UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

DETERMINING THE IMPACT OF *SELF-DIRECTED IEP* INSTRUCTION ON SECONDARY IEP DOCUMENTS

A Dissertation

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

By

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Norman, Oklahoma
2005

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DETERMINING THE IMPACT OF *SELF-DIRECTED IEP* INSTRUCTION ON SECONDARY IEP DOCUMENTS

A Dissertation APPROVED FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

True independence is a myth; it does not exist. Completing a doctorate program independently adheres to the same mythical parameters; it simply cannot happen. This dissertation, which signifies the completion of my doctorate program at the University of Oklahoma, has been one of many tasks that required the assistance of countless other individuals. This acknowledgements section is my best attempt to recognize the major members of a rather large *circle of inter-dependence* that has surrounded my Ph.D. journey.

First and foremost, thank you to my best friend and husband, Eddie Van Dycke. Your consistent support allowed me to focus on this four-year journey, and your willingness to help with "the twins" gave me the precious time needed to stay on track. Speaking of "the twins," let me also say thank you to Rachel and my grandmother. The two of you provided me with a constant source of balance that I could have never achieved in any other way. Thanks also to my mother, and all my other family members who cheered me on along the way.

I was especially lucky to travel much of this journey along side a stellar group of co-horts. I will always remember the late night and weekend statistics study groups, led by Lori Peterson and choreographed by Joyce Brandes. And of course, the mere mention of statistics would not be complete without thanking Rob Christensen and Clay Millsap for their invaluable assistance with my dissertation statistical analyses. I couldn't have asked for a better circle of colleagues to share this journey with.

My good fortune is perhaps best reflected though, in Jim Martin and the resources provided by the Zarrow Center for Learning Enrichment. How lucky I was to meet Jim at a point in my career when I was ready and able to pursue graduate studies. Jim, don't ever lose your enthusiasm for this important work that you do. Thank you for sharing your boundless energy with me and all your other graduate students.

And then there is Linda Gill! My goodness, what can I say that has not already been said by countless other students you have helped over the years! I wish you the same success you have helped to facilitate for so many others. Most importantly, though, I wish for you the same kind of steadfast belief that you give to so many.

Speaking of belief, I must recognize the stellar source of belief and guidance that Laura Bixler provided for me – thanks Bix – for all your contributions. And finally, last but not least, thank you to the outstanding individuals who compose my doctoral committee: Dr. Jim Martin, Dr. David Lovett, Dr. Barbara Greene, Dr. Lisa Lawter, and Dr. Mary John O'Hair. It has been an honor to have your expertise and guidance on this adventure. As I begin my new journey as a university professor, I only hope that I will make the same kinds of differences for students that all of you have made for me.

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ABSTRACT

I wanted to determine if *Self-Directed IEP* instruction impacted three things in secondary IEP document development: (1) student ownership of the IEP; (2) complexity of postschool goal/vision statements in IEPs; and (3) infusion of the four vision components of living, learning, working, and community involvement, into other key IEP areas. I examined 94 secondary IEP documents (including 92 postschool goal/vision statements) for the presence of four vision components using a scoring rubric. Pilot study and inter-rater reliability procedures established the validity and reliability of the rubric. The IEPs had been developed during Year 2 of a federally sponsored field-initiated research grant that used a randomized control/intervention group design. The secondary students represented in the documents had mild/moderate disabilities and had randomly received *Self-Directed IEP* instruction to increase student participation in IEP meetings.

Study results indicate that the *Self-Directed IEP* had a moderate impact on the complexity of the vision statements, with vision statements in the intervention group being more inclusive of the four vision components, specifically living and working. The instruction had no influence on student first-person references in the IEP document. The intervention had no impact on the general features of the vision statements, such as their writing style, futures orientation, or support through planned courses and coordinated activities. The *Self-Directed IEP* did not influence the vision components being addressed within or across specific sections of the IEP, other than the vision statement itself.

The lack of vision component representation across the IEP raises concerns, given the 2004 IDEA amendments, which reiterate that the purpose of special education is to prepare students for further education, employment, and independent living. Implications

include the need for specific materials designed to increase IEP vision development and the infusion of the four vision components into key areas of the IEP. Field-initiated research to validate the implementation of such materials is also needed.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Curiosity: Looking Again

Curiosity is the phenomenon that fuels research; it provides a framework for questions that guides the process of "looking again," and nestles the hope of finding a different or better answer to the ever-looming question of "why?" Curiosity is not always directional, but sometimes it should be. Consider the following contemporary fable:

Upstream/Downstream

> It was many years ago that villagers in Downstream recall spotting the first body in the river. Some old timers remember how spartan were the facilities and procedures for managing that sort of thing. Sometimes, they say, it would take hours to pull ten people from the river, and even then only a few would survive.
>
> Though the number of victims in the river has increased greatly in recent years, the good folks of Downstream have responded admirably to the challenge. Their rescue system is clearly second to none: most people discovered in the swirling waters are reached within 20 minutes – many in less than ten. Only a small number drown each day before help arrives – a big improvement from the way it used to be.
>
> Talk to the people of Downstream and they'll speak with pride about the new hospital by the edge of the waters, the flotilla of rescue boats ready for service at a moment's notice, the comprehensive health plans for coordinating all the manpower involved, and the large number of highly trained and dedicated swimmers always ready to risk their lives to save victims from the raging currents. Sure it costs a lot, say the Downstreamers, but what else can decent people do except to provide whatever is necessary when human lives are at stake?
>
> Oh, a few people in Downstream have raised the question now and again, but most folks show little interest in what's happening Upstream. It seems there's so much to do to help those in the river that nobody's got time to check how all those bodies are getting there in the first place. That's the way things are, sometimes. (Ardell, 1977, p. 179)

Directional Curiosity: Looking Back

In the Upstream/Downstream fable, some directional curiosity could have

changed the outcomes of the story. If the people in Downstream had been curious as to what was first happening in Upstream, and determined the antecedent conditions, they might have found the answers needed to address the problem. But as it was, all the time and effort of the people in Downstream was focused on the current problem, instead of what was contributing to the problem in the first place.

As a society, we sometimes focus so intently on a need or problem, and its manifestations and implications – that we forget to investigate the antecedents to the need, and address those antecedents as part of the solution. The field of special education is not immune to this problem, especially in terms of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) process. A parallel scenario to the Upstream/Downstream fable sets the stage for this study.

Process/Product

It has been over 30 years since special educators first recall hearing about the Individualized Education Program (IEP) process. Some special educators remember how students with disabilities were often segregated from public schools before federal legislation was passed that required all students with disabilities to receive a free and appropriate public education in the environment that best met their unique needs. Even back in the early days, special educators say, they were expected to work as a team with parents and other professionals in the IEP process. But even then, team members only made a few comments in the IEP meetings, and students hardly ever came.

Though the number of students qualifying for special education services has increased greatly over the years, professionals have responded admirably to the challenge. States and school districts have developed extensive IEP forms, and provided

training to write compliant IEPs that meet state and federal requirements. Most recently, computerized IEP programs have become second to none. Now students with disabilities receive special education services at a rate that is almost double what is was 30 years ago, which is a big improvement from the way things used to be.

Talk to the special educators and they'll speak with pride about the advances in the IEP form, about how quickly they can complete the forms, and about how many IEPs meetings they can conduct in one day. Though professionals make attempts to get parents and students involved in the IEP process, they are often unsuccessful. Researchers have attributed this lack of success to the impending perception that the IEP *document* is more important than the IEP *process* (Storms, O'Leary, & Williams, 2000). Sure there is more of a focus on the IEP document, say the special educators, but what else can you expect when there are so many rules and regulations to be followed, and the education of students with disabilities is at stake?

A few folks have raised the question now and again as to what happened to the IEP process, but most special educators show little interest. It seems there's so much to do to prepare all the IEP documents that no one has time to focus on the process. That just seems to be the way things are.

General Description of the Area of Concern

The preceding parallel scenarios reflect the overwhelming focus that the special education field is currently placing on the IEP document, and the associated loss of focus on the IEP process (Furney & Salembier, 2000; Lovitt & Cushing, 1999; Lytle & Bordin, 2001; Rock, 2000; Rodger, 1995). Although the Process/Product scenario mirrors the Upstream/Downstream fable in format, its content has been well documented in the

literature for decades. An over-reliance on IEP *document* compliance in exchange for truly individualized educational planning that focuses on the future needs of the student has existed since IEPs were first federally mandated in 1976 (Blue-Banning, Summers, Frankland, Nelson, & Beegle, 2004; Drasgow, Yell, & Robinson, 2001; Garriott, Wandry, & Snyder, 2000; Huefner, 2000; Valle & Aponte, 2002).

Additionally, just as the Process/Product scenario mirrors the opening fable, so does the behavior of special educators mirror that of the Upstream/Downstream villagers. By the time students reach the secondary level, special education professionals have become so regimented with completing the IEP document that they often fail to look back and reflect on portions of the IEP process as the antecedent procedures for which they were intended (deFur, 2003). These antecedent procedures include gathering information about the student, determining appropriate assessments, and planning appropriate programs (Rodger, 1995; Yell, 1998).

Embedded within these procedures is an additional antecedent factor that must be addressed in every student's IEP by at least the age of 14[1]: transition services that are

---

[1]On December 3, 2004, the 2004 Amendments to IDEA were signed into law as P.L. 108-446. This legislation requires that transition services be addressed for students by age 16, which is a change from the 1997 IDEA transition services requirement at age 14. However, the 2004 IDEA Amendments will not go into effect until July 1, 2005. At the administration of this study and the writing of its results, the age 14 transition services requirement was still in effect and was addressed as such in Chapters 1 (introduction), 3 (methodology), and 4 (results). Chapters 2 (literature review) and 5 (discussion) address the transition services changes in IDEA 2004, and their implications for this study and future research.

based on the student's needs, preferences, and interests (Kohler & Field, 2003; Konrad & Test, 2004; Storms et al., 2000). On the transition services plan page of Oklahoma's IEP form, this factor is explored in the following way: "Beginning at age 14, address student's postschool vision/preferences and interests (Where does the student want to live, learn, work, and how will he or she be involved in the community?)" (see Appendix A). Recent observations of IEP meetings in Oklahoma reveal that this vision question is often directed to students for the first time in the IEP meeting, without benefit of prior deliberation or pre-IEP meeting planning (Van Dycke, Lovett, Greene, & Martin, 2004).

Problem to be Studied

Nowhere is the absence of directional curiosity more evident in the secondary IEP process then in the development of the transition services postschool goal/vision section of the IEP (deFur, 2003). Although the student's postschool goal/vision should drive the IEP process at the secondary level, current postschool outcomes for students with disabilities indicate that it does not (Eisenman, 2001; Kohler & Field, 2003; Wagner et al., 1991). Recent evidence from observed secondary IEP meetings shows that the completion of IEP meetings is indeed goal driven; however, the goal is to obtain required signatures within pre-determined meeting timeframes – not the student's postschool goal/vision (Martin et al., in press; Van Dycke et al., 2004). Chapter two explores the results of research studies and literature reviews which reveal that the IEP process, which should be led by the student's post school goal/vision, is instead being led by administrative demands for compliant IEP documents that will ensure continued federal funding.

Justification for Investigation

To date, there are no research data available that address an alternate way to examine the IEP process at the secondary level beyond state and federal compliance procedures. Furthermore, there is no research that connects student participation in the IEP process and the development of the student postschool goal/vision within the IEP document. However, research is presently underway at the University of Oklahoma's (OU) Zarrow Center for Learning Enrichment (ZC) that provides an avenue to fill both of these research voids. This three-year research project (funded from September 1, 2002 – August 31, 2005), which is fully described in future sections and chapters, is primarily designed to determine the effects of student *Self-Directed IEP* (Martin, Marshall, Maxson, & Jerman, 1997) instruction on IEP meeting outcomes, and participants' perceptions of those meetings.

This research study was associated with this existing project, and designed to fill the two previously identified research voids. First it provided an alternate way to examine the IEP process at the secondary level. This alternate examination allowed the four vision components to be evaluated and scored across six other key corresponding areas within the IEP: (1) present levels of educational performance, (2) strengths, (3) educational needs, (4) measurable annual goals, short-term objectives and benchmarks, (5) coordinated transition activities, and (6) postschool goal/vision statement (see Appendix B). Second, it examined the missing connection between student involvement in the IEP process, and the concomitant development of the student's postschool goal/vision within the IEP document.

Purpose of the Research Project

The purpose of this research was to determine the impact of *Self-Directed IEP* instruction on secondary IEP transition documents by evaluating the presence and development of four transition services postschool goal/vision components: (1) living, (2) learning, (3) working, and (4) community involvement in existing secondary IEP documents that were produced during Year 2 of the OU-ZC IEP federally sponsored three-year research project. The data derived from this research expands the existing empirical data regarding the IEP process at the secondary level. This research also adds to the literature by providing a specific lense to examine the secondary IEP process and offering a way to establish the secondary IEP process as an individual plan guided by the student's postschool goal/vision.

Feasibility of the Research

This research included a pilot and primary study associated with the OU-ZC 2002 – 2005 field-initiated Office of Special Education Program's (OSEP) research project, titled *Student Involvement in Their Own IEP Meeting: Does Instruction Make a Difference in Meeting and Educational Outcomes?* University of Oklahoma (OU) Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was obtained at the onset of this study, and was renewed each subsequent year. See Appendix C for Year 2 study approval from OU-IRB. During Year 2 of the project, 130 middle and high school IEP meetings were observed: 65 meetings were for students who had received *Self-Directed IEP* instruction (the intervention group); and 65 meetings were for students who had not (the control group).

The intent of the primary study was to examine the IEP documents from 70-110 of these Year 2 meetings, and use that data to answer the research questions. I designed an IEP Postschool Goal/Vision Scoring Rubric (see Appendix D) for this purpose, which the OU-IRB also approved (see Appendix E). Parental permission to examine these IEP documents had already been obtained through a consent form that was signed by the parent(s) before the student's IEP meeting was observed (see Appendix F).

General Areas of Inquiry

Three general areas of inquiry guided the development of the specific research questions for the primary study. Since the associated research study contained control and intervention student groups, the same specific research question was asked for both groups. Following are the three broad inquiry areas from which I derived the questions.

1. Do existing IEP documents at the secondary level contain evidence of the four postschool goal/vision components (living, learning, working, and community involvement) as required on the Oklahoma transition services plan page, and in related sections of the IEP, such as the present levels of educational performance, strengths and educational needs, and goals, objectives and benchmarks?
2. Does student *Self-Directed IEP* instruction influence vision development in the IEP, such as its degree of development, and where it is supported in the IEP?
3. Does student *Self-Directed IEP* instruction encourage student ownership of the postschool goal/vision in the IEP?

Specific Research Questions

Primary Study

Overview

The primary study contains 13 specific research questions. Questions 1-4 relate to the existence of the postschool goal/vision statement in the IEP, and whether it was developed or altered during the meeting as evidenced by handwritten revisions. Questions 5-7 relate to the content of the postschool goal/vision statement, and how well it was supported through planned courses and activities. Questions 8-11 address how well the postschool goal/vision components were represented in specific locations within the IEP. Question 12 addresses how well the four postschool goal/vision components were reflected across the IEP as a whole. Question 13 addresses student IEP ownership as evidenced through student first-person references.

Specific Questions

1. Do existing IEP documents from *control and intervention* IEP meetings observed in Year 2 of the SD-IEP research project address the student's postschool goal/vision for the future, including living, learning, working, and community involvement, at the required postschool vision/preferences and interests section on the transition services plan page of the IEP?
2. In existing IEP documents from *control and intervention* IEP meetings observed in Year 2 of the SD-IEP research project, was the student's postschool goal/vision statement on the transition services plan page typewritten in its entirety, without handwritten edits?

3. Do existing IEP documents from *control and intervention* IEP meetings observed in Year 2 of the SD-IEP research project that had typewritten postschool goal/vision statements on the transition services plan page also include handwritten revisions to the postschool goal/vision statement?
4. In existing IEP documents from *control and intervention* IEP meetings observed in Year 2 of the SD-IEP research project, was the student's postschool goal/vision statement on the transition services plan page handwritten in its entirety?
5. In existing IEP documents from *control and intervention IEP* meetings observed in Year 2 of the SD-IEP research project, did the postschool goal/vision statement reflect uncertainty regarding the student's vision?
6. In existing IEP documents from *control and intervention* IEP meetings observed in Year 2 of the SD-IEP research project, did the postschool goal/vision statement contain a futures-oriented statement?
7. In existing IEP documents from *control and intervention* IEP meetings observed in Year 2 of the SD-IEP research project, do the classes and activities in the course of study, and activities in the coordinated activities section support the student's postschool goal/vision statement?
8. Do existing IEP documents from *control and intervention* IEP meetings observed in Year 2 of the SD-IEP research project address the student's postschool goal/vision for the future, including living, learning, working, and community involvement, in the coordinated activities section of the plan for needed transition services page of the IEP?

9. Do existing IEP documents from *control and intervention* IEP meetings observed in Year 2 of the SD-IEP research project address the student's postschool goal/vision for the future, including living, learning, working, and community involvement, in the present levels of educational performance section of the IEP?
10. Do existing IEP documents from *control and intervention* IEP meetings observed in Year 2 of the SD-IEP research project address the student's postschool goal/vision for the future, including living, learning, working, and community involvement, in the strengths and educational needs sections of the IEP?
11. Do existing IEP documents from *control and intervention* IEP meetings observed in Year 2 of the SD-IEP research project address the student's postschool goal/vision for the future, including living, learning, working, and community involvement in the annual goals and benchmarks or short term objectives section of the IEP?
12. Do existing IEP documents from *control and intervention* IEP meetings observed in Year 2 of the SD-IEP research project address the four components of the student's postschool goal/vision for the future (living, learning, working, community involvement) across the postschool vision/preferences and interests, coordinated transition activities, present levels of educational performance, strengths and educational needs, and goals, benchmarks, and short-term objectives of the IEP?
13. In existing IEP documents from *control and intervention* IEP meetings observed in Year 2 of the SD-IEP research project, are student first-person references made in addressing the postschool vision/preferences and interests, coordinated

transition activities, present levels of educational performance, or goals, benchmarks, and short-term objectives of the IEP?

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

"Our visions begin with our desires."

Audre Lorde

We all have some picture of ourselves in the future that is framed by our preferences. These pictures, or visions, create consequences; they influence the choices we make and effect the way we spend our time (Covey, 1989). But imagine these pictures without any frames; imagine a vision without any preferences or desires to frame it. Without a preference frame, a vision cannot exist. Without a vision, choices and consequences become irrelevant.

We must then, attend to the preference framework surrounding our visions, and provide dimension to our dreams. This is not a new concept; building dreams, creating visions, and realizing the impact of choices on our future desires have been prevalent in literature from a variety of fields for many years. This prevalence has been guised through a plethora of synonymous vernacular that will be briefly explored, as this literature review prepares to journey through the history, supportive frameworks, and current status of four postschool vision components (living, learning, working, and community involvement) for individuals with disabilities, as they prepare to graduate from school and transition into the adult world.

Synonymous Vernacular

Visions, preferences, passion, sense of purpose, goal setting, goal attainment, quality of life, futures planning – for many decades, these terms and more have infiltrated literature in the fields of sports, recreation and leisure, business economics, general

psychology, educational psychology, general education, adult education, and motivational education. Within the past three decades, however, the special education field has been added to the list. The reasons behind this recent vision interest have roots that parallel those of general education. The purpose of education has always been to prepare students for productive citizenry (O'Hair, McLaughlin, & Reitzug, 2000); only within the last 15 years has special education begun to share this same purpose (Field, 1996; Lehman, Deniston, Tobin, & Howard, 1996).

Evolution of a Purpose

Brief History

On November 29, 1975, President Ford signed Public Law 94-142, The Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA). This landmark legislation entitled students with disabilities to receive a free and appropriate public education, with specially designed instruction and related services to meet their unique educational needs. It also specified this education occur in the environment that is the least restrictive for the student, and be documented in an individualized education program (Katsiyannis, Yell, & Bradley, 2001; Drasgow et al., 2001).

Since the passage of EAHCA in 1975, numerous reauthorizations and changes to the act have been made. One major change occurred in 1990, when EAHCA was renamed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The most recent changes to IDEA have occurred during the 1997 and 2004 reauthorizations of the act. Despite numerous amendments, however, the initial precepts of EAHCA have remained intact: that a free appropriate public education (FAPE) be provided to all qualified students with a disability in the least restrictive environment (LRE), and documented

through an individualized education program (IEP) (Yell, 1998). See Table 1 for purposes of the FAPE, LRE, and IEP mandates as provided in the Federal Regulations to the 1997 IDEA Amendments.

Table 1

IDEA Mandates and Purposes

Mandate	Acronym	Purpose
Free Appropriate Public Education	FAPE	The provision of FAPE means that special education and related services are to be provided at public expense, under public supervision and direction, and without charge; meet the standards of the State Education Agency; include preschool, elementary school, or secondary school education in the State; and be provided in conformity with an individualized education program (IEP) and its requirements (IDEA Regulations, 34 C.F.R. §300.13).
Least Restrictive Environment	LRE	LRE establishes that to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are nondisabled; and that special classes, separate schooling or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only if the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily (IDEA Regulations, 34 C.F.R. §300.550 (b)(1)-(2).
Individualized Education Program	IEP	The development of the IEP is a collaborative effort between school personnel and parents to ensure that students' special education programs will meet their individual needs. The IEP also serves a number of other important purposes, including communication, management, accountability, compliance and monitoring, and evaluation (IDEA Regulations, 34 C.F.R. § 300 Appendix C:1).

