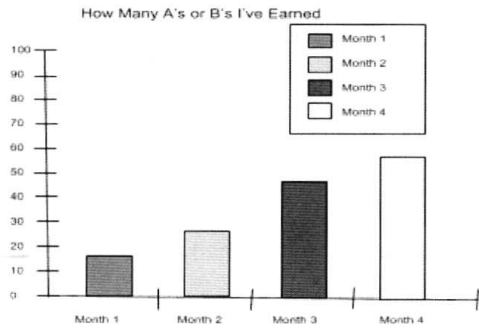
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Kind of tedious, right? So what's another option?

Chart-a-Point

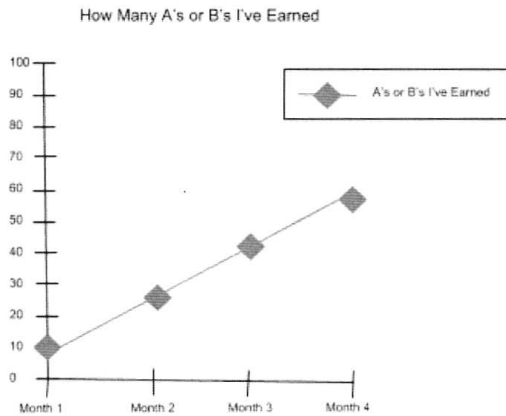
We can use charting to track progress toward goals. Instead of checking every box, you use a bar graph or a line graph, like you learned in Methods of Science. Bart will track his monthly progress by charting how many A's and B's he earns each month. Bart is going to track his grades on a bar graph like this:

Chart-a-Point



And his chart would look like this if he were using a line graph:

Chart-a-Point



Now you have three different methods for charting progress toward your goals: Check-a-Box, Check-a-Row, or Check-a-Point. Practice which method might be best for the following goals:

1. Goal: Bart will skateboard at least four laps around the track for five days in a row by the end of the month.
 - Check-a-Box
 - Check-a-Row
 - Check-a-Point
 2. Lisa will practice her saxophone 300 days this year.
 - Check-a-Box
 - Check-a-Row
 - Check-a-Point
 3. Marge will go to the library six times this month.
 - Check-a-Box
 - Check-a-Row
 - Check-a-Point
 4. Homer will watch ten hours of television a day for 7 days in a row.
 - Check-a-Box
 - Check-a-Row
 - Check-a-Point
-

Let's check your answers.

1. Goal: Bart will skateboard at least four laps around the track for five days in a row by the end of the month.
 - Check-a-Box
 - Check-a-Row
 - Check-a-Point
2. Lisa will practice her saxophone 300 days this year.
 - Check-a-Box
 - Check-a-Row
 - Check-a-Point
3. Marge will go to the library six times this month.
 - Check-a-Box
 - Check-a-Row
 - Check-a-Point
4. Homer will watch ten hours of television a day for 7 days in a row.
 - Check-a-Box
 - Check-a-Row
 - Check-a-Point

Remember the SMART goals that you set in class? Now you have three different methods to help you track your progress. Next time you set a goal, identify a tracking process and start keeping data on your progress.

Review:

1. You recognized that by measuring a goal, you can track your progress on reaching that goal.
2. You saw that it would be worth your time and effort to track your own goals.
3. You learned three different ways of tracking goals.

Appendix B: Assessing Fidelity of Implementation at the Classroom Level

Assessing Fidelity of Implementation at the Classroom Level Instructional “Walk-through” Guidelines

Directions: This Guidelines document is completed prior to the classroom observation. All the potential observers for the school should get together and decide what **teacher actions** would be a basis for the rating in the left-hand column. See full directions on page 9.

1. Adherence

Learning objective is evident to the students.

Rating	Possible Teacher Actions that Might Be Observed to Support Rating
Evident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher specifically names objective at beginning of lesson/class. • Students write down the objective. • Students accurately answer teacher's question about objective
Not evident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher does not mention objective, goal, reason for the lesson.
Unable to determine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective not specifically mentioned, but students seem to have a good understanding of topic and context.
Supporting examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student responds accurately to teacher's question (<i>Ex: Why are we talking about Greece and Rome? To see the Greek and Roman influences in the U.S. today.</i>) • •

Teacher uses program materials effectively during instruction / intervention.