The purpose of special education services in the late 1970s was a legislatively mandated one: to identify and bring individuals with disabilities into the public schools and provide them with a free and appropriate education along side their peers without

disabilities. In the years that followed the initial P.L. 94-142 legislation, the purpose of special education evolved, following the needs of special education students as they progressed through school and prepared to transition into the adult world.

> It is noteworthy that the transition movement began approximately one school generation after legislation requiring school districts to provide education for students with disabilities was passed. Students were not experiencing the level of success after completing educational programs that was envisioned. (Field, 1996, p. 171)

In the 1990 amendments to IDEA, legislation once again altered the purpose of special education services by adding new requirements that specifically targeted secondary transition practices. In these amendments, mandates were added that required a "statement of needed transition services" to be included in students' IEPs by the age of 16. This statement was to address instruction, community experiences, the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives, and if appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation (Storms et al., 2000). IDEA 1990 also provided a three-part definition of transition services that outlined transition services as a coordinated set of activities for a student with a disability and:

(1) Is designed within an outcome-oriented process, that promotes movement from school to postschool activities, including postsecondary education, vocational training, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation;

(2) Is based on the individual's student's needs, taking into account the student's preferences and interests; and

(3) Includes instruction, related services, community experiences, the development of employment and other postschool adult living objectives, and if appropriate, acquisition of daily living and functional vocational evaluation. (34 C.F.R. § 300.29(a)(1)-(3)(v)

In 1997, several additional amendments to IDEA specifically targeted secondary transition practices on a large scale, and ". . . underscored the importance of empowering students with disabilities to become more knowledgeable and skilled in expressing their needs, preferences, and aspirations" (DeStefano & Hasazi, 2000, p. 5). These amendments included student invitation to attend IEP meetings if a purpose of the meeting is to consider transition services; development of a statement of transition service needs at the age of 14 that focuses on the student's courses of study; development of a statement of needed transition services at the age of 16 that focuses on interagency responsibilities and needed linkages; and informing the student at least one year in advance about the transfer of rights at the age of majority. See Table 2 for the purposes of these transition mandates as provided in the Federal Regulations to the 1997 IDEA Amendments.

Table 2

IDEA 1997 Transition Mandates and Purposes

Mandate	Purpose
Student Invitation	The public agency shall invite a student with a disability of any age to attend his or her IEP meeting if a purpose of the meeting will be the consideration of the student's transition service needs or needed transition services or both (IDEA Regulations, 34 C.F.R. § 300.344(b)(i)-(iii).
Statement of transition service needs (course of study)	The IEP must include for each student with a disability beginning at age 14 (or younger if determined appropriate by the IEP team), and updated annually, a statement of the transition service needs of the student under the applicable components of the student's IEP that focuses on the student's course of study (IDEA Regulations, 34 C.F.R. § 300.347(b)(1).
Statement of needed transition services	The IEP must include for each student beginning at age 16 (or younger if determined appropriate by the IEP team), a statement of needed transition services for the student, including, if appropriate, a statement of the interagency responsibilities or any needed linkages (IDEA Regulations, 34 C.F.R. § 300.347(b)(2).

Transfer of rights	In a state that transfers rights at the age of majority, beginning at least one year before a student reaches the age of majority under state law, the student's IEP must include a statement that the student has been informed of his or her rights under Part B of the Act, if any, that will transfer to the student on reaching the age of majority (IDEA Regulations, 34 C.F.R. § 300.347(c).

The Surface of a Common Purpose

Without question, the transition amendments in IDEA 1997 reflected large policy changes that had been building since the law was originally enacted.

> IDEA of 1997 incorporated several broad policy shifts reflecting major changes in the way that persons with disabilities would receive an education (Stodden, 1998). One change from earlier special education legislation and IDEA of 1997 is that special education will focus on educational and transition results rather than on the process, steps, and procedures to implement programs. This shift represents an increasing focus on what happens to students when they exit the educational system and their quality of life and success in postschool environments. (Flexer, 2001, pp. 31-32)

This shift in focus to student outcomes reflected what was perhaps the most important 1997 amendment of all: the purpose of the act. The 1997 IDEA Amendments provided a mandated purpose for special education services that clearly encompassed transition into adulthood. This purpose, at 34 C.F.R. § 300.1(a), stated:

The purposes of this part are to ensure that all children with disabilities have available to them a free appropriate public education that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and *prepare them for employment and independent living* [italics added].

So in 1997, IDEA legislation finally determined that the purpose of special education services should be to prepare students with disabilities for what all citizens envision: to have a job and a home. The 2004 amendments to IDEA continue to reinforce this purpose, with the added emphasis of further education, at Section 601 (d)(1)(A).

Though the purposes of IDEA 1997 and 2004 are succinctly stated, their achievement is anything but simple as there are a multitude of skills and subskills involved in successful employment and independent living. These skills can be broadly encompassed in the four vision components of living, learning, working, and community involvement. But regardless of how simple or complicated, visions are the driving forces that provide direction in our lives. Visions should be framed by preferences and desires, and special education legislation has continued to mandate that in the 2004 IDEA Amendments, through the second part of the transition definition at Section 602 (34)(B), which requires that transition services be based on the student's needs, strengths, preferences, and interests.

Supportive Frameworks

How did legislation come to mandate this? Legislative action is historically recognized as a culmination of societal influence and experience; this is especially true in terms of federal policy and disability issues (Osborne, 1996; Turnbull & Turnbull, 1998). It seems particularly prudent at this point to review the societal frameworks that support the transition service postschool goal/vision planning process. The remaining sections of this literature review will examine these frameworks through the lenses of democratic principles, parental fears, theoretical constructs, and existing research. Each lense will contribute toward understanding the postschool vision components of living, learning, working, and community involvement, and their contribution in the IEP process at the secondary level. The review will end with a description of the research project through which this study is associated.

Democratic Principles

In its most basic form, democracy represents that state "where free men and women would rule the public domain" (Glickman, 2002, p. 373). Americans live in a 'free-dom' rather than in a 'king-dom', meaning that citizens are free to choose their positions on political parties, education, religion, welfare, and to pursue a high quality of life. Basic democracy can be represented as a single belief:

> Democracy is simply the belief that citizens have the capacity to educate and govern themselves through participatory problem solving in ways profoundly better than what a king, oligarchy, or tyrant could do for them. It is the belief that in a democracy the unfettered pursuit of truth is the best way to educate and to live. (Glickman, 2002, p. 374)

This single belief is often represented through visions with multiple components that require numerous planners. In fact, democracy is intended to be a collaborative process. Beane (1998) states that "…democracy is to involve intelligent, collaborative participation in society. Creative individuality is to be balanced with concern for the welfare of others and a desire for a common good" (p. 8). O'Hair et al. (2000) add to that by saying that democracy is "a way of life" (p. 7); that it is a *process* rather than a *product*, and far exceeds the way we govern ourselves. This process involves all areas of life, and is supported by the following conditions: (1) an open flow of ideas that allows people to be fully informed; (2) faith in the individual and collective capacity of people to creatively problem solve; (3) the use of critical reflection to evaluate ideas and problems; (4) concern for the welfare and common good of others; and (5) concern for the dignity and rights of all individuals (Beane & Apple, 1995).

Links to Democratic Education

These conditions serve as a guideline for a democratic life, and provide direction for envisioning and planning that life. They also subsume the democratic principles and group processes inherent in democratic education. Glickman (2001) states that:

> Ultimately, an American education must stand on a foundation that is wider than the beliefs of any one individual or any one group. It should encourage, respect, and support any conceptions – no matter how diametrically opposed to one's own – that are willing to be tested open and freely. Furthermore, it should involve the willing and nondiscriminatory participation of all students, parents, and educators. That is what should be at the core of an American education. (p. 147)

Links to Vision Planning

These same individuals – students, parents, and educators, are part of the required core team for creating postschool goals/visions for students via the IEP process. Legislation has made it clear that all students with a disability that qualify for and receive special education services in the public schools must have their individual educational needs addressed through the IEP process (Bateman & Linden, 1998; Yell, 1998). Legislation has also made it clear that transition planning processes for students with disabilities are to address students' postschool goals and visions for the future (Storms et al., 2000). A closely associated process that is not mandated by law but clearly evident is parental fear of the future.

Parental Fears

The Impact of an Acronym

Through its nearly 30 years of existence, the individualized education program and its associated acronym, "IEP," has become one of the most widely recognized processes in the special education field (Drasgow et al., 2001; Rodger, 1995). The

mention of these three letters together impacts professionals and parents alike, as the following words from a parent portray:

> IEP – I can't remember exactly when I first heard that title. I'm sure I had no clue what it meant or how important it would become in my family's life. The same three letters that can strike fear in the hearts of parents and educators can also make a huge difference to the life of a child with disabilities. (Goldstone, 2001, p. 60)

Parental Involvement

Despite these fears, parental influence has long been recognized as a positive factor in the outcomes of children's education (Hughes & Ruhl, 1987; Morningstar, Turnbull, & Turnbull, 1995; Rock, 2000; Taymans & Frith, 1983; Wolf & Troup, 1980). Parents have been included as members of the IEP team from the initial passage of EAHCA in 1975, to the latest reauthorization of IDEA in 2004. This reinforces a central intent of the legislation, which is to include parents as decision makers in the educational process for their child (Furney & Salembier, 2000; Salembier & Furney, 1997; Turnbull & Turnbull, 2001). Garriott, Wandry, and Snyder (2000) asserted that parental involvement as equal partners in the IEP planning process is considered a cornerstone of special education. The 1997 IDEA Amendments reinforced this cornerstone notion by expanding the role of parents in the IEP process:

> The parents of a child with a disability are expected to be equal participants along with school personnel, in developing, reviewing, and revising the IEP for their child. This is an active role in which the parents: (1) provide critical information about their child's abilities, interests, performance, and history, (2) participate in the discussion about the child's need for special education and related services and supplementary aids and services, and (3) join with the other participants in deciding how the child will be involved and progress in the general curriculum and participate in state-and district-wide assessments, and what services the agency will provide to the child and in what setting. (Bateman & Linden, 1998, pp. 194-195)

In promotion of this expanding role for parents, numerous resources have been developed over the past two decades to encourage parental involvement in the IEP process. These resources come in a variety of forms, including books, guidebooks, manuals, pamphlets, newsletters, and checklists, that are based on implications from research projects, as well as experiences from teachers and parents. However, experiences for parents of children with disabilities are varied, and range from the shock of the initial diagnosis, to concerns over career and finances, to finding and qualifying for public assistance, to dealing with the level of disability, to handling threats to the family structure, to responding to the presence of behaviors and future placements that compromise familial and ethical standards (Ferguson, 2002; Singer, 2002), and that's the short list.

Parental Stressors

The long list of parental stressors begins with the birth of the child, or soon after the disability diagnosis is made, and centers on the child's vision for life after school. The *Oklahoma State Department of Education Handbook for Parents of Children with Exceptional Needs* captures these life-long stressors in the following way:

> Thoughts about your child's transition into adulthood begin almost immediately after your child is born, or as soon as your child's disability is diagnosed. You wonder, where will my child live when he or she is an adult? Will he or she continue to go to school past high school? Will he or she have a job? What about friends? Will my son or daughter be involved and have a sense of belonging in their community?
>
> These questions strike fear in the hearts of parents, and indeed, the answers require complex support systems. However, these questions are also addressed through transition planning in the IEP, and must begin by the time the student is 16, or sooner if necessary. Two of the main purposes of transition planning are: (1) to begin to answer many of the futures questions that you have harbored from the time your child was born, and (2) to begin to establish the support links that your child with a disability will need as they prepare to enter

into adulthood. (Oklahoma State Department of Education, 2004)

A Paradox of Fears

In many cases, the expectation for parental involvement in students' educational programming is paradoxical. Many times, the very thing that professionals are asking parents to contribute to the planning process is the one thing they fear the most and feel the least prepared for: establishing supports for the future. This fear is captured in the following questions: What is the postschool vision for my child? What does it look like and how will we find the supports to make it happen?

Theoretical Constructs

One way to help make a postschool vision happen is to incorporate it into the IEP. However, there are some important theoretical constructs that must be understood before visions can be successfully infused into the IEP process. These constructs have evolved from self-determination theory that is prominent in the special education field. This section will provide a definitional review of the theoretical constructs inherent in self-determination theory, followed by their practical applications in the IEP process. Finally, the specific sections within the IEP document that support these applications will be presented.

Self-Determination Theory

Self-determination theory has been emerging in the special education field for the last three decades, specifically from 1975 – 2005. Within that time frame, the identification and definition of special education self-determination has included self-management outcomes in a behavioral context (Martin et al., 2003; Wehmeyer, Palmer, Agran, Mithaug, & Martin, 2000), motivational constructs in a cognitive context (Field,

Hoffman, & Posch, 1997; Wehmeyer, 1999), and quality of life indicators in a secondary transition/postschool outcomes context (Turnbull, Turnbull, Wehmeyer, & Park, 2003; Wehmeyer & Palmer, 2003; Wehmeyer & Schwartz, 1998). For the purposes of this research, self-determination will be examined within the secondary transition/postschool outcomes context.

Definitions

A generally accepted definition of self-determination does not currently exist, although many experts in the special education field view the construct from an internal attributes perspective (Wehmeyer, Abery, Mithaug, & Stancliffe, 2003). For example, Field and Hoffman (1994) define self-determination as "one's ability to define and achieve goals based on a foundation of knowing and valuing oneself" (p. 164). They developed a model of self-determination with five major components: (1) know yourself, (2) value yourself, (3) plan, (4) act, and (5) experience outcomes and learn, which also serves as a basis for the development of their curriculum, *Steps to Self-Determination*. This model and curriculum have significantly contributed to the promotion and understanding of special education self-determination (Wehmeyer et al., 2003).

Another frequently cited definition of self-determination stems from Martin and Marshall (1995), who captured the evolving definition of self-determination as follows:

> Self-determined individuals know how to choose – they know what they want and how to get it. From an awareness of personal needs, self-determined individuals choose goals, then doggedly pursue them. This involves asserting an individual's presence, making his or her needs known, evaluating progress toward meeting goals, adjusting performance, and creating unique approaches to solve problems. (p. 147)

Martin and Marshall compiled a comprehensive list of 37 self-determination concepts, and grouped them into the seven areas of: (1) self-awareness, (2) self-advocacy, (3) self-

efficacy, (4) decision-making, (5) independent performance, (6) self-evaluation, (7) adjustment (see Table 3). They conceptualized these through a three step process that included (1) an extensive literature review and interview process; (2) operationalization of each concept; and (3) validation through university-based transition experts, teachers, self-advocates, and parents. These concepts have significantly aided in the understanding of special education self-determination, and were incorporated into the *ChoiceMaker* curriculum (Martin & Marshall, 1994).

Table 3

Self-Determination Concepts

Self-awareness	Self-advocacy	Self-efficacy	Decision making	Independent performance	Self-evaluation	Adjustment
Identify needs	Assertively state wants and needs	Expect to obtain goals	Assess situation demands	Initiate tasks on time	Monitor task performance	Change goals
Identify interests	Assertively state rights		Set goals	Complete tasks on time	Compare performance to standard	Change strategies
Identify and understand strengths	Determine needed supports		Set standards	Use self-management strategies	Evaluate effectiveness of self-management strategies	Change standards
Identify and understand limitations	Pursue needed support		Identify information to make decisions	Perform tasks to standard	Determine if plan completed and goal met	Change plan
Identify own values	Obtain and evaluate needed support		Consider past solutions for new situations	Follow through on own plan		Change support
	Conduct own affairs		Generate new, creative solutions			Persistently adjust

	Consider options	Use environmental feedback to aid adjustment
	Choose best option	
	Develop plan	

Note. From Martin, J. E., & Marshall, L. H. (1995). *ChoiceMaker:* A comprehensive self-determination transition program. *Intervention in School and Clinic, 30*(3), 147-156.

Ecological Influences

Wehmeyer et al. (2003) believe that to further promote the understanding of the concept, it is important to understand that self-determination does not solely reside within the person; ecological influences must be considered as well.

> Self-determination, however, does not "lie within the person." It is the product of both the individual and the environment – of the person using the skills, knowledge, and beliefs at his/her disposal to act on the environment with the goal of obtaining valued and desired outcomes. Some environments are quite supportive of self-determination. In these situations, people may only need the most basic personal capacities in order to exercise the levels of control over their lives that they desire. Other environments may not only be unsupportive of self-determination but also actively create barriers to its exercise. To fully understand the construct, one must therefore understand not only how various personal characteristics influence self-determination, but the manner in which the ecology influences its development and behavioral manifestation. (p. 27)

The ecological influences pertinent for this research include the execution of the IEP process, and climate of the IEP meeting itself. With that basis in mind, self-determination skills presented in this review and appropriate for this study include: (1) the IEP participation skills the student possesses (based on internal attributes), and (2) the

opportunities in the IEP meeting (the ecological environment) to execute those skills. The next two sections will further elaborate on these dual components.

Self-Determination and the IEP Process

Within the IEP process are a myriad of opportunities for students to exhibit self-determination skills. These opportunities can occur at various points in the IEP preparation process, such as the determination of students' current functioning levels and educational needs (Van Dycke, Martin, & Lovett, 2004). Students should also be invited into the IEP planning process, and expected to (1) have an informative role in developing and writing their educational performance description (the present levels of educational performance or PLEP); (2) aid in the development of measurable postsecondary goals in their IEPs; (3) help identify their needed accommodations, modifications, and supports; and (4) be responsible in the achievement of coordinated transition activities, postschool linkages, and postsecondary goals (Mason, Field, & Sawilowsky, 2004; Mason, McGahee-Kovac, Johnson, & Stillerman, 2002). Undoubtedly, the most optimal opportunity of all exists in the planning and development of students' postschool goals/visions, which are the starting points at which all secondary IEP planning should begin (deFur, 2003).

Self-Determination and the IEP Document

Within the IEP document itself are multiple opportunities for students to execute the self-determination skills employed in the IEP process. When students are actively involved in the creation and composition of key segments of the IEP document, they are using specific self-determination skills. This is demonstrated by juxtaposing the seven self-determination concepts complied by Martin and Marshall (1995) with the associated

IEP document segment that supports the execution of specific self-determination skills (see Table 4).

Table 4

Self-Determination Concepts Juxtaposed with Associated IEP Document Segments

IEP Document Segment	Self-Determination Concept Employed
Present Levels of Educational Performance	Identify needs Identify interests Identify values Assess situation demands
Student Strengths	Identify interests Identify and understand strengths
Student Educational Needs	Identify needs Identify and understand limitations
Consideration of Special Factors	Identify needs Identify and understand limitations Determine needed supports Pursue needed support
Annual Goals and Benchmarks or Short Term Objectives	Assess situation demands Set goals Set standards Develop plan Complete tasks on time Use self-management strategies Perform task to standard Follow through on plan Compare performance to standard Determine if plan completed and goal met Use environmental feedback to aid adjustment
Supplementary Aids and Services	Identify needs Identify and understand strengths Identify and understand limitations Determine needed supports Pursue needed support
Program Modifications	Identify needs Identify and understand strengths Identify and understand limitations Determine needed supports Pursue needed support

Student Post-School Goal/Vision	Identify interests Identify and understand strengths Identify and understand limitations Identify own values Assertively state wants and needs Expect to obtain goals
Student Course of Study	Assess situation demands Identify information to make decisions Assertively state wants and needs
Needed Transition Service Areas	Assess situation demands Set standards Identify information needed to make decisions
Statements of Intended Outcomes	Identify interests Identify own values Expect to obtain goals
Coordinated Transition Activities	Generate new, creative solutions Initiate tasks on time Complete tasks on time Monitor task performance
Transition Linkages	Assertively state wants and needs Assertively state rights Determine needed supports Pursue needed supports Obtain and evaluate needed support Conduct own affairs
Modifications for State/District Assessments	Identify needs Identify and understand limitations Identify and understand strengths Determine needed supports

Note. Order of segments based on Oklahoma's IEP form as used in 2004-2005.

Questions to be Answered

Of the IEP document segments listed in Table 4, the postschool goal/vision is paramount. For secondary IEPs, the postschool goal/vision statement should set the tone for the IEP, and guide the direction of services, supports, activities, and goals (deFur, 2003). In order for that to happen, the student's postschool goal/vision needs to be the first topic of discussion in the IEP meeting. Within that initial discussion, the four vision

components (living, learning, working, and community involvement) need to be addressed, and then infused throughout the IEP (Storms et al., 2000). Do existing literature and research support this "vision first" philosophy? Does existing research indicate how well the four vision components are addressed and infused into secondary IEP documents? Do existing literature and research in student participation in the IEP process reflect ecologies that uniformly support the execution of student self-determination skills within IEP process? The following review will analyze current research literature using the parameters of these questions.

Existing Research

Opportunities for research and innovative projects in self-determination have flourished within the past 15 years. From 1990 – 1996, the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) funded 26 model demonstration projects to promote self-determination for youth with disabilities (Field & Hoffman, 2002; Field, Martin, Miller, Ward & Wehmeyer, 1998; Wehmeyer, 1999). Additionally, OSEP funded five major research projects to develop and design theoretical frameworks and assessment processes for self-determination (Wehmeyer et al., 2003).

As a result, the promotion of self-determination became a central focus in the education of students with disabilities by the end of the 1990s, specifically in the realm of secondary transition services. In fact, curriculum and intervention development gained momentum at a "frenzied pace," (Wehmeyer et al., 2003, p. viii). Since 1983, OSEP has funded more than 500 projects focused on transition education and services for students with disabilities in secondary and postsecondary education, and supported transition systems change efforts in 46 states (Kohler & Field, 2003). Researchers in the special

education field have focused on promoting self-determination, and have published over 450 articles on the topic (Zhang, Katsiyannis, & Zhang, 2002). Publishers have subsequently produced over 60 curricula filled with models and strategies for helping individuals with disabilities to attain self-determination skills (Wood, Karvonen, Test, Browder, & Algozzine, 2004).

It is beyond the purpose of this review to address the entire realm of self-determination research and resources now available in the special education field. However, some studies have specifically targeted self-determination and secondary transition. A few studies have focused on student involvement in the IEP process, using specific self-determination curriculum and self-advocacy strategies. A review of this research, guided by the three aforementioned literature review questions follows.

Review Question One

Do existing literature and research in student participation in the IEP process reflect ecologies that uniformly support the execution of student self-determination skills within IEP process?

Supportive Environments

Ecologies that are supportive of the execution of student self-determination skills in the IEP process must originate from teachers and their administrators (Barrie & McDonald, 2002). In an article written by a special education teacher and two administrators, student ownership of the IEP process is addressed through an IEP design process successfully used by the authors (Kroger, Leibold, & Ryan, 1999). Using a large chalkboard and colored chalk, the IEP team created the sections of the IEP on the chalkboard, beginning with the list of strengths and gifts of the student. The authors

realized the ecological value of student input in this process, and reflected that in the opening of the article:

> Everyone on the IEP team is a significant stakeholder in the process. Often the person with the most interest in the IEP process – the student – is the last to realize it. The student, the primary consumer of the product, is the bottom line. The IEP is a useless document unless the student buys it. (p. 4)

Another supportive environment for student ownership of the IEP process was initiated and implemented by two school district administrators. In their article, Barrie and McDonald (2002) explained that the student self-determination philosophy in their district began by having students, teachers, and parents listen to student speakers from a neighboring district that had led their own IEP meetings. The first expectation was that students would learn about special education laws, state standards, and their own specific support needs. The next step included paying two teachers from the district to develop lessons plans for teaching student-directed IEP instruction that directly linked to state standards for graduation. The end result was increased student IEP involvement across all grade levels, and numerous administrative benefits, such as more streamlined courses of study, more effective use of accommodations and modifications in the classroom, increases in parent participation, and increases on follow-through on agency linkages.

However, such supportive environments are not uniformly reflected in literature or practice. Menlove, Hudson, and Suter (2001) addressed this in a candid opening to their article on the IEP development process, titled "A Field of IEP Dreams."

> As special education professionals, we sometimes feel that we are working in a field of dreams. This field of dreams is created by idealistic visionaries, who develop legislation, regulations, and mandates that we must put into practice in actual school settings with limited time and resources. Although we see the reasons for these best practice dreams and expectations, we know the reality of what happens in actual practice. (p. 28)

"What happens in actual practice" has been the topic of several research studies involving the acceptance and implementation of self-determination skills and practices in public school settings. In 2000, Wehmeyer, Agran and Hughes reported results from a national survey of 1, 219 secondary level educators' opinions about the value of self-determination and issues relating to teaching skills leading to that outcome. They found that 60% of the teachers were familiar with the concept of self-determination, and that 90% - 98% believed that instruction in self-determination domains was important for students. However, only 22% of these teachers indicated that all their students had IEP goals in this area of self-determination; and 31% indicated that none of their students had such goals. Finally, one third of the teachers reported that they did not involve students in educational planning at all.

Similar to those findings, Agran, Snow, and Swaner (1999) reported on survey findings from 69 special educators in Utah, regarding their perceptions of the benefits of self-determination and the extent to which self-determination related goals and objectives were included in IEPs. Seventy-seven percent of the teachers rated self-determination as "very important," or "important;" however, 55% indicated that self-determination-related skills were either not included at all or appeared in only some IEPs.

In a study of how a variety of secondary schools implemented and assessed self-determination activities, Eisenman and Chamberlin (2001) reported the results of a cluster evaluation that included information from school profiles, lesson plans, student products, informal interviews, classroom observations, student discussion groups, and student assessments from seven participating school representing 200 students and nine school staff members. The results yielded several issues and lessons learned regarding the

implementation of self-determination activities. For example, when examining the structure of self-determination activities, time issues were paramount. "Despite their enthusiasm, participants found little room in their school day for additional programs, even valued ones such as those relating to self-determination" (p. 144). When examining the foundations of self-determination, disability awareness and involvement in the IEP were significant concerns.

> Participants noted that many of their students feel stigmatized by their association with special education. Participants suggested that students know little about and are reluctant to talk about their disabilities and educational needs. Although students attend IEPs, they have little knowledge or ownership of IEP goals and objectives. This lack of information is compounded by the fact that teachers are reluctant to talk to students about their disability-related educational needs because they don't want students to feel uncomfortable. (p. 143)

Additional concerns were noted by Zhang, Katsiyannis, and Zhang (2002), when they investigated teachers' and parents' practices in fostering self-determination skills of high school students with mild disabilities. In this study, parents and special education teachers of 58 students reported via survey the frequency in which they provide opportunities for students to engage in self-determination activities. Although teachers' ratings were generally higher that parents', fewer than half of the teachers indicated providing opportunities for students to help with scheduling, or help develop course-related plans or postschool plans.

To examine how well these actual practices match with IEP participant perceptions, Martin, Greene, and Borland (2004) conducted a web-based survey on administrators' perceptions of student IEP involvement that was completed by 218 secondary administrators. The reports from this survey indicated that administrators encouraged students to participate in IEP meetings, yet they also reported that actual

student involvement fell behind efforts to encourage participation. Additionally, even though administrators believed that students were invited to their IEP meetings almost all the time, they indicated that students only attended some to most of the time. Martin and colleagues raised some pertinent questions in regard to these discrepancies.

> Why the discrepancy between the invitation rate and actual meeting attendance? Perhaps, the school culture has not evolved to the point where students are expected to attend their meetings. As an indication of this culture, even when students do attend their meetings, administrators thought that they were only somewhat involved in their meetings, If the school culture valued active student participation at their IEP meetings, students would most likely attend at greater rates, and their level of involvement would increase as noted by several researchers (e.g., Field et al., 1998; Sands et al., 1999). The relatively low level of perceived student engagement in the IEP process found in this study clearly does not meet the intent of IDEA's transition reforms. (p. 184)

Low levels of student engagement in the IEP process have also been validated in two additional research studies conducted by Martin and colleagues. In the first study, 1,638 IEP meeting participants from 393 meetings over 3 consecutive years were surveyed about their perceptions of IEP meetings. Students reported the lowest scores for knowing the reasons for the meetings, knowing what to do at the meetings, and understanding what was said. Students also reported feeling significantly less comfortable saying what they thought, and knowing what to do next (Martin, Marshall, & Sale, 2004).

In the second study, Martin and colleagues directly observed 109 secondary IEP meetings. They collected data on who talked during these meetings using 10-second momentary time sampling procedures. In the meetings observed, students talked 3% of the meeting time, compared to 51% for special education teachers, 15% for family members, 9% for administrators, and 2 % of the meeting time when no conversations occurred (Martin et al., in press). This study was the culmination of the Year 1 research

efforts associated with the OU-ZC IEP research project, and served as the baseline for Year 2 research procedures, which entailed a specific strategy for teaching students how to becoming actively involved in their IEP meetings.

A Specific Strategy: The Self-Directed IEP

In 1997, Martin, Marshall, Maxson, and Jerman developed the *Self-Directed IEP* to improve student understanding of the IEP process and promote active student participation in IEP meetings. The last section of this review will provide details on the *Self-Directed IEP* instructional package itself. The following paragraphs, however, will provide an overview of the research that has been conducted using the *Self-Directd IEP*.

Snyder and Shapiro (1997) taught the *Self-Directed IEP* to three secondary students with emotional and behavioral disabilities. They used a multiple baseline design to evaluate the effectiveness of the instruction, and created a rating scale to measure new skills taught by the *Self-Directed IEP*, such as introducing the meeting, reviewing past goals and performance, discussion future goals, and closing the meeting. Two of the three students in the study made substantial gains in their IEP meeting behaviors.

Sweeney (1997) conducted a study to determine if instruction with the *Self-Directed IEP* increased student attendance at IEP meetings, increased the frequency of students reporting IEP goals, and increased student involvement in IEP meetings. Using a nonequivalent control and intervention group design, Sweeney taught the lessons to a total of 69 students with a variety of disabilities (intervention n = 54, control n = 15). Students in the intervention group attended more IEP meetings, had higher levels of meeting involvement, and knew more of their goals after the meeting ended.

Snyder (2000) taught the *Self-Directed IEP* to 13 ninth and tenth grade students with learning disabilities, and used a multiple baseline design to demonstrate instructional effectiveness. Twelve of the 13 students showed substantial gains in their ability to implement the *Self-Directed IEP* leadership steps at the IEP meetings. In 2002, Snyder taught the *Self-Directed IEP* to five students with mental retardation and behavior problems, and again used a multiple baseline design to evaluate instructional effectiveness. As in the previous studies, these students learned the IEP leadership steps and applied them in their IEP meetings.

Allen, Smith, Test, Flowers, and Wood (2001) also used a multiple baseline design to determine if instruction using the *Self-Directed IEP* increased IEP meeting participation. Four students with moderate mental retardation received the instruction. All students in this study exhibited the meeting leadership steps, expressed interests, reported skills and limits, and helped to choose transition goals.

Evidence-Based Need

The results of these studies indicate a clear need for self-determination instruction and the supportive ecologies in which to display those skills. At this point, the answer to review question one is no. Literature and research on student participation in the IEP process does not reflect ecologies that uniformly support the execution of student self-determination skills within the IEP process – even though four single-subject studies and one quasi-experimental study on the *Self-Directed IEP* support the instruction as a promising practice. To reiterate the need for self-determination instruction, four more articles will be briefly reviewed. These articles were featured in the Summer 2004 issue of *Exceptional Children* as a special mini-series on implementing and improving best

practices regarding self-determination instruction. Each article addressed self-determination in relationship to current issues in special education, such as standards-based reform, access to the general curriculum, IDEA reauthorization, and standards for personnel preparation. Within each of the articles, student IEP involvement skills were a central tenet.

Student involvement in individualized education program meetings. This article, authored by Test, Mason, Hughes, Konrad, Neale, and Wood (2004), reviewed 16 published research studies designed to increase student IEP involvement. The purpose of the study was to determine the impact of student IEP participation instruction in the field of special education. Their results indicated that direct instruction and role-playing prior to IEP meetings were positive strategies, as well as specific curricula and person-centered planning. Results also uncovered research limitations that need to be addressed in future research, such as fidelity of treatment measures, varied dependent measures, lack of generalization into home or community, and lack of parental participation in the IEP process. Test and colleagues stated an implication for practice that is most noteworthy: ". . . the results of our literature and other research to date suggest that although level of student participation in IEP meetings is less than ideal, it is not because students are incapable of being involved" (p. 407). The key is to make sure that students are taught the skills needed to participate and/or lead their IEP meetings.

Self-determination and student involvement in standards-based reform. This article, written by Wehmeyer, Field, Doren, Jones, and Mason (2004), provided a synopsis of special education self-determination within the last decade, which serves as a foundation for discussing current educational demands. Chief among these is access to

the general curriculum; increased access is expected to impact student performance in core content areas and their associated standards. Special educators are concerned about supporting students with disabilities to meet state standards, along with finding time to teach other critical domains, such as self-determination skills. The authors note that there is an emerging database suggesting that self-determination skills can be infused into educational programs via existing state standards, and that this infusion enhances positive educational results for all students, including students with disabilities.

Promoting access to the general curriculum by teaching self-determination skills. This article, authored by Palmer, Wehmeyer, Gipson, and Agran (2004), reported on the results of a study with 22 middle and junior high school students with intellectual disabilities. These students were given specific instruction in problem solving and study planning skills as a way to promote involvement and progress in the general curriculum. Results indicated that students significantly improved their knowledge and skills in problem solving and study planning, which subsequently led to increases in goal achievement and academic performance. A major implication of this research was that components of self-determination, such as problem solving and planning skills, can serve as entry points into the general curriculum for students with disabilities.

Implementation of self-determination activities and student participation in IEPs. This article, written by Mason, Field, and Sawilowsky (2004), reported the results of an on-line web survey on the instructional practices and attitudes of 523 educators regarding self-determination and student involvement in the IEP process. Similar to other survey results provided earlier in this review, teachers rated self-determination activities, including student involvement in IEPs as very important; however, they reported

dissatisfaction with their current instructional activities and preparation to provide self-determination skill instruction.

More of the Same Information

The findings from the special series articles mirror those of previous studies, with the added illumination of standards based reform and access to the general curriculum. Research in self-determination and student IEP participation seems to be providing more of the same information. Perhaps a different research focus is needed. A particular research limitation addressed in the first article of the series may be the springboard for this focus. In the review of 16 IEP involvement studies by Test et al. (2004), a noted research limitation was lack of generalization into home or community. Specifically stated: ". . . there is no evidence across studies of generalization of self-determination or student participation skills, implementation of IEP goals, or effects on student outcomes across settings such as home or community" (p. 406). Indeed, how will we know if instruction in self-determination impacts students' daily lives, if we don't assess its impact in home and community ecologies?

A Research Void

Undoubtedly, there is a need for future research in this area. But before branching directly into those environments, there is a way to evaluate the impact of self-determination instruction and student IEP involvement training, on *anticipated* home and community settings. These anticipated ecologies are known in secondary IEP planning and development as the student's postschool goal/vision for the future, which addresses where the student wants to live, learn, work, and be involved in the community after high school. In secondary IEP development the student's postschool vision is pivotal in

transition planning, and should guide the development of the entire IEP (deFur, 2003; Storms et al., 2000). However, none of the studies presented in this review thus far included an evaluation of the student's postschool goal/vision, or investigated to see if the vision was effected by student-directed IEP instruction. Furthermore, none of these studies evaluated the degree of vision development, or if the vision was supported in other key parts of the IEP. Given the fact that the student's postschool goal/vision is paramount in secondary IEP planning and development, and should be the first section addressed in IEP planning (deFur, 2003; Storms et al., 2000), this research void is noteworthy. In fact, it leads to the next question in this review of literature and research.

Review Question Two

Do existing literature and research support a "vision first" philosophy in secondary IEP development?

Legislative Implication

The 1997 and 2004 IDEA Amendments specifically mandate that students' preferences be addressed in the delivery of secondary transition services. This mandate is expressed in the three-part IDEA definition of transition services. Part B of the 2004 IDEA transition definition specifically states that transition services are to be "based on the individual child's needs, taking into account the child's strengths, preferences, and interests" Section 602 (34)(B). In Oklahoma, this requirement has been incorporated into the student's postschool/vision statement that is addressed on the transition services plan page of the IEP (see Appendix A).

Several opportunities exist within the IEP for representing students' strengths, preferences, and interests; however, a vision statement is an ideal way to capture those

student qualities needed for long-term futures planning. Even though federal policy does not specifically mandate that a vision statement be developed in the IEP per se, the implication is clear.

> Strategic planning begins with a vision of the future based on personal values and possibilities. No doubt, a clear articulation of the future vision for the child or youth with a disability has been missing from the traditional IEP process and, to some degree, from the transition mandates. That is, no federal policy mandates this step nor does such policy describe the IEP as a long-term strategic plan. Yet student-centered planning that *begins with a shared and articulated vision* [italics added] based on the student and family needs and interests receives support from professionals and families critical to a quality transition plan (Morningstar, 1997; Schwartz et al., 2000; Storms et al., 2000). . . . Beginning the IEP transition planning process with a focus on the family and student vision orients all IEP team members to the true purpose of the meeting. It provides a clear venue for family and student leadership and input and creates a shared vision, a necessity for effective team actions. (deFur, 2003, p. 121)

Despite these legislative implications and supportive philosophies, transition planning is most often perceived from a mindset that separates transition from other IEP components. As a result, "transition planning too often becomes an afterthought rather than the primary focus that guides secondary special education services decisions" (deFur, 2003, p. 115). Other researchers have addressed this problem by calling the transition planning process "a stepchild to the IEP" (Shearin, Roessler, & Schriner, 1999, p. 22). This separateness is further solidified by the order in which IEP forms are developed and presented. For example, in Oklahoma's IEP form, the transition planning "pages" are typically presented as the fourth and fifth pages of a six-page document, *after* present levels of performance, goals, services, supplementary aids and services, and program modifications have been addressed (see Appendix B).

Research Results

Research results indicate that professionals have been traveling separate planning paths for special education and transition services for over a decade. In 1992, Lombard, Hazelkorn, and Neubert discovered that transition plans for students from 100 secondary schools in Wisconsin were not likely to have transition or vocational goals. In 1993, Krom and Prater discovered that the annual IEP goals of 21 intermediate-aged students with mild mental retardation in Hawaii were almost solely academic and included remediation of basic skills in core and elective classes. Additionally, they discovered many inconsistencies between reported vocational and pre-vocational skills training, and the actual reflection of that instruction in the IEP. Additional paperwork concerns were discovered by Baer, Simmons, and Flexer (1996), when they surveyed 277 special education administrators and transition coordinators in Ohio about policies and practices regarding transition service delivery. Ninety percent of the respondents reported the existence of transition plans for their secondary students, but less than 50% reported that transition services were available as required. This finding suggested that district compliance with transition mandates was only at a paperwork level.

The effects of separate planning processes for transition continue to be evident in research. In a qualitative study conducted by Van Dycke et al. 2004, transcripts from nine secondary IEP meetings were analyzed to determine the extent and nature of IEP team member participation, the extent and nature of student contribution in IEP meetings, and if the structure, dynamics and content of the meetings affected student contribution. A significant theme that emerged from the analysis, termed “The Instant Vision” captured the instantaneous presentation of the transition postschool goal/vision statement in the

meetings. This theme also reflected the lack of pre-IEP meeting and pre-transition planning that occurred for students, and the expectation for students to articulate their post-school vision during the meeting with little to no preparation or discussion, other than what occurred in the meeting itself. Van Dycke and colleagues further stated that when the instant vision occurs in secondary IEP meetings, the vision statement becomes little more than a symbolic insert in the IEP paperwork.

An Integration Model

At this point, the answer to review question two is easily answered – not only does a "vision-first" philosophy fail to exist in secondary IEP development; a "transition-first" philosophy fails to exist as well. The one philosophy that does seem to exist is that of separateness. However, deFur (2003) presented a model for integrating transition into the IEP that focuses on quality student-centered strategic plans, and begins with ". . . a shift in the culture of special education and in the perception of the purpose of the IEP to one of considering the IEP as an annual action agenda for a strategic long-term plan" (p. 120).

deFur (2003) clearly states that in order for this culture shift to occur, the IEP process must be viewed as a unified document based on the student's transition needs, preferences and interests.

> The IEP present levels of educational performance forms the student biographical foundation from which all other IEP decisions are made. Goals, objectives, benchmarks, accommodations, modifications, supplementary aids, extended school year, participation with nondisabled peers, and services must emanate from this documented baseline. There should be a direct relationship between the student transition needs, interests, and preferences identified in the present level of educational performance and all other components in the IEP. (p. 121)

deFur purports that a change in the perception of the *intent* of the IEP must occur as well, and move from a perception of a prescriptive remediation document to a strategic career plan focusing on student strengths and interests. In order to facilitate IEP meeting dialog in this direction, deFur suggests asking questions such as the following:

> (1) What are the student's long-term goals?
> (2) Can these goals be accomplished within the typical four years of high school?
> (3) How will this experience prepare the student to live and work in the community or attend college?
> (4) What objectives, activities, or special education supports are needed this year to help progress toward these goals?
> (5) What school or community resources are needed to address any at-risk behaviors that are present? (p. 123)

These questions encompass the four postschool goal/vision components of living, learning, working, and community involvement, and serve as effective questions for developing postschool goal/vision statements as well. However, since these questions are part of deFur's best practice model for integrating transition into the IEP, it is likely that they are not uniformly infused in existing secondary IEP documents. The answer to the third question in this review will confirm or deny this speculation.

Review Question Three

Does existing research indicate how well the four vision components are addressed and infused into secondary IEP documents?

Addressed for Compliance Purposes

In 2000, Thompson, Fulk, and Piercy reported the results of their study involving 22 high school students with learning disabilities. In this study, the transition plans of these students were evaluated in four postschool outcome areas of employment, postsecondary education, residential, and recreation and leisure, and compared against student and parent responses to questions regarding the students' postschool aspirations

and related support needs. Findings revealed that most transition plans were complete in the four postschool areas, but little relationship existed between students' desired outcomes and expressed support needs. Thompson and colleagues concluded that the lack of agreement among parents, students, and transition plans indicated that transition planning was not facilitating a unified vision of postschool outcomes and support needs among transition planners. They also noted that a completed transition plan on file did not automatically ensure that systematic, comprehensive transition activities would occur. They further noted an erroneous assumption among study participants: that transition technical compliance equaled program quality.