Rating	Possible Teacher Actions that Might Be Observed to Support Rating
Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • •
Sometimes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • •
No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • •
Unable to determine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • •
Supporting examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •

Learning objective/objectives are met.

Rating	Possible Teacher Actions that Might Be Observed to Support Rating
Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">••
No	<ul style="list-style-type: none">••
Unable to determine	<ul style="list-style-type: none">••
Supporting examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•

2. Exposure

_____ minutes devoted to instruction /intervention

_____ minutes determined to be optimum

3. Quality of Delivery

Teacher appears adequately prepared to deliver instruction or intervention.

Rating	Possible Teacher Actions that Might Be Observed to Support Rating
Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">••
Sometimes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">••
No	<ul style="list-style-type: none">••
Unable to determine	<ul style="list-style-type: none">••
Supporting examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•

Teacher's interactions with students reflect encouragement and enthusiasm.

Rating	Possible Teacher Actions that Might Be Observed to Support Rating
Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">••
Sometimes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">••
No	<ul style="list-style-type: none">••
Unable to determine	<ul style="list-style-type: none">••
Supporting examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•

Teacher provides clear, explicit instruction for all students.

Rating	Possible Teacher Actions that Might Be Observed to Support Rating
Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">••
Sometimes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">••
No	<ul style="list-style-type: none">••
Unable to determine	<ul style="list-style-type: none">••
Supporting examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•

Teacher provides positive, constructive feedback to all students.

Rating	Possible Teacher Actions that Might Be Observed to Support Rating
Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">••
No	<ul style="list-style-type: none">••
Unable to determine	<ul style="list-style-type: none">••
Supporting examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•

Pacing and transitions are effective.

Rating	Possible Teacher Actions that Might Be Observed to Support Rating
Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">••
No	<ul style="list-style-type: none">••
Unable to determine	<ul style="list-style-type: none">••
Supporting examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•

4. Program Specification

Teacher adheres to instructional components as designed.

Rating	Possible Teacher Actions that Might Be Observed to Support Rating
Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">••
No	<ul style="list-style-type: none">••
Unable to determine	<ul style="list-style-type: none">••
Supporting examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•

Teacher demonstrates knowledge of content and intervention strategy.

Rating	Possible Teacher Actions that Might Be Observed to Support Rating
Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">••
No	<ul style="list-style-type: none">••
Unable to determine	<ul style="list-style-type: none">••
Supporting examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•

5. Student Responsiveness

Students appear. . .

	Highly engaged –Most students are authentically and actively engaged.
	Moderately engaged – Most students are engaged or willingly compliant.
	Not engaged – Most students are not participating or are off-task.
Possible Student Actions that Might Be Observed to Support Rating	
Possible Teacher Actions that Might Be Observed to Support Rating	

Notes 

Appendix C: Emergent Themes

Themes	Categories
Developing a plan/setting goals for the future	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Having a goal and pushing to reach it Need to have a plan Plan for future Plan for college Identify place to live Make a budget Estimate future expenses Develop long- and short-term goals
Self-confidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confidence in self and ability Develop self-confidence
Understanding self, wants, and what one needs to be successful	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Know or have an idea what you want to do Know who you are so you can prepare Identify options based on interests and abilities Know self and compensate for needs Work hard Choose college based on individual needs
Strategies for being successful as a student	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stay organized Make schedules Write down details
Areas for improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of confidence in areas of weakness Underestimating abilities Fear of asking for help Fear of making mistakes Procrastination Overthinking when making decisions Stress and anxiety Self-doubt
Intrinsic motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal motivation to be successful
Self-advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask for help in class Know how to talk to others Be more social Identify what I need to know
Self-determination instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Helpful for upperclassmen who are preparing for college Construct a goal

	<p>Identify how to achieve a goal Plan to reach goals Motivation to succeed Improved confidence Determine wants and create a plan to reach goals Considering options for colleges and jobs Aids in plan development for future Avoid last-minute panic Develop a back-up plan Increase self-confidence Identify strengths and weaknesses</p>
Self-determination	<p>Making choices Know strengths and weaknesses Working to improve Following through when not motivated Ask for help</p>