Similar results were reported by Grigal, Test, Beattie, and Wood (1997), when they evaluated the transition component of 94 IEPS for high school students with learning disabilities, mild and moderate mental retardation, and emotional/behavioral disorders. The purpose of the study was to determine the extent of compliance with IDEA transition mandates, and the reflection of good transition planning and best practices in special education. Study results indicated that the majority of the transition plans complied with IDEA mandates and had goals in the four major areas of education, employment, recreation and residential. However, the quality of the goals were rated as only adequate to minimal, with most including vague outcomes such as "will explore jobs," "will think about best place to live," and "will continue in exceptional children's classes" (p. 367).

Shearin, Roessler, and Schriner (1999) evaluated 68 high school IEPs for students primarily with learning disabilities and mental retardation, to determine the extent that transition mandates were being met. An outcome/skill checklist developed by the authors

was used for the evaluation. Results indicated that the special education teacher was the only participant who consistently attended IEP meetings, that most transition plans did not include mandated IDEA transition outcomes statements, and that a written statement justifying why the outcomes were not addressed was not included in the IEP.

Infusion or Confusion?

The studies presented thus far provide a partial answer to review question three. Existing research indicates that when the four vision components are addressed in IEP transition plans, it is for the sole purpose of complying with IDEA mandates. However, no research exists that examines how well the transition mandates, specifically the student's postschool goal/vision and its four components, are *infused into the entire* IEP document. This void is alarming, considering the guiding power of the postschool goal/vision, and its intended impact on the planning and execution of secondary special education services.

Have educators become confused with the intent of transition services, thinking that compliance with IDEA mandates automatically equates with infusion into the entire IEP and the subsequent delivery of services? Or have teachers just become overwhelmed with all their educational obligations? Powers, Turner, Matuszewski, Wilson, and Loesch (1999) conducted a qualitative investigation of student involvement in transition planning, and interviewed 12 high school students, their parents, and school staff about their perspectives regarding the transition planning process. The following words capture the time challenges involved with integrating transition planning into the IEP process.

> There was general agreement among parents, students and teachers that the integration of transition planning within the IEP meeting can be difficult. A transition coordinator shared, "It can sometimes be tough, there's a lot to discuss and only so much time." Staff also reported that the focus of meetings is generally

predetermined. For example, Jill's case manager described the *proforma* organization of her planning meetings:

> We typically go over the progress of the year. How things are done and how she's done this year. Then we talk about what she's going to do next year. By that time, we've already pretty much established what they're going to take by virtue of course scheduling, which happens earlier in the year. There might be fine-tuning or revisions of that. (pp. 21-22)

A second examination of the previous quote reveals a paradox. The case manager *was* describing items and activities that secondary transition planning *should* encompass, *if* the student's postschool goal/vision is the driving force for planning.

IEP time constraints were also noted by Valenzuela and Martin (in press) in their review article describing the interrelationships between IEPs, cultural values, self-determination and transition. The authors noted that needed adjustments in the IEP process are often precluded by individualistic time-oriented cultural values, which result in a loss of focus on the IEP process:

> In the individualistic culture time is a schedule-oriented process. For example, the teacher may schedule an IEP meeting from 8:00 – 8:45 a.m. The meeting usually ends at the scheduled time, irrespective of whether the IEP process is complete, with minimal attention to decision-making and personal satisfaction. In the collectivist culture, time is process-oriented. Ideally, the IEP meeting will begin at the scheduled time and when the family and student are comfortable. The meeting will end after the student, family, and the IEP team have freely engaged in decision-making, and the student and family are satisfied with the IEP meeting, irrespective of time constraints (Greene, 1996). (pp. 5-6)

With such constraints, it is clear that a change in educators' perception of transition planning is needed, and along with that, a realization that infusion of the vision components into key portions of the IEP is essential for successful futures planning.

Key Questions Remaining

Two key questions remain unanswered from this research and literature review. First, is the development of the student's postschool goal/vision in the IEP influenced by

student-directed IEP instruction? Second, how well is the postschool goal/vision in the IEP infused into other key parts of the IEP? A venue to answer these questions was found in a federally funded research project designed to increase student involvement in the IEP process. This last review section will describe this project, its purpose and procedures, and connection to the current study.

Field Initiated Research

In 2002, the University of Oklahoma's (OU) Zarrow Center for Learning Enrichment (ZC) was awarded a three-year field-initiated research grant from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs [(CFDA 84.324C) grant award number H324C020045], to study the effects of the *Self-Directed IEP* on meeting and educational outcomes for secondary special education students. The funding period for the study is from September 1, 2002 - August 31, 2005. The project is titled *Student Involvement in Their Own IEP Meeting: Does Instruction Make a Difference in Meeting and Educational Outcomes?*

Purpose of Study

The primary purpose of the OU-ZC study is to determine if active student participation in secondary IEP meetings influences IEP teams in meeting the needs of individual students by including them in the IEP decision-making and post-IEP meeting educational programming process. This purpose is represented across the three years of the study through the following conditions. The study is expected to provide data to determine if differences exist between IEP meetings and outcomes when:

1. Students attend their IEP meetings without IEP instruction, compared to when students do not attend at all (study year one).

2. Students who attend their IEP meeting having received IEP meeting instruction, compared to students who attend but without receiving IEP instruction (study year two).

3. Students who attend their IEP meeting having received IEP instruction and their IEP team received student facilitation training, compared to students who attend their IEP meeting with IEP meeting instruction but their teams had no IEP meeting student facilitation instruction (study year three).

Year 1 Data Collection Procedures

In Year 1 of the study, 109 middle and high school meetings across seven school districts were observed to determine who talked in the meetings, using 10-second momentary time sampling procedures. The results from these observed meetings served as the baseline for primary conversationalists in the meetings. During Year 1, research procedures entailed direct observation of meetings and the administration of a post-meeting survey on meeting perceptions that was completed by all participants. Each observed IEP meeting was assigned a code number; data collected for each meeting were coded accordingly and organized into individual meeting folders.

Year 2 Research Procedures

Data Collection

During Year 2 of the study, 130 middle and high school meetings across five school districts were observed. Year 2 research procedures included student-directed IEP instruction that was delivered by seventeen participating teachers to students that were randomly selected into control and intervention groups. Sixty-five meetings were observed for students in the intervention group, and 65 meetings were observed for

students in the control group. Year 2 observation and post-meeting survey procedures were the same as Year 1, with the added data collection item of IEP meeting discussion topic, using 10-second interval time sampling procedures.

Student-Directed IEP Instruction

The student directed IEP instruction specifically included the *Self-Directed IEP* (Martin et al., 1997) lesson package. This multi-media instructional program includes a detailed teacher manual, a 27-page student workbook, and a video featuring a student modeling the *Self-Directed IEP* process, which includes 11 lessons that focus on specific IEP leadership steps (see Table 5). After receiving this instruction, students were expected to take an active role in their IEP meeting, and execute as many of the leadership skills as possible. During Year 2 meeting observations, data were also collected on student execution of these leadership skills in IEP meetings.

Table 5

Self-Directed IEP Lessons and Leadership Skills

Lessons	IEP Meeting Leadership Steps
Lesson One	Begin Meeting by Stating Purpose
Lesson Two	Introduce Everyone
Lesson Three	Review Past Goals and Performance
Lesson Four	Ask for Other's Feedback
Lesson Five	State Your School and Transition Goals
Lesson Six	Ask Questions if You Don't Understand
Lesson Seven	Deal With Differences in Opinion
Lesson Eight	State the Support You'll Need
Lesson Nine	Summarize Your Goals

Lesson Ten	Close Meeting by Thanking Everyone
Lesson Eleven	Work on IEP Goals All Year

Connection to Current Study

The connection of the current study to the OU-ZC IEP research project is girded by three needs established in this review of research and literature. First, an alternate way to examine the IEP process at the secondary level beyond meeting state and federal compliance with transition mandates is needed. Second, data are needed to determine if a connection exists between student IEP leadership training and the development of the student postschool goal/vision in the IEP. Third, empirical evidence is needed to re-establish and support the secondary IEP process as an individual plan guided by the student's postschool goal/vision. This study was designed to address these research needs. The IEP documents developed for the students whose meetings were observed in Year 2 of the OU-ZC IEP research project provided an ideal sample from which to gather the data needed to answer this study's research questions.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

The purpose of this research was to determine the impact of *Self-Directed IEP* instruction on secondary IEP transition documents by evaluating the presence and development of four transition services postschool goal/vision components: (1) living, (2) learning, (3) working, and (4) community involvement in existing secondary IEP documents that were produced during Year 2 of the OU-ZC IEP federally sponsored three-year research project. This purpose was achieved through an instrument pilot study and a primary quantitative study. The function of the instrument pilot study was to test and validate the effectiveness of the IEP Postschool Goal/Vision Scoring Rubric (see Appendix D). The research design for the primary study was descriptive using historical quantitative methods. The following sections describe the studies.

Instrument Pilot Study

IEP Postschool Goal/Vision Scoring Rubric

Overview

The purpose of the pilot study was to establish the effectiveness of the data collection instrument for the primary study: the IEP Postschool Goal/Vision Scoring Rubric (see Appendix D). The rubric was designed to correspond with the primary study's research questions, and contains 57 components represented across four sections. The first section contains four yes/no questions, and one multiple-choice question. These questions were designed to capture information regarding the existence and development of the vision statement on the transition services plan page, and to ascertain and

substantiate vision-supporting components in the course of study and coordinated activities sections of the IEP.

The second section of the rubric contains a 4 x 6 matrix for scoring the prevalence of the four vision components across six key IEP areas. This scoring matrix was designed to statistically document the vision components that are most frequently addressed, and the areas within the IEP where these components most often appear. The third section of the rubric contains the identical 4 x 6 matrix used in section two. However, the scoring continuum for this matrix documents the existence of student first person references among the four vision components across six key IEP areas. This scoring matrix was designed to statistically document the areas within the IEP that contain student first person references.

The fourth section of the rubric contains three boxes for recording the vision and supporting course of study and coordinated activities components. This section was designed to allow for triangulation and validity of findings by requiring an exact copy of the vision statement, as well as a copy of the course of study and coordinated activities excerpts that contain vision-supporting components. The following paragraphs elaborate further on the four rubric sections.

Rubric Questions

Question 1. Is the student's postschool vision/preferences and interests section on the transition services plan page blank? This is a yes/no question regarding the existence of a written vision statement in the IEP. If the answer is yes, and no written vision exists, the researcher is directed to go to the matrix section of the rubric. If the answer is no, and

a written vision does exist, the researcher is directed to the back of the rubric, where the vision statement is to be copied exactly as it is written in the IEP.

Question 2. Is the student's postschool vision/preferences and interests statement: typed, handwritten, or typed and handwritten? This is a multiple-choice question regarding the development of the vision statement. The answer choices for this question are: typed; handwritten; and typed and handwritten. These choices are significant in that they reveal the amount of vision development that occurred during the meeting. Prior to all IEP meetings observed during Year 2 of the OU-ZC research project, a computerized IEP program was used to generate the draft IEP documents. This means that all draft IEP documents presented in the meetings were in typewritten format. A vision statement that is *typewritten in entirety*, without any handwritten additions or revisions, indicates that the student's vision was pre-written into the document before the meeting occurred, and that no changes were made to it during the meeting. A vision statement that is *handwritten in entirety* indicates that the student's vision was not pre-written, and that the vision was developed during the meeting. A vision statement that is *both typed and handwritten* indicates that the student's vision was pre-written into the document before the meeting, but that additions or revisions were made to it during the meeting.

Question 3. Does the student's postschool vision/preferences and interests section contain a statement that reflects uncertainty regarding the student's vision? This is a yes/no question regarding the content of the vision statement. A yes answer means that the vision statement indicates that the student does not currently have a vision, or is unsure about what he or she wants to do after graduating from school. A no answer means that the vision statement does not reflect any uncertainty at all.

Question 4. Does the student's postschool vision/preferences and interests section contain a futures-oriented statement (a summary sentence projecting future goal of the student)? This is a yes/no question regarding the content of the vision statement. A yes answer means that the vision statement clearly projects future goals of the student. A no answer means that the vision statement is not futures-oriented.

Question 5. Do the Course of Study and coordinated activities support the student's vision? This is a yes/no question that is to be scored across a 2 x 3 matrix, with the options of yes, no, and unclear. These choices are significant because they allow scoring to occur between two vision-supporting areas of the IEP. Two *yes* scores indicate that the course of study and coordinated activities both support the vision statement. Two *no* scores indicate that neither the course of study or coordinated activities support the student's vision. One *yes* score for the course of study indicates that vision support only occurs in that section of the IEP. One *yes* score for the coordinated activities indicates that only that section supports the vision statement. For all *yes* scores, the researcher is directed to the back of the rubric, where the supporting course of study and coordinated activities components are to be copied as they appear in the IEP. An *unclear* score indicates that the researcher was unable to tell if the course of study or coordinated activities supported the vision.

Vision Components Matrix

This section of the rubric contains a 4 x 6 matrix for scoring the prevalence of the four vision components (living, learning, working, and community involvement) across six key IEP sections: (1) vision statement; (2) transition coordinated activities; (3) present levels of educational performance; (4) strengths; (5) educational needs; (6) and goals,

benchmarks, and short-term objectives. Each of the 24 cells within the matrix is represented by a different number/letter combination, ranging from 6a-6f, to 9a-9f. Each cell is to receive an individual score.

Scoring directions on the rubric provide guidelines for ascertaining the degree of existence of the four vision components across the six IEP areas. The scoring range extends from zero to two. A score of zero means the component was not addressed. A score of one means the component was addressed with a single phrase or statement. A score of two means that the component was addressed with more than one phrase or statement. These scores are significant in that they allow the level of vision component development to be reflected.

Student Ownership Matrix

This section of the rubric contains a 4 x 6 matrix for scoring the prevalence of student first person references among the four vision components across six key IEP sections: (1) vision statement; (2) transition coordinated activities; (3) present levels of educational performance; (4) strengths; (5) educational needs; (6) and goals, benchmarks, and short-term objectives. Each of the 24 cells within the matrix is represented by a different number/letter combination, ranging from 10a-10f, to 13a-13f. Each cell is to receive an individual score, ranging from zero to one. A score of zero means the component was not addressed with a student first person reference. A score of one means the component was addressed with a student first person reference. These scores are significant in that they allow the level of student ownership within the IEP to be reflected.

Rubric Case Study Description: IEP Examples

This section of the rubric contains three boxes. The first box (Rubric Item 1a) is for documenting supporting evidence from rubric question 1, which asks about the existence of a written vision statement in the IEP. If a vision statement does exist, it is to be copied into this box exactly as it appears on the transition services plan page of the IEP. The remaining two boxes are associated with rubric question 5 (Rubric Item 5a and 5b), which asks about course of study and coordinated activities support for the vision statement. The supporting evidence for any *yes* scores documented in question 5 is to be copied into these boxes. Supporting course of study components are to be copied into box 5a. Supporting coordinated activities are to be copied into box 5b.

Gaining Document Access

Ten IEP documents were used for pilot review using the IEP Postschool Goal/Vision Scoring Rubric. To gain access to these documents, I visited with the special education directors from two participating school districts, and explained the purpose of my study. I provided a copy of the IEP Postschool Goal/Vision Scoring Rubric, and explained the purpose of the rubric. I also reminded the directors that permission to gain access to these IEP documents had already been obtained through the OU-ZC IEP research project procedures (see Appendixes C and F).

I then requested an opportunity to evaluate five IEP documents (from Year 2 observed meetings) from one participating teacher in each district, using the IEP Postschool Goal/Vision Scoring Rubric. I explained that this evaluation could occur in one of two ways. The first way was for the teacher to provide me with copies of the IEP documents with all identifying information removed or blackened from the documents. I

would leave the school site with the IEP copies and evaluate them at a later time. The second way was for each original IEP document to be evaluated by me at the teacher's school or administration site.

Both directors allowed me to have copies of the IEP documents with all identifying information removed. In one district I obtained the five IEP documents from the participating teacher. In the other district the director mailed the requested IEP copies to me.

Data Collection Procedures

Document Examination – Group 1

The documents were grouped by district, and examined in two groups of five. I examined the first set of five IEP documents from one district using the IEP Postschool Goal/Vision Scoring Rubric. Individual document examination time ranged from 15-30 minutes. The rubric was designed so that data could be recorded on one two-sided form. The form was also designed to maintain confidentiality of information.

Inter-Rater Reliability

I trained an additional researcher who has experience in secondary transition and IEP development on the use of the IEP Postschool Goal/Vision Scoring Rubric. This researcher also examined the first set of five documents. A comparison of scores using the inter-rater reliability formula (agreements divided by total number of agreements plus disagreements multiplied by 100) was used to determine scoring consistency. The rubric contains 57 items for potential agreement. The inter-rater reliability average on the first set of five document scores was 98.9% (see Table 6).

Table 6

Pilot Inter-Rater Reliability – Group 1

IEP Code	Agreements	Potential Agreements	Scoring Consistency
OK 214	57	57	100%
OK 271	57	57	100%
OK 317	55	57	96.5%
OK 342	57	57	100%
OK 343	56	57	98.2%
Total:			98.9%

Document Examination – Group 2

I examined the second set of five IEP documents using the IEP Postschool Goal/Vision Scoring Rubric. Individual document examination again ranged from 15-30 minutes. The same secondary researcher examined the second set of five documents. A comparison of scores using the inter-rater reliability formula (agreements divided by total number of agreements plus disagreements multiplied by 100) was used to determine scoring consistency. Inter-rater reliability score on the second set of five documents was 98.6% (see Table 7).

Table 7

Pilot Inter-Rater Reliability – Group 2

IEP Code	Agreements	Potential Agreements	Scoring Consistency
OK 300	57	57	100%
OK 301	55	57	96.5%
OK 302	56	57	98.2%

OK 304	57	57	100%
OK 322	56	57	98.2%
Total:			98.6%

The inter-rater reliability average of both pilot groups (N = 10) was 98.8. Based on this high degree of agreement and positive feedback from the secondary researcher regarding the rubric and its feasibility, no changes were deemed necessary to the rubric before entering data collection procedures for the primary study.

Primary Study

Sample

Document Availability

During Year 2 of the OU-ZC IEP research project, 130 IEP meetings were observed across 17 middle and high school special education teachers from five public school districts. After the pilot study was completed, 120 IEP documents were potentially available for examination. I was able to evaluate 84 of these documents. The remaining 36 IEP documents were not accessible for examination due to the following reasons: (a) parent(s) not giving permission to access the student's cumulative record, meaning the parent circled "no" on the parent permission form (see Appendix F) (n = 8); (b) students no longer being served in the district (n = 9); (c) students having graduated from high school (n = 5); (d) records were being used for re-evaluation purposes (n = 9); or (e) students were not 14, or going to turn 14 during the term of the IEP, and so a postschool goal/vision statement was not developed (n = 5). The total sample size for the primary study, after including pilot study data (n = 10), was 94 (10 + 84).

Document Access

To gain access to the IEP documents, I visited with the special education directors from the five participating school districts, and explained the purpose of my study. I provided a copy of the IEP Postschool Goal/Vision Scoring Rubric, and explained the purpose of the rubric. I also reminded the directors that permission to access these IEP documents had already been obtained through the OU-ZC IEP research project procedures (see Appendixes C and F).

From each district, I requested an opportunity to evaluate each participating teacher's IEP documents (from their Year 2 observed meetings) using the IEP Postschool Goal/Vision Scoring Rubric. I explained that this evaluation could occur in one of two ways. The first way was for each teacher to provide me with copies of the IEP documents from their Year 2 observed meetings, with all identifying information removed or blackened from the documents. I would leave the school site with the IEP copies and evaluate them at a later time. The second way was for each original IEP document to be evaluated using the IEP Postschool Goal/Vision Scoring Rubric at the teacher's school or administration site, without being provided copies of the documents.

All five districts allowed me to access the IEP documents that were developed during Year 2 of the OU-ZC IEP Research Project. Two districts provided me with copies of the students' IEPs with confidential information blackened out. One district gave me copies of half of the student's IEPs, and requested that I examine the other half in the teacher's classroom. Two districts gave me permission to examine students' IEPs in their administrative offices.

District Characteristics

Of the five participating districts, two were suburban and three were rural. Out of the 94 IEP documents examined, 64.9% (n = 61) were for students in suburban districts, and 35.1% (n = 33) were for students in rural districts. In the three rural districts, only high school IEP meetings were observed during Year 2 of the OU-ZC IEP research project, resulting in only high school IEP documents being available for examination. In the two suburban districts, both middle and high school IEP meetings were observed during Year 2 of the OU-ZC IEP research project, resulting in both middle and high school IEP documents being available for examination. Out of the 94 IEP documents examined, 28.7% (n = 27) were for high school students in suburban districts; 35.1% (n = 33) were for high school students in rural districts; and 36.2% (n = 34) were for middle school students in suburban districts. The economic status of the middle and high schools in each participating district was determined through the percentage of students receiving free or reduced priced lunches. See Table 8 for these district characteristics in association with the number of IEP documents that were evaluated for each district and school.

Table 8

District Characteristics and Number of IEP Documents Examined

District and Schools	Type/Locale	Percentage of Free or Reduced Lunches	Number of IEPs Examined	Percentage of Total IEP Sample Examined
District 1	Suburban		(55)	(58.5)
HS #1		21.5	5	5.3
HS #2		26.6	19	20.2
MS #1		46.0	22	23.4

MS #2		22.1	9	9.6
District 2	Suburban		(6)	(6.4)
HS		12.3	3	3.2
MS		30.8	3	3.2
District 3	Rural		(12)	(12.8)
HS		25.0	12	
District 4	Rural		(11)	(11.7)
HS		36.2	11	
District 5	Rural		(10)	(10.6)
HS		9.0	10	

Note. Numbers enclosed in parentheses represent district totals.

Teacher Characteristics

The majority of the teachers completing the IEP documents were female high school teachers that taught a combination of lab/resource and core subject classes to students with learning disabilities and mild mental retardation. See Table 9 for demographic characteristics of each participating teacher, including gender, grade level and types of classes taught, types of disabilities served, the number of IEP meetings each teacher had observed, and the number of IEP documents that were examined.

Table 9

Participating Teacher Demographics and Number of Observed and Evaluated IEPs

Teacher	Male	Female	MS	HS	Lab Only	Lab and Core Subject	LD	MR	ASD	OHI	# of IEP Meetings Observed	# of IEP Documents Evaluated
#1		X		X		X	X				8	6
#2		X		X		X	X			X	9	5
#3		X		X		X		X		X	3	3
#4		X	X			X	X		X		7	3
#5		X	X			X	X	X		X	7	5
#6		X	X		X		X				9	4
#7		X	X			X	X				22	18
#8		X	X			X		X	X	X	7	4
#9		X		X		X	X	X			6	5
#10		X		X		X	X	X			6	6
#11		X		X		X	X	X			11	9
#12		X		X		X	X	X			6	0
#13		X		X		X	X	X			2	2
#14		X		X	X		X				2	2
#15		X		X		X	X	X			13	10
#16	X			X		X	X	X		X	7	7
#17		X		X		X	X	X		X	5	5
Total	1	16	5	12	2	15	15	11	2	6	130	94

Note: LD = Learning Disability; MR = Mental Retardation; ASD = Autism Spectrum Disorder; OHI = Other Health Impaired.

Student Characteristics

From the 94 IEP documents examined, 46.8% (n = 44) were for students in the control group, and 53.2% (n = 50) were for students in the *Self-Directed IEP* intervention group. The majority of the students represented in the IEPs for both the control and intervention groups were male high school students with learning disabilities. See Table

10 for the student demographic characteristics represented in the IEP documents across the control and intervention groups

Table 10

Student Characteristics by Research Condition

Group	MS	HS	Male	Female	LD	MR	ASD	OHI
Control	11	33	29	15	36	4	1	3
Intervention	23	27	32	18	41	4	2	3
Total	34	60	61	33	77	8	3	6

Note: LD = Learning Disability; MR = Mental Retardation; ASD = Autism Spectrum Disorder; OHI = Other Health Impaired.

Data Collection Procedures

IEP Postschool Goal/Vision Scoring Rubric

The rubric facilitated the collection of all data necessary to answer the primary study's research questions. It was designed so that data could be recorded on one two-sided form. The form was also designed to maintain confidentiality of information. Using this form, individual IEP document examination time ranged from 15-30 minutes.

Inter-Rater Reliability

The same researcher that I trained on the use of the IEP Postschool Goal/Vision Scoring Rubric for the pilot study also analyzed 17 IEP documents used in the primary study. The rubric contains 57 items for potential agreement. A comparison of scores using the inter-rater reliability formula (agreements divided by total number of agreements plus disagreements multiplied by 100) was used to determine scoring consistency. After including pilot study inter-rater reliability data, 28.7 percent (n = 27) of the total IEP documents used in the primary study received dual scoring (10 pilot + 17

primary). The inter-rater reliability average for the 27 documents examined was 98.0%. This average was determined from the following scores: 3 documents received a score of 94.7% (signifying 3 disagreements); 8 documents received a score of 96.5% (signifying 2 disagreements); 5 documents received a score of 98.2% (signifying 1 disagreement); and 11 documents received a score of 100% (signifying no disagreements).

Analysis Procedures

Overview

The *Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 11.0* data analysis program was used for this study. Initial analysis procedures included descriptive computations of frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations. Inferential analysis included Independent-Samples t tests and Chi-Square procedures. Case study information from the specific IEP vision examples was used to qualify findings, provide triangulation, and increase validation of findings (Creswell, 1998).

Dependent Measures Correspondence

The IEP Postschool Goal/Vision Scoring Rubric (see Appendix D) contains the dependent measures that were used to answer each research question in the primary study. The rubric was specifically designed to record data that corresponds with the study's research questions. See Table 11 for the correspondence between the scoring rubric, the study's research questions, and the analysis procedure for each correspondence.

Table 11

Dependent Measures Correspondence

Research Questions	Dependent Measures and Data Sources	Analysis Procedures
1. Do existing IEP documents from *control and intervention* IEP meetings observed in Year 2 of the SD-IEP research project address the student's postschool goal/vision for the future, including living, learning, working, and community involvement, at the required postschool vision/preferences and interests section on the transition services plan page of the IEP?	Rubric Question 1 Rubric Items: 1a, 6a, 7a, 8a, 9a	Descriptive: computations of frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations Case study description: Example vision statements Inferential: Chi Square and Independent-Samples t Test
2. In existing IEP documents from *control and intervention* IEP meetings observed in Year 2 of the SD-IEP research project, was the student's postschool goal/vision statement on the transition services plan page typewritten in its entirety, without handwritten edits?	Rubric Question 2	Descriptive: computations of frequencies and percentages Inferential: Chi Square
3. Do existing IEP documents from *control and intervention* IEP meetings observed in Year 2 of the SD-IEP research project that had typewritten postschool goal/vision statements on the transition services plan page also include handwritten revisions to the postschool goal/vision statement?	Rubric Question 2	Descriptive: computations of frequencies and percentages Inferential: Chi Square
4. In existing IEP documents from *control and intervention* IEP meetings observed in Year 2 of the SD-IEP research project, was the student's postschool goal/vision statement on the transition services plan page handwritten in its entirety?	Rubric Question 2	Descriptive: computations of frequencies and percentages Inferential: Chi Square

5. In existing IEP documents from *control and intervention* IEP meetings observed in Year 2 of the SD-IEP research project, did the postschool goal/vision statement reflect uncertainty regarding the student's vision?	Rubric Question 3 Rubric Item 1a	Descriptive: computations of frequencies and percentages Case study description: Example vision statements Inferential: Chi Square
6. In existing IEP documents from *control and intervention* IEP meetings observed in Year 2 of the SD-IEP research project, did the postschool goal/vision statement contain a futures-oriented statement?	Rubric Question 4 Rubric Item 1a	Descriptive: computations of frequencies and percentages Case study description: Example vision statements Inferential: Chi Square
7. In existing IEP documents from *control and intervention* IEP meetings observed in Year 2 of the SD-IEP research project, do the classes and activities in the course of study, and activities in the coordinated activities section support the student's postschool goal/vision statement?	Rubric Question 5 Rubric Items: 5a, 5b	Descriptive: computations of frequencies and percentages Case study description: Example supportive course of study and coordinated activities components Inferential: Chi Square
8. Do existing IEP documents from *control and intervention* IEP meetings observed in Year 2 of the SD-IEP research project address the	Rubric Items: 6b, 7b, 8b, 9b	Descriptive: computations of frequencies,

student's postschool goal/vision for the future, including living, learning, working, and community involvement, in the coordinated activities section of the plan for needed transition services page of the IEP?		percentages, means, standard deviations Inferential: Independent-Samples t Test
9. Do existing IEP documents from *control and intervention* IEP meetings observed in Year 2 of the SD-IEP research project address the student's postschool goal/vision for the future, including living, learning, working, and community involvement, in the present levels of educational performance section of the IEP?	Rubric Items: 6c, 7c, 8c, 9c	Descriptive: computations of frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations Inferential: Independent-Samples t test
10. Do existing IEP documents from *control and intervention* IEP meetings observed in Year 2 of the SD-IEP research project address the student's postschool goal/vision for the future, including living, learning, working, and community involvement, in the strengths and educational needs sections of the IEP?	Rubric Items: 6d, 7d, 8d, 9d 6e, 7e, 8e, 9e	Descriptive: computations of frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations Inferential: Independent-Samples t Test
11. Do existing IEP documents from *control and intervention* IEP meetings observed in Year 2 of the SD-IEP research project address the student's postschool goal/vision for the future, including living, learning, working, and community involvement in the annual goals and benchmarks or short term objectives section of the IEP?	Rubric Items: 6f, 7f, 8f, 9f	Descriptive: computations of frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations Inferential: Independent Samples t Test
12. Do existing IEP documents from *control and intervention* IEP meetings observed in Year 2 of the SD-IEP research project address the four components of the student's postschool goal/vision for the future (living, learning, working, community involvement) across the postschool vision/preferences and interests, coordinated transition activities, present levels of educational performance, strengths and	Rubric Items: 6a, 6b, 6c, 6d, 6e, 6f 7a, 7b, 7c, 7d, 7e, 7f 8a, 8b, 8c, 8d, 8e, 8f 9a, 9b, 9c, 9d, 9e, 9f	Descriptive: computations of frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations Inferential: Independent-Samples t Tests

educational needs, and goals, benchmarks, and short-term objectives of the IEP?		
13. In existing IEP documents from *control and intervention* IEP meetings observed in Year 2 of the SD-IEP research project, are <u>student first-person references</u> made in addressing the postschool vision/preferences and interests, coordinated transition activities, present levels of educational performance, strengths and educational needs, or goals, benchmarks, and short-term objectives of the IEP?	Rubric Items: 10a, 11a, 12a, 13a 10b, 11b, 12b, 13b 10c, 11c, 12c, 13c 10d, 11d, 12d, 13d 10e, 11e, 12e, 13e 10f, 11f, 12f, 13f	Descriptive: computations of frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations

CHAPTER 4

Results

The purpose of this research was to determine the impact of *Self-Directed IEP* instruction on secondary IEP transition documents by evaluating the presence and development of four transition services postschool goal/vision components: (1) living, (2) learning, (3) working, and (4) community involvement in existing secondary IEP documents that were produced during Year 2 of the OU-ZC IEP federally sponsored three-year research project. I designed thirteen research questions to address this purpose. Of these questions, statistically significant findings with moderate power (medium effect size) were determined for questions one and 12 only. The following sections detail the findings of all questions, which include a variety of descriptive and case study data.

Research Question One

Do existing IEP documents from *control and intervention* IEP meetings observed in Year 2 of the SD-IEP research project address the student's postschool goal/vision for the future, including living, learning, working, and community involvement, at the required postschool vision/preferences and interests section on the transition services plan page of the IEP?

Overview

The answer to the first research question predicated the answers to all other questions in this study. Because of its pivotal nature, I will present the answer to research question one in six steps. Each step and its accompanying procedures are described in the following subsections: vision presence in IEP, scoring procedure for vision components, continuum scoring, case study descriptions, range of scores, and vision total scores.

Vision Presence

Of the 94 IEP documents examined, 98% (n = 92) contained postschool goal/vision statements and 2% (n = 2) did not: 1 from the control group, and 1 from the intervention group (see Table 12). This required the total sample (N = 94) to be reduced by 2 (n = 92), in order to answer the remaining part of the first research question, which asked if the four vision components were addressed in the vision statement. I also analyzed questions 2 through 7 with the reduced sample, since these questions specifically referred to the vision statement itself. Questions 8 – 12 were analyzed with the total sample (N = 94), since these questions referred to the vision components of living, learning, working, and community involvement as reflected in other parts of the IEP.

Table 12

Vision Presence in IEP by Condition

	Control		Intervention	
Vision Presence	*f*	%	*f*	%
Vision addressed	43	46.7	49	53.3
Vision not addressed	1	50.0	1	50.0

Note. Sample reduction of 2 (N = 92) was used to answer research questions 1 – 7.

A Chi-square analysis using a two-way contingency table determined whether the intervention had an effect on vision presence in the IEP documents. The two variables were control and intervention, with two levels of vision presence (vision addressed, vision not addressed). Condition and vision presence were not found to be significantly related (χ^2 (1, N = 94) = .008, p = .927.

Presence of Four Vision Components in Vision Statement

Scoring procedure. In addition to determining if the vision statement existed in control and intervention groups, question one asked if the four vision components were addressed within the vision statement. The vision components matrix of IEP Postschool Goal/Vision Scoring Rubric (see Appendix D) allowed for a continuum scoring of 0 - 2 to reflect if each vision component was: not addressed (score of 0), addressed with a single phrase or statement (score of 1), or addressed with more than one phrase or statement (score of 2). The scoring range for vision components reflected in the vision statement was 0 – 8, with a total score of 8 indicating that all four vision components were addressed with more than one statement in the vision. See Table 13 for an example of this scoring procedure using a sample postschool goal/vision statement: *Ken would like to attend college in Oklahoma. He'd like to be a police officer. In high school, he'd like to go to technical school for small engines. He would like to live in Oklahoma. He volunteers on Sundays with church. He would like to continue in some way.*

Table 13

Example Postschool Goal/Vision Statement Scoring Procedure

Vision Component	Applicable Vision Portion	Score
Living (housing: independent, semi-independent, supported, renting a home or apartment, living in group home, etc.)	He would like to live in Oklahoma.	1
Learning (post-secondary learning: university, college, community college, local community classes, etc.)	Ken would like to attend college in Oklahoma. In high school, he'd like to go to technical school for small engines.	2
Working (employment: competitive part-time or full-time jobs, supported	He'd like to be a police officer.	1

employment, workshop participation, etc.)		
Community Involvement (activities with clubs, groups, organizations, volunteer services, friends, etc.)	He volunteers on Sundays with church. He would like to continue in some way.	2
	Total Score:	6

Continuum scoring. Using this scoring procedure, values were assigned and descriptive statistics were computed for each vision component reflected in the vision statements for the control and intervention groups. Out of the 43 vision statements in the control group, 72.1% (n = 31) included the component of learning, which was the most frequently addressed component for this group. Of these 31 learning components, all were addressed with a single phrase or statement. Out of the 49 vision statements in the intervention group, 81.6% (n = 40) included the component of working, which was the most frequently addressed component for the intervention group. Of these 40 working components, 34 were represented with a single phrase or statement, and 6 were addressed with more than one phrase or statement. See Table 14 for a frequency summary of the continuum scoring for each component as represented in the vision statements by condition.

Table 14

Continuum Scoring for Components Addressed in Vision Statement by Condition

	Control		Intervention	
Vision Component	*f*	%	*f*	%
Living				
Not addressed	35	81.4	25	51.0
Addressed	8	18.6	24	49.0
One statement	7	16.3	22	44.9
Two or more statements	1	2.3	2	4.1
Learning				
Not addressed	12	27.9	20	40.8
Addressed	31	72.1	29	59.2
One statement	31	72.1	24	49.0
Two or more statements	0	0	5	10.2
Working				
Not addressed	21	48.8	9	18.4
Addressed	22	51.2	40	81.6
One statement	20	46.5	34	69.4
Two or more statements	2	4.7	6	12.2
Community Involvement				
Not addressed	36	83.7	27	55.1
Addressed	7	16.3	22	44.9
One statement	4	9.3	13	26.5
Two or more statements	3	7.0	9	18.4

Note. Total N = 92. Control group n = 43. Intervention group n = 49.

Case study descriptions. The scoring rubric also required each evaluated vision statement to be copied exactly as it appeared in the IEP. This case study data served as triangulation for the descriptive findings of each vision statement. Of the 92 vision statements examined, none received the highest possible score of 8. One vision statement received a score of 7, and occurred in the intervention group. Three other vision statements received the next highest score of 6, and were also in the intervention group. See Table 15 for exact copies of some of the highest and lowest scoring vision statements as they appeared in the IEPs.

Table 15

Selected Postschool Goal/Vision Statements

Group	Score	Vision Statement
Intervention	7	Marie would like to receive training about air traffic control. She would like to get married and have two children. She plans to own her own home and vote. Marie wants to continue to rodeo and plans to run flags when she turns 18. Marie is currently considering nursing and is enrolling in health careers at the Vo-tech.
Intervention	6	Ken would like to attend college in Oklahoma. He'd like to be a police officer. In high school, he'd like to go to technical school for small engines. He would like to live in Oklahoma. He volunteers on Sundays with church. He would like to continue in some way.
Intervention	6	Carey would like to attend college in California to study architecture. He would then like to live and work in San Diego or Orange County. In high school, he'd like to play tennis and rugby. He is playing rugby now. In high school he'd also like to get a job. He also attends church.
Intervention	6	Terry sees himself owning a home. He will be married and have children. Terry would like to do body work on cars with his grandpa. Terry is planning to vote. In his free time Terry will go to the lake to fish and camp out.
Intervention	5	Karie wants to attend OSU and study nursing. She wants to return to Norman to live and work. In high school she'd like to play softball and baseball. She is in a church group. As an adult she'd like to go to shelters and hand out food.

Intervention	1	Work on cars
Control	1	Katie plans to attend college after graduation
Control	0	Journalism
Control	0	Computers
Control	0	Undecided, but would like to leave options open

Range of scores. Out of all 92 vision statements examined, 41.3% (n = 38) received a score of 1, which was the largest scoring group. Out of the 43 control group vision statements examined, 51.2% (n = 22) received a score of 1. Out of the 49 intervention group vision statements, 32.7% (n = 16) received a score of 1. See Table 16 for the range of vision statement scores across the control and intervention groups.

Table 16

Range of Vision Scores by Condition

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Total
Control	4 (9.3)	22 (51.2)	7 (16.3)	5 (11.6)	2 (4.7)	3 (6.9)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	43 (100)
Intervention	1 (2.0)	16 (32.7)	8 (16.3)	6 (12.2)	8 (16.3)	6 (12.2)	3 (6.1)	1 (2.0)	49 (100)
Total	5 (5.4)	38 (41.3)	15 (16.3)	11 (12.0)	10 (10.9)	9 (9.8)	3 (3.3)	1 (1.0)	92 (100)

Note. Score continuum = 0 – 7. Numbers enclosed in parenthesis indicate percentages.

Teacher representation. The full range of vision scores is representative across 16 of the 17 participating teachers. The lower range of scores from 0 – 3, is representative across 12 teachers. The higher range of scores from 4 – 7, is representative across four teachers. The 10 vision statements that received a score of 4 were written by four

different teachers. The nine vision statements that received a score of 5, and the three vision statements that received a score of 6, were written by two of these four teachers.

Vision Total Scores

An independent-samples t test was used to evaluate the differences between the control and intervention groups on their VISION TOTAL mean scores. The VISION TOTAL scores were determined by adding the 4 vision components scores together for each case. For VISION TOTAL, the test was significant, $t(87.77) = 3.29$, $p = .001$, Cohen's d = .69. IEP documents in the intervention group (M = 2.80, SD = 1.79) contained vision statements that were more inclusive of the four vision components than those in the control group (M = 1.72, SD = 1.13). The effect size indicates that the *Self-Directed IEP* had a moderate impact on complexity of the vision statements (e.g., Cohen, 1988). Eta squared indicated that a moderate amount of variance in VISION TOTAL (11%) was accounted for by the intervention.

An evaluation of the vision component means within the vision totals revealed the largest mean differences for community involvement (control mean = .23, intervention mean = .63). The vision component of working contained the next largest mean difference (control mean = .56, intervention mean = .94), followed by the vision component of living (control mean = .21, intervention mean = .53). See Table 17 for these mean scores. Additional analyses involving these vision components occur in the answer for research question 12.

Table 17

Vision Component Means Within The Vision Totals

	Vision Component			
Condition	Living	Learning	Working	Community Involvement
Control	.21	.72	.56	.23
Intervention	.53	.69	.94	.63
Total	.38	.71	.76	.45

Research Questions Two – Four

In existing IEP documents from *control and intervention* IEP meetings observed in Year 2 of the SD-IEP research project, was the student's postschool goal/vision statement on the transition services plan page typewritten in its entirety, without handwritten edits?

Do existing IEP documents from *control and intervention* IEP meetings observed in Year 2 of the SD-IEP research project that had typewritten postschool goal/vision statements on the transition services plan page also include handwritten revisions to the postschool goal/vision statement?

In existing IEP documents from *control and intervention* IEP meetings observed in Year 2 of the SD-IEP research project, was the student's postschool goal/vision statement on the transition services plan page handwritten in its entirety?

Writing Style of Vision Statement

Over half of the IEP postschool goal/vision statements were handwritten. When all 92 vision statements were examined as a whole, 62% (n = 57) were handwritten,

33.7% (n = 31) were typed, and 4.3% (n = 4) were both typed and handwritten. Of the 43 control group vision statements examined, 58.1% (n = 25) were handwritten. Of the 49 intervention group vision statements examined, 65.3% (n = 32) were handwritten (see Table 18).

Table 18

Writing Style of Vision Statement by Condition

	Control		Intervention	
Vision Writing Style	*f*	%	*f*	%
Typed	16	37.2	15	30.6
Handwritten	25	58.1	32	65.3
Typed and Handwritten	2	4.7	2	4.1

Note. Total N = 92. Control group n = 43. Intervention group n = 49.

A Chi-square analysis using a two-way contingency table determined whether the intervention had an effect on the vision writing style in the IEP documents. The two variables were control and intervention, with three levels of vision writing style (typed, handwritten, typed and handwritten). Condition and vision writing style were not found to be significantly related (χ^2 (2, N = 92) = .503, p = .778.

Research Question Five

In existing IEP documents from *control and intervention IEP* meetings observed in Year 2 of the SD-IEP research project, did the postschool goal/vision statement reflect uncertainty regarding the student's vision?

Vision Reflection of Uncertainty

Almost 20% of the IEP postschool goal/vision statements reflected uncertainty. When all 92 vision statements were examined as a whole, 19.6% (n = 18) reflected uncertainty; the remaining 80.4% (n = 74) did not. Of the 43 control group vision statements examined, 16.3% (n = 7) reflected uncertainty. Of the 49 intervention group vision statements examined, 22.4% (n = 11) reflected uncertainty (see Table 19).

Table 19

Vision Statement Reflection of Uncertainty by Condition

	Control		Intervention	
Presence of Uncertainty	*f*	%	*f*	%
Vision does not reflect uncertainty	36	83.7	38	77.6
Vision does reflect uncertainty	7	16.3	11	22.4

Note. Total N = 92. Control group n = 43. Intervention group n = 49.

A Chi-square analysis using a two-way contingency table determined whether the intervention had an effect on vision reflection of uncertainty in the IEP documents. The two variables were control and intervention, with two levels of uncertainty (reflects uncertainty, does not reflect uncertainty). Condition and presence of uncertainty were not found to be significantly related (χ^2 (1, N = 92) = .554, p = .457.

Case Study Descriptions

For triangulation purposes, four example vision statements are included to qualify the findings for research question five. Two statements reflect uncertainty; two do not. See Table 20 for exact copies of these statements as they appeared in the IEPs.

Table 20

Example Vision Statements Regarding Uncertainty

Condition	Variable	Vision Statement
Control	Uncertain	He is undecided at this time.
Intervention	Uncertain	No idea – likes lawyer, teacher, psychiatrist.
Control	Not uncertain	Daran has expressed interest in being either a police dispatcher or a teacher.
Intervention	Not uncertain	Mark is considering going to MNTC in the welding program. He is also interested in the art field.

Research Question Six

In existing IEP documents from *control and intervention* IEP meetings observed in Year 2 of the SD-IEP research project, did the postschool goal/vision statement contain a futures-oriented statement?

Vision Reflection of Future-Orientation

Almost 90% of the IEP postschool goal/vision statements were futures-oriented. When all 92 vision statements were examined as a whole, 87% (n = 80) were futures-oriented; 13% (n = 12) were not. Of the 43 control group vision statements examined, 83.7% (n = 36) were futures-oriented. Of the 49 intervention group vision statements examined, 89.9% (n = 44) were futures oriented (see Table 21).

Table 21

Vision Statement Reflection of Future-Orientation by Condition

	Control		Intervention	
Presence of Future-Orientation	*f*	%	*f*	%
Vision is not futures-oriented	7	16.3	5	10.2
Vision is futures-oriented	36	83.7	44	89.8

Note. Total N = 92. Control group n = 43. Intervention group n = 49.

A Chi-square analysis using a two-way contingency table determined whether the intervention had an effect on vision reflection of future-orientation in the IEP documents. The two variables were control and intervention, with two levels of future-orientation (is futures-oriented, is not-futures-oriented). Condition and presence of future-orientation were not found to be significantly related (χ^2 (1, N = 92) = .745, p = .388.

Case Study Descriptions

For triangulation purposes, four example vision statements are included to qualify the findings for research question six. Two statements reflect future-orientation; two do not. See Table 22 for exact copies of these statements as they appeared in the IEPs.

Table 22

Example Vision Statements Regarding Future-Orientation

Condition	Variable	Vision Statement
Control	Futures-oriented	James plans to attend college and become a physical therapist.
Intervention	Futures-oriented	Kent wants to go to college.
Control	Not futures-oriented	Paul is attending MNTC in the Auto Services Technology program.
Intervention	Not futures-oriented	Computer Sciences / Drafting

Uncertain but Futures-Oriented

The findings represented in Table 19 (vision statement reflection of uncertainty) and Table 21 (vision statement reflection of future-orientation), were not mutually exclusive. Out of the 92 vision statements examined, 6.5% (n = 6) reflected uncertainty and were futures-oriented as well. These 6 statements occurred in the intervention group. Three examples of these vision statements as they appeared in the IEPs follows:

Example 1: *Cathy is in a youth group and will continue in high school. After high school, she wants to go to college in Missouri (SMS). She is unsure of her studies. She has not decided on a career, but she does want to live in Missouri.*

Example 2: *Kristy would like to attend college in Oklahoma to study dance. She'd like to play volleyball in high school. She is involved in dance now at modern dance arts. She does not know where she wants to live and work.*

Example 3: *Jennifer does want to go to college, but isn't sure what she wants to do, she enjoys art and music.*

Research Question Seven

In existing IEP documents from *control and intervention* IEP meetings observed in Year 2 of the SD-IEP research project, do the classes and activities in the course of study, and activities in the coordinated activities section support the student's postschool goal/vision statement?

Overview

This question addresses two sections of the IEP: course of study and coordinated activities (see Appendix B). Therefore, the findings for this question are divided into separate subsections. This division accommodates the design of both the scoring rubric and the Oklahoma IEP form.

Vision Support via Course of Study

Almost 90% of the IEP postschool goal/vision statements were supported by the course of study. When all 92 vision statements were examined as a whole, 87.0% (n = 80) contained support via the course of study; 13% (n = 12) did not. Of the 43 control group vision statements examined, 88.4% (n = 38) were supported through the course of study. Of the 49 intervention group vision statements examined, 85.7 (n = 42) contained course of study support (see Table 23).

Table 23

Vision Statement Support in Course of Study by Condition

	Control		Intervention	
Presence of Support	*f*	%	*f*	%
Course of study supports vision	38	88.4	42	85.7
Course of study does not support vision	5	11.6	7	14.3

A Chi-square analysis using a two-way contingency table determined whether the intervention had an effect on vision support via course of study in the IEP documents. The two variables were control and intervention, with two levels of course of study support (supports vision, does not support vision). Condition and course of study vision support were not found to be significantly related (χ^2 (1, N = 92) = .143, p = .706.

Out of the 80 vision-supporting courses of study examined, 65% (n = 52) supported the vision by listing core academic course requirements and electives for graduation. The remaining 35% (n = 28) supported the vision in the same manner, but also listing vocational-technical centers or vocational training. None of the supportive courses of study included non-academic or extra-curricular activities.

Vision Support via Coordinated Activities

Just over 70% of the IEP postschool goal/vision statements were supported by the coordinated activities. When all 92 vision statements were examined as a whole, 71.7% (n = 66) contained support via the coordinated activities; 28.3% (n = 26) did not. Of the 43 control group vision statements examined, 69.9% (n = 30) contained coordinated activities support. Of the 49 intervention group statements examined, 73.5 (n = 36) were supported through the coordinated activities (see Table 24).

Table 24

Vision Statement Support in Coordinated Activities by Condition

	Control		Intervention	
Presence of Support	*f*	%	*f*	%
Coordinated activities support vision	30	69.8	36	73.5
Coordinated activities do not support vision	13	30.2	13	26.5

Note. Total N = 92. Control group n = 43. Intervention group n = 49.

A Chi-square analysis using a two-way contingency table determined whether the intervention had an effect on vision support via coordinated activities in the IEP documents. The two variables were control and intervention, with two levels of coordinated activities support (supports vision, does not support vision). Condition and coordinated activities vision support were not found to be significantly related (χ^2 (1, N = 92) = .155, p = .694.

Case Study Descriptions

Coordinated activities vision support typically included references to completing high school education or obtaining vocational training. Out of the 66 vision-supporting coordinated activities examined, 75.8% (n = 50) included a reference to taking core curriculum classes and completing credits for high school graduation. See Table 25 for copies of some of the coordinated activities components as they appeared in the IEPs.

Table 25

Example Coordinated Activities Components

Condition	Example coordinated activities Components
Control	Will take core curriculum and electives in general education setting with needed support.
Control	Take courses to receive credits for graduation.
Control	Vocational training in basic life skills.
Intervention	Will pass classes to earn enough credits for graduation.
Intervention	Student will take Oklahoma Career Search
Intervention	Will increase self-determination skills by evaluating the progress of his goals.

Research Question Eight

Do existing IEP documents from *control and intervention* IEP meetings observed in Year 2 of the SD-IEP research project address the student's postschool goal/vision for the future, including living, learning, working, and community involvement, in the coordinated activities section of the plan for needed transition services page of the IEP?

Inclusion of Vision Components in Coordinated Transition Activities

Descriptive findings. The vision components matrix of the scoring rubric (see Appendix D) allowed for a continuum scoring of 0 - 2 to reflect if each vision component was: not addressed (score of 0), addressed with a single phrase or statement (score of 1), or addressed with more than one phrase or statement (score of 2). Using this scoring procedure, values were assigned and descriptive statistics were computed for each vision component reflected in the coordinated transition activities sections of the IEP documents. When all 94 coordinated transition activities sections were examined as a

whole, 65.8 % (n = 70) addressed learning, which was the most frequently included vision component.

Out of the 44 coordinated transition activities sections in the control group, 77.3% (n = 34) included learning, which was the most frequently addressed component for this group. Of these 34 learning components, 52.3% (n = 23) were addressed with a single phrase or statement; 25.0% (n = 11) were addressed with two or more phrases or statements. Out of the 50 coordinated transition activities sections in the intervention group, 72.0% (n = 36) included learning, which was the most frequently addressed component for the intervention group. Of these 36 learning components, 58.0% (n = 29) were represented with a single phrase or statement; 14.0% (n = 7) were addressed with two or more phrases or statements. See Table 26 for a frequency summary of the continuum scoring for each component as represented in the coordinated transition activities sections by condition.

Table 26

Continuum Scoring for Vision Components Addressed in Coordinated Transition Activities by Condition

	Control		Intervention	
Vision Component	*f*	%	*f*	%
Living				
Not addressed	42	95.5	46	92.0
Addressed	2	4.5	4	8.0
One statement	1	2.3	4	8.0
Two or more statements	1	2.3	0	0.0

	Control		Intervention	
Vision Component	*f*	%	*f*	%
Learning				
Not addressed	10	22.7	14	28.0
Addressed	34	77.3	36	72.0
One statement	23	52.3	29	58.0
Two or more statements	11	25.0	7	14.0
Working				
Not addressed	43	97.7	44	88.0
Addressed	1	2.3	6	12.0
One statement	0	0.0	3	6.0
Two or more statements	1	2.3	3	6.0
Community Involvement				
Not addressed	34	77.3	44	88.0
Addressed	10	22.7	6	12.0
One statement	9	20.5	4	8.0
Two or more statements	1	2.3	2	4.0

Note. Total N = 94. Control group n = 44. Intervention group n = 50.

Inferential findings. An independent-samples t test was used to evaluate the differences between the control and intervention groups on their COORDINATED ACTIVITIES TOTAL mean scores. The COORDINATED ACTIVITIES TOTAL scores were determined by adding the 4 vision components scores for coordinated activities together for each case. For COORDINATED ACTIVITIES TOTAL, the test was not

significant, $t(92) = .422$, $p = .674$. There were no differences between the control and intervention groups that could be accounted for by the intervention.

Research Question Nine

Do existing IEP documents from *control and intervention* IEP meetings observed in Year 2 of the SD-IEP research project address the student's postschool goal/vision for the future, including living, learning, working, and community involvement, in the present levels of educational performance section of the IEP?

Inclusion of Vision Components in Present Levels of Educational Performance

Descriptive findings. Using the same continuum scoring procedure as in the previous question, values were assigned and descriptive statistics were computed for each vision component reflected in the present levels of educational performance sections of the IEP documents. When all 94 present levels of educational performance sections were examined as a whole, 13.2% (n = 14) included working, which was the most frequently addressed vision component. Out of the 44 present levels of educational performance sections in the control group, 15.9% (n = 7) included working, which was the most frequently addressed component for this group. Of these 7 working components, all were addressed with a single phrase or statement. Out of the 50 present levels of educational performance sections in the intervention group, 14.0% (n = 7) included working, which was the most frequently addressed component for the intervention group. Of these 7 working components, 12.0% (n = 6) were represented with a single phrase or statement; 2.0% (n = 1) were addressed with two or more phrases or statements. See Table 27 for a frequency summary of the continuum scoring for each component as represented in the present levels of educational performance sections by condition.

Table 27

Continuum Scoring for Vision Components Addressed in Present Levels of Educational Performance by Condition

	Control		Intervention	
Vision Component	*f*	%	*f*	%
Living				
Not addressed	44	100.0	50	100.0
Addressed	0	0.0	0	0.0
One statement	0	0.0	0	0.0
Two or more statements	0	0.0	0	0.0
Learning				
Not addressed	41	93.2	48	96.0
Addressed	3	6.8	2	4.0
One statement	2	4.5	2	4.0
Two or more statements	1	2.3	0	0.0
Working				
Not addressed	37	84.1	43	86.0
Addressed	7	15.9	7	14.0
One statement	7	15.9	6	12.0
Two or more statements	0	0.0	1	2.0
Community Involvement				
Not addressed	43	97.7	49	98.0
Addressed	1	2.3	1	2.0
One statement	1	2.3	1	2.0
Two or more statements	0	0.0	0	0.0

Inferential findings. An independent-samples t test was used to evaluate the differences between the control and intervention groups on their PRESENT LEVELS OF EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE TOTAL mean scores. The PRESENT LEVELS OF EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE TOTAL scores were determined by adding the 4 vision components scores for present levels of educational performance together for each case. For PRESENT LEVELS OF EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE TOTAL, the test was not significant, $t(92) = .424$, $p = .673$. There were no differences between the control and intervention groups that could be accounted for by the intervention.

Research Question Ten

Do existing IEP documents from *control and intervention* IEP meetings observed in Year 2 of the SD-IEP research project address the student's postschool goal/vision for the future, including living, learning, working, and community involvement, in the strengths and educational needs sections of the IEP?

Overview

This question addresses two sections of the IEP (see Appendix B). Therefore, the findings for this question are divided into separate subsections. This division accommodates the design of both the scoring rubric and the Oklahoma IEP form.

Inclusion of Vision Components in Strengths

Using the same continuum scoring procedure as in the previous question, values were assigned and descriptive statistics were computed for each vision component reflected in the strengths sections of the IEP documents. When all 94 strengths sections were examined as a whole, none addressed any of the four vision components (see Table 28).

Table 28

Continuum Scoring for Vision Components Addressed in Strengths by Condition

	Control		Intervention	
Vision Component	*f*	%	*f*	%
Living				
Not addressed	44	100.0	50	100.0
Addressed	0	0.0	0	0.0
One statement	0	0.0	0	0.0
Two or more statements	0	0.0	0	0.0
Learning				
Not addressed	44	100.0	50	100.0
Addressed	0	0.0	0	0.0
One statement	0	0.0	0	0.0
Two or more statements	0	0.0	0	0.0
Working				
Not addressed	44	100.0	50	100.0
Addressed	0	0.0	0	0.0
One statement	0	0.0	0	0.0
Two or more statements	0	0.0	0	0.0
Community Involvement				
Not addressed	44	100.0	50	100.0
Addressed	0	0.0	0	0.0
One statement	0	0.0	0	0.0
Two or more statements	0	0.0	0	0.0

Note. Total N = 94. Control group n = 44. Intervention group n = 50.

Inclusion of Vision Components in Educational Needs

When all 94 educational needs sections were examined as a whole, 1.9% (n = 2) included working, which was the only vision component addressed. Out of the 44 educational needs sections in the control group, 2.3% (n = 1) included working, which was the only vision component addressed for this group. This one working component was addressed with a single phrase or statement. Out of the 50 educational needs sections in the intervention group, 2.0% (n = 1) included working, which was the only component addressed for the intervention group. This one working component was addressed with a single statement (see Table 29).

Table 29

Continuum Scoring for Vision Components Addressed in Educational Needs by Condition

	Control		Intervention	
Vision Component	*f*	%	*f*	%
Living				
Not addressed	44	100.0	50	100.0
Addressed	0	0.0	0	0.0
One statement	0	0.0	0	0.0
Two or more statements	0	0.0	0	0.0
Learning				
Not addressed	44	100.0	50	100.0
Addressed	0	0.0	0	0.0
One statement	0	0.0	0	0.0
Two or more statements	0	0.0	0	0.0

	Control		Intervention	
Vision Component	*f*	%	*f*	%
Working				
Not addressed	43	97.7	49	98.0
Addressed	1	2.3	1	2.0
One statement	1	2.3	1	2.0
Two or more statements	0	0.0	0	0.0
Community Involvement				
Not addressed	44	100.0	50	100.0
Addressed	0	0.0	0	0.0
One statement	0	0.0	0	0.0
Two or more statements	0	0.0	0	0.0

Note. Total N = 94. Control group n = 44. Intervention group n = 50.

Research Question Eleven

Do existing IEP documents from *control and intervention* IEP meetings observed in Year 2 of the SD-IEP research project address the student's postschool goal/vision for the future, including living, learning, working, and community involvement in the annual goals and benchmarks or short term objectives section of the IEP?

Inclusion of Vision Components in Annual Goals, Benchmarks, or Short-Term Objectives

Descriptive findings. Using the same continuum scoring procedure as in the previous question, values were assigned and descriptive statistics were computed for each vision component reflected in the annual goals, benchmarks, or short-term objectives sections of the IEP documents. When all 94 annual goals, benchmarks, or short-term objectives sections were examined as a whole, 2.8% (n = 3) included working, which was

the most frequently addressed vision component. Out of the 44 annual goals, benchmarks, or short-term objectives sections in the control group, 2.3% (n = 1) included working, which was the most frequently addressed component for this group. This one working component was addressed with a single statement. Out of the 50 annual goals, benchmarks, or short-term objectives sections in the intervention group, 4.0% (n = 2) included working, which was the most frequently addressed component for the intervention group. Both of these working components were represented with a single statement. See Table 30 for a frequency summary of the continuum scoring for each component as represented in the annual goals, benchmarks, or short-term objectives sections by condition.

Table 30

Continuum Scoring for Vision Components Addressed in Annual Goals, Benchmarks, or Short-Term Objectives by Condition

	Control		Intervention	
Vision Component	*f*	%	*f*	%
Living				
Not addressed	44	100.0	50	100.0
Addressed	0	0.0	0	0.0
One statement	0	0.0	0	0.0
Two or more statements	0	0.0	0	0.0
Learning				
Not addressed	43	97.7	49	98.0
Addressed	1	2.3	1	2.0
One statement	1	2.3	1	2.0

	Control		Intervention	
Vision Component	*f*	%	*f*	%
Two or more statements	0	0.0	0	0.0
Working				
Not addressed	43	97.7	48	96.0
Addressed	1	2.3	2	4.0
One statement	1	2.3	2	4.0
Two or more statements	0	0.0	0	0.0
Community Involvement				
Not addressed	43	97.7	49	98.0
Addressed	1	2.3	1	2.0
One statement	1	2.3	1	2.0
Two or more statements	0	0.0	0	0.0

Note. Total N = 94. Control group n = 44. Intervention group n = 50.

Inferential findings. An independent-samples t test was used to evaluate the differences between the control and intervention groups on their GOALS, OBJECTIVES, and BENCHMARKS TOTAL mean scores. The GOALS, OBJECTIVES and BENCHMARKS TOTAL scores were determined by adding the 4 vision components scores for goals, objectives and benchmarks together for each case. For GOALS, OBJECTIVES, and BENCHMARKS TOTAL, the test was not significant, $t(92) = .169$, $p = .866$. There were no differences between the control and intervention groups that could be accounted for by the intervention.

Research Question Twelve

Do existing IEP documents from *control and intervention* IEP meetings observed in Year 2 of the SD-IEP research project address the four components of the student's postschool goal/vision for the future (living, learning, working, community involvement) across the postschool vision/preferences and interests, coordinated transition activities, present levels of educational performance, strengths and educational needs, and goals, benchmarks, and short-term objectives of the IEP?

Overview

The answer to this research question is fragmentally answered in research questions 1, 8, 9, 10, and 11, since these questions targeted vision component presence in specific IEP document locations. Therefore, a summary table reflecting the descriptive findings of these five questions is presented as a partial answer to question 12. However, since this question addressed vision component representation across the six IEP areas, findings from inferential statistical procedures are also included.

Reflection of Vision Components Across Six Key IEP Areas

Postschool goal/vision. For the IEP postschool goal/vision statement, living was addressed three times as often in the intervention vision statements (n = 24) as in the control vision statements (n = 8). Learning was included almost equally between control vision statements (n = 31) and intervention group vision statements (n = 29). Working was addressed almost twice as much in intervention vision statements (n = 40) as in control vision statements (n = 22). Community involvement was included three times as frequently in the intervention statements (n = 22) as in the control vision statements (n = 7).

Coordinated activities. In the coordinated activities section of the IEP, living was included twice as much in the intervention group IEPs (n = 4) as in the control group IEPs (n = 2). Learning was addressed almost equally between the control group IEPs (n = 34), and the intervention group IEPs (n = 36). Working was included six times as frequently in the intervention group IEPs (n = 6), as in the control group IEPs (n = 1). Community involvement was addressed more frequently in the control group IEPs (n = 10), as compared to the intervention group IEPs (n = 6).

Remaining IEP sections. In the present levels of educational performance section of the IEP, living was not addressed in either the control or intervention groups. Learning, working, and community involvement were addressed almost equally by both intervention and control groups. The remaining IEP sections of strengths, educational needs, and goals, objectives, and benchmarks either did not address the vision components at all, or on a very infrequent basis. See Table 31 for a frequency summary of the four vision components as addressed across six key IEP areas.

Table 31

Vision Components Addressed Across Six IEP Areas

	Control		Intervention	
IEP Area	*f*	%	*f*	%
Postschool Goal/Vision				
Living	8	18.6	24	49.0
Learning	31	72.1	29	59.2
Working	22	51.2	40	81.6
Community Involvement	7	16.3	22	44.9
Coordinated Activities				
Living	2	4.5	4	8.0
Learning	34	77.3	36	72.0
Working	1	2.3	6	12.0
Community Involvement	10	22.7	6	12.0
Present Levels of Educational Performance				
Living	0	0.0	0	0.0
Learning	3	6.8	2	4.0
Working	7	15.9	7	14.0
Community Involvement	1	2.3	1	2.0
Strengths				
Living	0	0.0	0	0.0
Learning	0	0.0	0	0.0
Working	0	0.0	0	0.0
Community Involvement	0	0.0	0	0.0

	Control		Intervention	
IEP Area	*f*	%	*f*	%
Educational Needs				
Living	0	0.0	0	0.0
Learning	0	0.0	0	0.0
Working	1	2.3	1	2.0
Community Involvement	0	0.0	0	0.0
Goals, Objectives, Benchmarks				
Living	0	0.0	0	0.0
Learning	1	2.3	1	2.0
Working	1	2.3	2	4.0
Community Involvement	1	2.3	1	2.0

Note. For IEP postschool goal/vison, total N = 92 (control group n = 43; intervention group n = 49). For remaining IEP sections, total N = 94 (control group n = 44; intervention group n = 50).

Inferential Findings

Four independent-samples t tests were used to evaluate the differences between the control and intervention group mean scores on LIVING TOTAL ACROSS 6 IEP areas, LEARNING TOTAL ACROSS 6 IEP areas, WORKING TOTAL ACROSS 6 IEP areas, and COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT TOTAL ACROSS 6 IEP areas. These scores were determined by adding the 4 vision components scores across the six IEP areas for each case. For LIVING TOTAL, the test was significant, $t(91.78) = 2.47$, $p = .015$, Cohen's d = .52. IEP documents in the intervention group (M = .60, SD = .70) addressed the vision component of living across all 6 IEP areas significantly more than the control group (M = .27, SD = .58). The effect size indicated that the *Self-Directed*

IEP had a moderate impact on the presence of the living component in the IEP. Eta squared indicated that 6% of the variance in LIVING TOTAL was accounted for by the intervention.

The independent samples t test for WORKING TOTAL was significant, $t(92) = 2.24$, $p = .027$, Cohen's d = .46. IEP documents in the intervention group (M = 1.32, SD = 1.13) addressed the vision component of working across the 6 IEP areas significantly more than the control group (M = .80, SD = 1.13). The effect size indicated that the *Self-Directed IEP* had a moderate impact on the presence of the working component in the IEP. Eta squared indicated that 5% of the variance in WORKING TOTAL was accounted for by the intervention. The t tests for LEARNING and COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT TOTALS showed no significant difference in mean scores. See Table 32 for the vision component mean scores across the six IEP areas.

Table 32

Vision Component Means Across Six IEP Areas

Vision Component	Condition	Mean	SD
Living	Control	.27	.58
	Intervention	.60	.70
Learning	Control	1.84	1.01
	Intervention	1.60	1.06
Working	Control	.80	1.13
	Intervention	1.32	1.13
Community Involvement	Control	.52	.90
	Intervention	.82	1.02

Research Question Thirteen

In existing IEP documents from *control and intervention* IEP meetings observed in Year 2 of the SD-IEP research project, are student first-person references made in addressing the postschool vision/preferences and interests, coordinated transition activities, present levels of educational performance, or goals, benchmarks, and short-term objectives of the IEP?

Presence of Student First-Person References Across Six Key IEP Areas

The student ownership matrix of the scoring rubric (see Appendix D) allowed for student first-person references to be documented across six IEP areas. Out of the 94 IEP documents examined, one IEP in the intervention group contained a student first person reference. This occurred in the present levels of educational performance section of the IEP, and was in regard to the vision component of learning.

Impending Summary

I will present a summary of the research questions findings in the next chapter. This summary will include the relationship between the significant findings in questions 1 and 12, which specifically relate to the vision statements examined and the complexity of their development (question 1), and the presence of the four vision components across six major IEP sections (question 12). I will address findings on the remaining research questions through interpretations of a variety of descriptive and case study data.

CHAPTER 5

Discussion

Study Overview

My initial curiosity for this research investigation centered around three broad areas of inquiry:

1. Do existing IEP documents at the secondary level contain evidence of the four postschool goal/vision components (living, learning, working, and community involvement) as required on the Oklahoma transition services plan page, and in related sections of the IEP, such as the present levels of educational performance, strengths and educational needs, and goals, objectives and benchmarks?
2. Does student *Self-Directed IEP* instruction influence vision development in the IEP, such as its degree of development, and where it is supported in the IEP?
3. Does student *Self-Directed IEP* instruction encourage student ownership of the postschool goal/vision in the IEP?

These broad questions led me to develop 13 specific research questions for this study, which I listed in Chapter 1, methodologically addressed in Chapter 3, and answered in Chapter 4.

The review of literature in Chapter 2 established three research needs that this study addresses in the following ways. First, this research provides an alternate way to examine the IEP process at the secondary level beyond state and federal compliance procedures. Second, it attempts to provide data connecting student participation in the IEP process and the development of the student postschool goal/vision in the IEP. Third, it provides empirical evidence to establish and support the secondary IEP process as an

individual plan guided by the student's postschool goal/vision. These needs were specifically supported by the purpose of this study, which was to determine the impact of *Self-Directed IEP* instruction on secondary IEP transition documents by evaluating the presence and development of four transition services postschool goal/vision components: (1) living, (2) learning, (3) working, and (4) community involvement in existing secondary IEP documents that were produced during Year 2 of the OU-ZC IEP federally sponsored three-year research project.

Discussion Organization

This discussion chapter is organized around the three broad questions that initiated this study. However, I am going to address them in reverse order; this sequence best accommodates the significant findings of the specific research questions. I will then discuss the contributions of the descriptive and case study data. This will be followed by implications for legislation and future research, and a summary of study limitations. My concluding impact statement will tie back into the opening scenarios described in Chapter 1.

Findings on Student IEP Ownership

Third Broad Area of Inquiry

Does student Self-Directed IEP instruction encourage student ownership of the postschool goal/vision in the IEP? One specific research question addressed this inquiry: question 13. Out of all 94 IEP documents examined in this study, only one contained a student first-person reference. Even though this first-person reference occurred in the intervention group IEPs, this finding did not require any statistical analysis to conclude

that the answer to this broad inquiry is no. In this study, the *Self-Directed IEP* had no impact or influence on student first-person references in the IEP document itself.

Findings on Vision Development and Support

Second Broad Area of Inquiry

Does student Self-Directed IEP instruction influence vision development in the IEP, such as its degree of development, and where it is supported in the IEP? Research questions one through seven specifically addressed this inquiry. These questions focused on the existence of the vision statement (question one), the writing style of the vision statement (questions two through four), the orientation of the vision statement (questions five and six), and vision support through planned courses and coordinated activities (question seven).

Summary of Analyses

Chi-square analyses show no significant relationships between the *Self-Directed IEP* and the existence of vision statements in the IEP documents, the writing style of the vision statements, their orientation (reflection of uncertainty or future-orientation), or their support through planned courses and coordinated activities. In this study, the *Self-Directed IEP* had no impact on the *general features of the vision statements*, i.e., their existence, writing style, orientation, or support through the courses of study and transition activities.

Findings from an independent-samples t test on the vision total mean scores reveal that the *Self-Directed IEP* had a moderate effect (Cohen's d = .69) on the *specific content of the vision statements*, meaning that IEP documents in the intervention group contained vision statements that were more inclusive of the four vision components than

IEP documents in the control group. Eta squared indicates that 11% of this variance can be accounted for by the intervention. In this study, the *Self-Directed IEP* had a moderate impact on the content of vision statements in IEP documents.

Overall Answer

The answer to the second broad area of inquiry is yes and no. The intervention did not influence the general features of the vision statements, such as their existence, writing style, orientation, or general support through the course of study or transition activities. However, the *Self-Directed IEP* did impact the specific content of the vision statements, meaning that vision statements in the intervention group were more inclusive of the living, learning, working, and community involvement components.

Findings on the Four Vision Components Across Key IEP Areas

First Broad Area of Inquiry

Do existing IEP documents at the secondary level contain evidence of the four postschool goal/vision components (living, learning, working, and community involvement) as required on the Oklahoma transition services plan page, and in related sections of the IEP, such as the present levels of educational performance, strengths and educational needs, and goals, objectives and benchmarks? Research question 1, as well as questions 8 – 12 specifically addressed this inquiry. These questions focused on how well the vision components were represented in specific locations within the IEP, such as the postschool goal/vision (question 1), the coordinated transition activities (question 8), the present levels of educational performance (question 9), the strengths and educational needs (question 10), and the annual goals, objectives, and benchmarks (question 11).

Question 12 addressed the representation of the four vision components across all six IEP areas.

Summary of Analyses

Components across six IEP areas. The significant findings from the independent-samples t test on the total means scores for the vision statement are previously discussed in the answer to the second broad area of inquiry. Findings from three other independent-samples t tests on the total mean scores for coordinated activities, present levels of educational performance, and annual goals, benchmarks, and short-term objectives indicate no differences between the control and intervention groups that can be accounted for by the intervention. Data for the IEP areas of strengths and educational needs were virtually non-existent, so inferential analyses procedures were not necessary. In this study, the *Self-Directed IEP* had no influence on the vision components of living, learning, working, or community involvement being addressed within specific sections of the IEP, *with the exception of the vision statement itself.* The specific differences within the vision statement are discussed in the next paragraph.

Components within vision statements. Findings from four independent-samples t tests on the vision components total mean scores reveal that the *Self-Directed IEP* had a moderate effect on the components of living and working (Cohen's d = .52 & .46, respectively), meaning that IEP documents in the intervention group addressed the vision components of living and working significantly more than IEP documents in the control group. Eta squared indicates that 6% of the variance for living, and 5% of the variance for working can be accounted for by the intervention. In this study, the *Self-Directed IEP* had

a moderate impact on the vision components of living and working within the vision statements in IEP documents.

Overall Answer

The intervention did influence the existence of two of the four vision components (living and working) in the vision statement to a moderate extent. However, the *Self-Directed IEP* did not impact the existence of the four vision components in the other key IEP areas of coordinated transition activities, present levels of educational performance, strengths, educational needs, or annual goals, benchmarks, or short-term objectives.

What Do These Findings Mean?

Conclusions

The results from this study clearly indicate that the *Self-Directed IEP* had no impact on student first-person references within the IEP document. The intervention did not influence the general features of the vision statements, such as their existence, writing style, orientation, or general support through the course of study or transition activities. The intervention had no effect on the four vision components within specific sections of the IEP, except for the vision statement section itself. The *Self-Directed IEP* did impact the content of the vision statements to a moderate degree, by influencing the components of living and working within the vision statement itself.

Questions

These conclusions lead to some important questions. According to the inferential findings, only *two* of the four vision components in the vision statement were impacted by the intervention: living and working. However, an examination of the vision component means within the vision totals between conditions reveals an increase in the

intervention group means for *three* of the four vision components: living, working, and community involvement, with community involvement showing the largest increase (see Table 17 on page 81). Additionally, the means for the vision component of learning actually showed a slight increase for the control group. This raises two questions. First, why did the community involvement component in the vision statements have the largest mean scores for the intervention group, yet show no significant differences on the t test findings? Second, what caused the learning component mean for the vision statements to increase for the control group?

Considerable concern also surrounds the lack of data regarding the presence of the vision components across the six key IEP areas, especially the areas of strengths and educational needs. This concern leads to a third question: Does the absence of data on the vision components' presence across the IEP reveal significant findings as well? The answers to these questions can be found by evaluating the descriptive and case study data collected through this research. The next part of this discussion is organized around these three important questions.

Descriptive and Case Study Data Contributions

Community Involvement

Why did the community involvement component in the vision statements have the largest increase in mean scores for the intervention group, yet show no significant differences on the t test findings? An examination of the frequency count between the control and intervention groups shows that community involvement was included over three times as frequently in the intervention vision statements (n = 22) as in the control vision statements (n = 7) (see Table 31 on page 103). However, an examination of the

total frequencies and percentages for the vision components present across *all* IEP areas provides the answer to this question. The frequencies provided in Table 31 show that across all the IEP areas, community involvement was the least addressed component in the intervention group IEPs. So, even though community involvement was addressed over three times as frequently in the intervention vision statements, the overall prevalence of community involvement across the intervention IEP areas was too low to warrant significant statistical findings. Regardless, descriptive findings clearly show that the *Self-Directed IEP* increased the frequency of the community involvement component in vision statements, in addition to the previously mentioned increases for living and working.

Learning

What caused the learning component mean for the vision statements to increase for the control group? An examination of the frequency count between the control and intervention groups shows that learning was included slightly more in the control group vision statements (n = 31) then in the intervention group vision statements (n = 29), which would account for the slightly higher control group learning mean. An examination of the *total* frequencies and percentages for the learning components present in *all* IEP vision statements reveals that 65.2% (n = 60) of all vision statements contained a reference to learning. These descriptive data do two things: first, they clearly support the lack of influence that the *Self-Directed IEP* had on the learning component in the vision statements. Second, they provide a curiosity seed for determining the extent and consistency that learning was addressed across the entire IEP.

The frequencies provided in Table 31 (see page 103) show that across all the IEP areas, learning was addressed the most. However, further examination reveals that these references occurred primarily in the vision and coordinated activities sections of the IEP, with a total of 76% (n = 70) of all coordinated activities sections containing a reference to learning. However, as with the vision statement, the frequency of learning addressed between the condition groups was almost equal (control n = 34; intervention n = 36).

Additional examination of case study data regarding the coordinated activities vision support reveals that out of the 70 coordinated activities sections that addressed learning, 50 supported the vision statement through a reference to completing high school, 16 referenced obtaining vocational training, and 4 referred to community-based education. The unfortunate finding here is that none of the IEPs contained learning support via coordinated activities that targeted postsecondary educational institutions such as community colleges, four-year colleges, or universities.

Other interesting findings on the learning component are found in a review of vision support via the course of study. Fortunately, 87% (n = 80) of the vision statements were supported by the IEP course of study, which was achieved by listing core academic courses, electives for graduation, and vocational-technical centers or vocational training. Sadly, however, none of the supportive courses of study included non-academic or extra-curricular activities.

The extent of learning addressed across the IEP ends upon examination of the remaining IEP sections. Learning was not addressed at all in the strengths or educational needs sections. Furthermore, it was only minimally included in the present levels of educational performance (n = 5), and the goal, objectives, and benchmarks (n = 2).

Good News/Bad News

The good news is that learning was the highest vision component reflected in the coordinated activities, and the second highest component addressed in the vision statement. The bad news is that these references mainly included required courses for graduation, rarely included vocational training, and never included institutions of higher education. This does not bode well for the newly revised purpose of IDEA 2004, which now includes "further education", and is stated at P.L. 108-446 §601(d)(1)(A) as:

> The purposes of this title are to insure that all children with disabilities have available to them a free appropriate public education that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for *further education*, employment, and independent living [italics added].

Additional bad news is that learning was not addressed at all in the strengths or educational needs sections of the IEP. The worst news is that learning was not the only missing vision component in the strengths or educational needs sections. In fact, most of the IEP sections (except for the vision statement) were deficient in their reflection of the four vision components, resulting in a clear absence of data.

Absence of Data

Does the absence of data reveal important findings as well? The answer is yes. In fact, some of the strongest implications and messages from this study's findings are not in what I found in the data, but in what I *did not* find in the data, and what I found *instead*.

Parallel Planning Pathways

I did not find evidence of joining pathways for postschool goal/vision planning and IEP development. The essentiality of parallel planning pathways for transition and IEP development has been a firm declaration of leading researchers for some time (deFur,

2003; Storms et al. 2000), and the clear outcome and need from a variety of studies on transition planning and the IEP (Baer et al., 1996; Krom & Prater, 1993; Lombard et al., 1992; Shearin et al., 1999). My lack of findings in this research supports these previous studies' findings.

What I *found instead* were additional separations within the transition planning process itself. Even though many of the vision statements examined in this study were inclusive of the four vision components, they were still developed in isolation from the other specific transition planning pieces of course of study and coordinated activities, which typically only referred to completing high school courses for graduation. While graduation from high school is a necessary futures goal, it does little to specifically support postschool visions in the contexts of living, learning (in a postschool realm), working, or community involvement.

IEP Infusion

I did not find evidence of the four vision components' infusion into key sections of the IEP. The descriptive data show that across all 94 documents examined, none of the vision components were reflected in the IEP sections of strengths. This void is especially alarming, considering the IDEA 2004 revision of the transition services definition, which specifically includes the "child's strengths", at P.L. 108-446§ 602(34)(A)-(C):

> The term "transition services" means a coordinated set of activities for a child with a disability that:
>
> (A) is designed to be within a results-oriented process, that is focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the child with a disability to facilitate the child's movement from school to post-school activities, including post-secondary education, vocational education, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation;

(B) is based on the individual child's needs, taking into account the *child's strengths*, preferences, and interests; and

(C) includes instruction, related services, community experiences, the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives, and when appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation [italics added].

In addition to their absence in the strengths section, the vision components were virtually unaddressed in the IEP areas of educational needs, and goals, objectives and benchmarks as well. Furthermore, in the present levels of educational performance section, which is the primary location for all information needed to drive the IEP document (deFur, 2003; Storms et al., 2000), the four vision components were only slightly addressed, with the component of working included the most at 14% (n = 14) (see Table 31 on page 103). What about the other 80 IEP documents examined in this study? With virtually no mention of the vision components in the present levels of educational performance, there was no opportunity to establish the pathways needed to infuse the vision into the IEPs.

In this study, the postschool goal/vision statement was the only IEP section that contained a uniform representation of the four vision components. So, *instead* of finding evidence of the four vision components' infusion into the IEP, I found complex vision statements developed on the transition services plan page, but not mentioned anywhere else in the IEP. Prime examples of this are seen in the four highest scoring vision statements examined in this study (see Table 15 on page 78). These vision statements were well developed and contained references to the vision components, yet none of the components were represented in other key areas of the IEPs.

Who Should Care About These Results?

The big "so what?" question in research is only validated if there are individuals who care about the results. For this study, the answer to the big question of who should care about this study's results is: everyone – at least everyone involved in building futures for future citizens with disabilities. First and foremost, students with disabilities receiving special education services through IEPs should care, and their teachers who help develop those IEPs should care. Most importantly, the parents of these students should care. In fact, Chapter 2 affirmed that parents are concerned about their future visions for their children from the moment the disability is discovered (Ferguson, 2002; Oklahoma State Department of Education, 2004; Singer, 2002).

School administrators should also have a vested interest in this study's results. Chapter 2 confirmed that links to a democratic education are rooted in visions that are created through a collaborative process (Glickman, 2002). Although the school-wide vision development process often begins with administrators, a vision can only come to life when it is shared by all those involved in its fruition (Nanus, 1992; Westley & Mintzberg, 1989). Administrators should note that the same premise holds true in the IEP postschool goal/vision planning process. The vision statement in the IEP is little more than a compliance requirement, unless two things occur. First, the vision must be shared by all members of the IEP team. Second, it must be viewed as a commitment of resources to initiate needed changes.

Implications for Legislation and Research

Our nation's policy-makers should also care about the results of this study. The regulations for the 2004 Amendments to IDEA are being developed as these study results

are being written. Data such as those from this study can only help to influence the policies and language designed to guide our nation's educators in implementing the latest legislative mandates.

Last but not least, researchers should continue to care. The findings from this study strongly suggest that additional instructional packages other than the *Self-Directed IEP* are needed to teach and facilitate postschool goal/vision development and its infusion into the IEP. Associated with this need is the field-initiated research required to validate such practices. This kind of instruction and research is imperative if secondary transition experiences for individuals with disabilities are to expand beyond IEP paperwork compliance.

Study Limitations

Internal Validity

In any study that introduces an intervention or treatment, certain extraneous variables can threaten the researcher's ability to make correct inferences from the data (Creswell, 2003; Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003). Campbell and Stanley (1971) identified eight major threats to internal validity that are considered one of the most authoritative sources regarding validity in experimental design (Gay, 1996). These include history, maturation, tesing, instrumentation, statistical regression, differential selection of subjects, mortality, and selection-maturation interaction. Following are the primary threats relevant to this study's internal validity, and the actions that were taken to control for them.

A primary concern in this study was the history and maturation of the students who were represented in the IEPs, and the teachers who implemented the *Self-Directed IEP* instruction. This was controlled for by the OU-ZC IEP research study design for

Year 2, which included control and intervention groups. Another issue was researcher collector bias, which was controlled for by inter-rater reliability measures on the postschool goal/vision scoring rubrics. The issue of instrumentation was again controlled for by inter-rater reliability measures on the scoring rubrics, and by the pilot study.

The threat of differential selection of subjects was controlled for by the OU-ZC IEP research study design for Year 2, which included the random assignment of students into condition groups. The issue of subject attrition, or mortality, was controlled for by large sample size. Implementation and interaction effects were somewhat controlled for by the study design which included condition groups. However, there was no way to control for the amount of contact the students in the control and intervention groups had with each other. This last concern had little effect on the students' IEPs that were developed after the implementation of the *Self-Directed IEP*.

External Validity

The external validity of this study, or the extent to which I can apply the findings from this research to settings or individuals beyond those that I studied, is high in terms of ecological value. This study's ecological validity is high for two reasons. First, the research conditions created for this research are replicable. Second, because the central tenants and minimal requirements for IEP content are mandated by legislation, all IEPs across the nation must contain certain elements to a minimal extent. One of the required elements in secondary IEPs is that transition services are to be addressed and driven by the student's strengths, needs, and interests. This is typically reflected in the student's postschool goal/vision statement.

Unfortunate Oversight

No study would be complete without at least one oversight on the part of the researcher. My oversight for this study is that I failed to collect specific data on the student signature section of the IEP. While I did look to see if most students signed their IEPs, I did not have a section on the IEP postschool goal/vision scoring rubric to indicate whether the student signed the IEP or not. This oversight is unfortunate, as this data could have allowed me to talk about the important issue of student *attendance at* the IEP meeting, versus student *participation in* the IEP meeting. IEP meeting attendance does not equal active IEP meeting participation (Martin et al, in press). This study would have been an ideal venue to glean data to support this position; it is unfortunate that I did not design the rubric to collect it.

Concluding Impact

The "Why" Factor

As was stated in Chapter 2, without a vision, choices and consequences become irrelevant. Without the vision to drive secondary IEP development, the choices and consequences reflected in the body of the IEP become just as irrelevant and inconsequential as the actions of the villagers in the Upstream/Downstream fable presented in Chapter 1. Secondary teachers and their administrators can become so overwhelmed with taking care of so many IEP documents (the product), that they fail to alter the direction of their curiosity, and look to see *why* the IEPs are needed in the first place (the process). However, IDEA 2004 addresses this "why" factor very succinctly through the purpose of the act, which essentially states that the purpose of special

education is to prepare students for further education, employment, and independent living – the very components that compose the core of this study.

A Sense of Destiny

These components are also vital elements for success. An article on infusing self-determination into transition programs authored by Martin, Marshall, and Maxon (1993), begins with this quote: "A sense of destiny facilitates success" (p. 53). A vision is a cornerstone of that destiny. Results from this study indicate that *Self-Directed IEP* instruction contributes to a heightened awareness of the importance of the vision statement, which concomitantly increases the complexity of vision statements developed in secondary IEPs. In a *very general sense*, this study's findings communicate an important message: that *Self-Directed IEP* instruction helps to shape the visions that cement the cornerstones of a student's destiny.

Results from this study also show that a heightened awareness of the importance of the vision statement is not enough to cause the infusion of the vision components into the key areas of the IEP. In a *very specific sense*, the findings from this study also communicate this critical message: *Self-Directed IEP* instruction does not promote teacher understanding or willingness to infuse the vision components into the IEP. This represents a true loss of the understanding of the purpose of the vision statement, which is to provide the beginning framework for secondary IEP planning (deFur, 2003; Storms et al., 2000).

This lack of understanding is best represented in this sample vision statement, presented here exactly (except for a name change) as it appeared in one of the IEPs examined for this study:

Corbin doesn't believe he has a disability, and doesn't know why he's in a special education class. He likes to watch TV, play videos, and play on the computer. When asked what chores he had at home he said, "I'm lazy." He said he didn't have any. He would like a job making video games, his mom would transport him, and he plans to live at home.

Aside from the inclusion of living and working in his vision statement, no other vision components were addressed in Corbin's IEP. In fact, none of the statements made in this vision were addressed anywhere within the body of the IEP. Most startling of all is the need for disability awareness/self-awareness training for this young man, which the IEP made no reference to. So again, much like the villagers in Downstream, the developers of this IEP need to go back and address why Corbin is in special education in the first place, and provide him with some much needed awareness training. Otherwise, Corbin's sense of destiny will remain tangled in a vision statement that at best, satisfies the postschool goal/vision statement requirement on the Oklahoma IEP form.

Future Needs and Research

Although the preceding example is presented in isolation, it is reflective of the overall findings of this study. Amazingly enough, the *Self-Directed IEP* did increase the complexity of vision statements developed in secondary IEPs, even though it was not designed to do that. However, the essential components of the vision statements were clearly not infused into key areas of the IEP documents. Additional instructional materials other than the *Self-Directed IEP*, as well as field-initiated research on the implementation of such materials are obviously needed to determine the best ways to facilitate this infusion. Perhaps a "vision" of what this infusion training could look like is not too far away.

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Appendix A

The Transition Services Plan Page of Oklahoma's IEP Form

TRANSITION SERVICES PLAN

0SDE Form 7
Page ____ of____

NAME:_____ STUDENT ID: _____

Beginning at age 14, address student's Post-School Vision/Preferences and Interests (Where does the student want to live, learn, work, and how will he or she be involved in the community?): _____

Check if student plans to attend: ____ College ____ Technical school ____ Business school ____ Other

Information and activities used to develop plan that shows student's preferences and interests (interest inventories, interviews, portfolios, etc.): _____

***At age 14*, transition service needs must be addressed that focus on developing a course of study that will be updated annually:**

Grade__: _____ Grade__: _____ Grade__: _____

Grade__: _____ Grade__: _____

Projected date of graduation/program completion and type:

☐ Standard Diploma

☐ General Education Development (GED)

☐ Other _____

In planning the course of study, is information needed regarding opportunities for vocational education (e.g., high school vocational education courses, school-based training, work-based training, work study programs, technology education, or area technology center programs)? Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, document date(s) when information was provided to student and parent(s). Date: _____

Needed transition services and coordinated activities must be addressed for students *no later than age 16, or younger* if determined appropriate by the IEP team. Use a *Plan For Needed Transition Services* page for addressing one or more of the following area(s): instruction, community experiences, development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives, acquisition of daily living skills, functional vocational evaluation, or other. If transition services are provided as a special education or related service, goals and objectives/benchmarks must be included as appropriate in the IEP.

No later than age 16, student has been referred to the vocational rehabilitation counselor in the student's school district.

Person responsible for referral:

_____

Date:_____ Yes ☐ No ☐

By age 17, student and parent(s) have been informed of any transfer of rights at age of majority.

Yes ☐ No ☐

COMMENTS:_____

Appendix B

Oklahoma's IEP Form

NAME OF CHILD:_____ STUDENT ID: _____
FIRST MIDDLE LAST

BIRTHDATE:_____ AGE:_____ GRADE:_____ DATE OF IEP:_____
MONTH/DAY/YEAR MONTH/DAY/YEAR

DISTRICT/AGENCY:_____ ☐ INITIAL IEP
☐ INTERIM IEP

BUILDING/SITE:_____ ☐ SUBSEQUENT IEP

INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM (IEP)

PRESENT LEVELS OF EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE Objective statements, existing evaluation data, results describing effects of the child's disability on educational performance. Include how the disability affects involvement and progress in the general curriculum or for preschool children, participation in age appropriate activities.

Strengths of the child and the anticipated effects on the child's participation in the general curriculum or appropriate activities	**Educational needs resulting from the child's disability, which may require special education, related services, supplementary aids, supports for personnel, or modifications**

Consideration of special factors: Check yes or no whether the IEP team considers each special factor to be relevant to this child.

Yes	No	
☐	☐	Strategies, positive behavioral interventions and supports, as appropriate, if behavior impedes learning of self or others
☐	☐	Language needs as related to the IEP for a child with limited English proficiency (LEP)
☐	☐	Instruction and use of Braille if child is blind or visually impaired, unless determined inappropriate based on evaluation
☐	☐	Communication needs, and for child who is deaf or hard of hearing, the language and communication needs, and opportunities for communication and instruction in the child's language and communication mode
☐	☐	Whether the child requires assistive technology devices and services

For special factors checked yes, explain determinations of the team as to whether services are required in the IEP:

PARENT CONCERNS FOR ENHANCING THE CHILD'S EDUCATION

NAME:_____ STUDENT ID:_____

ANNUAL GOALS AND BENCHMARKS OR SHORT TERM OBJECTIVES Measurable annual goals and benchmarks or short term objectives to enable the child to be involved in and progress in the general curriculum (or for a preschool child in appropriate activities) and to meet other educational needs that result from the disability Note: Reference present levels of performance, strengths, educational needs as appropriate	How will progress toward annual goals be measured? **and** How will the parents be regularly informed of progress at least as often as parents of nondisabled?	Extent of progress toward achieving the annual goals by end of the year

NAME: _____ STUDENT ID: _____

Special Education Services: List each special education service and placement setting. The continuum includes regular classes full-time, special classes part-time or full-time, special schools, home instruction, instruction in hospitals, instruction in other settings, or instruction in an institution or residential facility. For preschool children (aged 3 through 5), the continuum includes early childhood home, itinerant services outside the home, reverse mainstream, part-time early childhood/part-time early childhood special education, early childhood special education, separate school, or residential facility.

Type of Service and Placement Setting	Amount of Services (Time, Frequency)	Projected Starting Date	Expected Duration	Person Responsible (Position)

Related Services: List each related service necessary for the child to benefit from special education.

Type of Service	Amount of Services (Time,Frequency, Circumstances)	Projected Starting Date	Expected Duration	Person Responsible (Position)

To what extent, if any, will the child <u>not</u> participate in the regular class and activities with nondisabled children (e.g., regular curriculum, extracurricular, and nonacademic or for preschool children, age appropriate activities):

Time outside of Regular Classroom: ____ of ____ periods per day ____ % of instructional day
If block schedule, describe:

Is this student's instructional day the same length as nondisabled peers? Yes ☐ No ☐
If no, describe the reason(s) for a shortened school day:

Regular PE ☐ Adapted PE ☐ NA ☐ If not applicable provide justification:	List modifications necessary for this child to participate in regular PE (specially designed adapted PE, if needed, must be addressed on the IEP): .

Supplementary aids and services, program modifications and/or supports for personnel in regular education or other education-related settings not otherwise addressed as special education or related services.

Supplementary aids and services	**Location/Class/Settings**
Program modifications	**Location/Class/Settings**
Supports for personnel	**Location/Class/Settings**

TRANSITION SERVICES PLAN

0SDE Form 7
Page ____ of____

NAME:_____ STUDENT ID: _____

Beginning at age 14, address student's Post-School Vision/Preferences and Interests (Where does the student want to live, learn, work, and how will he or she be involved in the community?): _____

Check if student plans to attend: ____ College ____ Technical school ____ Business school ____ Other

Information and activities used to develop plan that shows student's preferences and interests (interest inventories, interviews, portfolios, etc.): _____

***At age 14*, transition service needs must be addressed that focus on developing a course of study that will be updated annually:**

Grade__: _____ Grade__: _____ Grade__: _____

Grade__: _____ Grade__: _____

Projected date of graduation/program completion and type:

☐ Standard Diploma

☐ General Education Development (GED)

☐ Other _____

In planning the course of study, is information needed regarding opportunities for vocational education (e.g., high school vocational education courses, school-based training, work-based training, work study programs, technology education, or area technology center programs)? Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, document date(s) when information was provided to student and parent(s). Date: _____

Needed transition services and coordinated activities must be addressed for students *no later than age 16, or younger* if determined appropriate by the IEP team. Use a *Plan For Needed Transition Services* page for addressing one or more of the following area(s): instruction, community experiences, development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives, acquisition of daily living skills, functional vocational evaluation, or other. If transition services are provided as a special education or related service, goals and objectives/benchmarks must be included as appropriate in the IEP.

No later than age 16, student has been referred to the vocational rehabilitation counselor in the student's school district.

Person responsible for referral:

_____

Date:_____ Yes ☐ No ☐

By age 17, student and parent(s) have been informed of any transfer of rights at age of majority.

Yes ☐ No ☐

COMMENTS:_____

PLAN FOR NEEDED TRANSITION SERVICES

OSDE Form 7

Page ___ of_____

NAME:_____ STUDENT ID: _____

Indicate needed transition service area(s) addressed: _____**Instruction** _____**Community experiences** _____**Development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives** _____**Acquisition of daily living skills** _____**Functional vocational evaluation** _____**Other**	**Statement of intended outcome(s):**_____ _____ _____ _____ _____

Coordinated Activities	**Goals**	**Linkages**	**Responsible Party(ies)**	**Dates**		
Activities shall be developed that promote movement from school to post-school life and may include the areas of vocational training, integrated employment, adult services, independent living, continuing and adult education, postsecondary education, or community participation.	Indicate if activity requires special education or related services.	Person(s)/agency(ies)/ service provider(s) that student (and family) need to be linked to in order to achieve coordinated activities.	Student/parent(s)/ teacher(s)/agency(ies)/ services provider(s) responsible for coordinated activity or linkage.	Linkage Date of Contact	Service Starting Date	Review Date

NAME: _____ STUDENT ID: _____

State and Districtwide Assessment Programs

Child will participate in state/districtwide assessments _____ alternate assessment _____

Specify any modifications in test administration or accommodations necessary for state/districtwide assessments:

If not participating in state/districtwide assessments, explain why not:

If participating in alternate assessment, describe how the child will be assessed:

Extended School Year Services (ESY)

ESY Services: will require further data to consider ____ are necessary _____ are not needed ____

Comments:

Documentation of LRE Placement Considerations

Describe considerations of placement options and reasons determined not appropriate:

Is this placement in the school the child would normally attend if nondisabled? Yes ☐ No ☐
If no, is this placement as close as possible to the child's home Yes ☐ No ☐
If no, explain why the IEP requires other arrangements:

In selecting the LRE, explain considerations of any potential harmful effects on the child or on the quality of services needed:

When special classes, separate schools/facilities, or other removal from the regular education environment occurs, describe how the nature and severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes, with the use of supplementary aids and services, cannot be achieved satisfactorily:

Additional Comments (may include disagreements with the IEP):

Date of next IEP/Review _____ Date of next 3 year reevaluation _____

Team Participant Signatures: Name / Title		Name / Title	
	Parent(s)		Student
	Special Education Teacher		Others
	Regular Classroom Teacher		
	Administrative Representative		

If parent(s) did not attend the IEP meeting, explain other methods to ensure parent participation (or student as appropriate):

Parents have protection under the procedural safeguards.
Parents have received *Parents Rights in Special Education*
Yes ☐ No ☐

Translation/Interpretation needed: Yes ☐ No ☐
If yes, specify how provided.

Parent consent for initial placement Yes ☐ No ☐ Parent Signature _____ Date _____

Appendix C

Year 2 OU-IRB Study Approval

The University of Oklahoma

OFFICE OF HUMAN RESEARCH PARTICIPANT PROTECTION

June 27, 2003

Dr. James Martin
Zarrow Center
Carpenter Hall 111
CAMPUS MAIL

SUBJECT: "Student Involvement in Their Own IEP Meeting: Does Instruction Make a Difference in Meeting and Educational Outcomes"

Dear Dr. Martin:

Thank you for returning your completed progress report for research conducted with human subjects under the above-referenced protocol. The Board has reviewed and approved your report. Since you indicate the study is continuing, they have extended your approval to continue this research for an additional twelve-month period ending 7/15/2004.

Please note that this approval is for the protocol and informed consent form reviewed by the Board. If you wish to make any changes, you will need to submit a request for change to this office for review.

Sixty days before the expiration of this approval you will receive notice from the IRB secretary that your approval anniversary is approaching along with information you can use to complete your progress report and request an extension of the approval date.

If you have any questions about the approval given your protocol, please contact me at 325-8110.

Sincerely yours,

Steven O'Geary

Steven O'Geary, Ph.D.
Director, Human Research Participant Protection
Administrative Officer
Institutional Review Board-Norman Campus (FWA #00003191)

JSO
FY2002-449

cc: Dr. E. Laurette Taylor, Chair, IRB

Appendix D

IEP Postschool Goal/Vision Scoring Rubric

IEP Postschool Goal/Vision Scoring Rubric (Page 1)

IEP Meeting Code #: _____ INTERVENTION CONTROL

Date of Examination: _____ Researcher Name: _____

1. Is the student's Postschool Vision/Preferences and Interests section on the Transition Services Plan page blank? YES (if yes, skip to scoring directions) NO (**if no, copy vision on back of rubric**)

2. Is the student's Postschool Vision/Preferences and Interests statement:
TYPED HANDWRITTEN TYPED AND HANDWRITTEN

3. Does the student's Postschool Vision/Preferences and Interests section contain a statement that reflects uncertainty regarding the student's vision? YES NO

4. Does the student's Postschool Vision/Preferences and Interests section contain a futures-oriented statement (a summary sentence projecting future goals of the student)? YES NO

5. Do the Course of Study and Coordinated Activities support the student's vision?

(if yes, copy the supporting Course of Study components and coordinated activities on back of rubric)

	Yes	No	Unclear
Course of Study			
Coordinated Activities			

Scoring Directions for Vision Components: place the correct score in each corresponding box to the right of each vision component
0 = Component not addressed
1 = Component addressed with a single statement
2 = Component addressed with more than one statement

Postschool goal/vision/preferences and interests components:	VSN	CRD ACT	PLEP	STR	NDS	G/B STOs	TOTAL
6. ***Living*** (housing: independent, semi-independent, supported, renting a home or apartment, living in group home, etc.)	(6a)	(6b)	(6c)	(6d)	(6e)	(6f)	
7. ***Learning*** (post-secondary learning: university, college, community college, local community classes, etc.)	(7a)	(7b)	(7c)	(7d)	(7e)	(7f)	
8. ***Working*** (employment: competitive part-time or full-time jobs, supported employment, workshop participation, etc.)	(8a)	(8b)	(8c)	(8d)	(8e)	(8f)	
9. ***Community Involvement*** (activities with clubs, groups, organizations, volunteer services, friends, etc.)	(9a)	(9b)	(9c)	(9d)	(9e)	(9f)	
TOTAL							

IEP Postschool Goal/Vision Scoring Rubric (Page 2)

Scoring Directions for Student Ownership: place the correct score in each corresponding box to the right of each vision component
0 = Component not addressed with a student first person reference
1 = Component addressed with a student first person reference, i.e., "I will……"

Postschool goal/vision/preferences and interests components:	VSN	CRD ACT	PLEP	STR	NDS	G/B STOs	TOTAL
10. ***Living*** (housing: independent, semi-independent, supported, renting a home or apartment, living in group home, etc.)	(10a)	(10b)	(10c)	(10d)	(10e)	(10f)	
11. ***Learning*** (post-secondary learning: university, college, community college, local community classes, etc.)	(11a)	(11b)	(11c)	(11d)	(11e)	(11f)	
12. ***Working*** (employment: competitive part-time or full-time jobs, supported employment, workshop participation, etc.)	(12a)	(12b)	(12c)	(12d)	(12e)	(12f)	
13. ***Community Involvement*** (activities with clubs, groups, organizations, volunteer services, friends, etc.)	(13a)	(13b)	(13c)	(13d)	(13e)	(13f)	
TOTAL							

From Rubric Question #1: Rubric Item 1a
Student's postschool vision/preferences and interests
Copy vision statement exactly as it appears on the Transition Services Plan page of the IEP:

From Rubric Question #5: Rubric Items 5a & 5b
Course of Study/coordinated activities
Copy the Course of Study Components and Coordinated Activities that support the student's vision:

(5a) Course of Study Components	(5b) Coordinated Activities

Appendix E

IEP Postschool Goal/Vision Scoring Rubric Permission from OU-IRB

The University of Oklahoma
OFFICE OF HUMAN RESEARCH PARTICIPANT PROTECTION

November 3, 2004

Dr. James Martin
Zarrow Center
Carpenter Hall 111
CAMPUS MAIL

SUBJECT: "Student Involvement in Their Own IEP Meeting: Does Instruction Make a Difference in Meeting and Educational Outcomes"

Dear Dr. Martin:

The Institutional Review Board has reviewed and approved the requested revision to the subject protocol.

- 1 Data collection tool

Please note that this approval is for the protocol and informed consent form initially approved by the Board on June 25, 2004, and the revision(s) included in your request dated November 3, 2004. If you wish to make other changes, you will need to submit a request for revision to this office for review.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 325-8110.

Cordially,

E. Laurette Taylor, Ph.D.
Chair
Institutional Review Board - Norman Campus (FWA #00003191)

FY2002-449

cc:

660 Parrington Oval, Suite 316 Norman Oklahoma 73019-3085 PHONE: (405) 325-8110 FAX: (405) 325-2373

Appendix F

Parental Permission Form to Access Student Records

Parent or Guardian Permission Letter for OU Researchers to Attend IEP Meeting Meetings and Examine Student Records for Research Being Conducted Under the Guidance of the University of Oklahoma – Norman Campus

Please read and answer each question by circling yes or no.

Yes No I (we) agree to allow Dr. Martin or OU researchers working with Dr. Martin *to attend my student's IEP meetings.*

Yes No I (we) agree to allow Dr. Martin or OU researchers working with Dr. Martin *to have access to my student's cumulative school record.*

Yes No I (we) agree to allow Dr. Martin or OU researchers working with Dr. Martin *to administer survey questions to myself and my student.*

I (we) understand that all collected information will remain confidential and no identifying information will be used.

____Please send a copy of the completed study to the address below:
Name:

Address:

Student's Name: _____
PLEASE PRINT

Your Name(s):_____
PLEASE PRINT

Your Signature(s):_____

Date:_____

Please return this page to Dr. Martin in the enclosed postage-paid envelope.
Return Address:
Zarrow Center for Learning Enrichment
840 Asp Avenue, Room 111
Norman, OK 73019-4090