Whose Future is it Anyway? Promoting Student Involvement in Transition Planning

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The transition requirements in the 1990 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA; P. L. 101-476) stated that "the coordinated set of activities (e.g., transition services) must be based upon the individual student's needs, taking into account the student's preferences and interests" [IDEA, Section 602(a)(19)]. Wehmeyer and Ward (1995) suggested that the intent of this language, and the spirit of IDEA, is closely aligned with educational efforts to promote student self-determination. The outcome from such efforts should be that students become actively involved in their transition planning and decision-making.

Involving students in their transition planning meetings makes good sense from a number of perspectives. Research in several disciplines indicates that students who choose their school activities are more motivated to perform the tasks they select (Schunk, 1985; Van Reusen & Bos, 1994). Likewise, opportunities to express preferences leads to enhanced educational outcomes (Koestner, Ryan, Bernieri, & Holt, 1984; Swann & Pitman, 1977). Best practices in transition emphasize student participation in transition planning (Halpern, 1994; Ianacone & Stoddern, 1987; Johnson & Rusch, 1993; Kohler, DeStefano, Wermuth, Grayson, & McGinty, 1994) and most introductory texts on transition emphasize student involvement as a key element of transition planning (Brolin, 1995; Wehman, 1992). In summary, the importance of student involvement in transition planning is generally acknowledged by researchers and practitioners alike.

However, there is a significant gap between this preferred outcome and actual practice. Based on a summary of research examining student involvement in educational planning (Gillespie & Turnbull, 1983; Van Reusen & Bos, 1990), Wehmeyer and Ward (1995) concluded that "the current reality for many students with disabilities is that they are left out of the transition planning process, from goal development to placement
and instructional decision-making” (p. 108). If transition services are to adequately prepare students with disabilities for adulthood, there is an urgent need to improve student involvement in educational planning and decision-making (Martin, Marshall, & Maxson, 1993; Van Reusen & Bos, 1994; Wehmeyer & Ward, 1995).

This article reports the outcome of the field-test of a student-directed transition planning program (Whose Future is it Anyway?) developed through a federally-funded model demonstration project and designed to enable learners with cognitive disabilities, primarily mild mental retardation and learning disabilities, to assume a more meaningful role in their transition planning process. The following section describes the materials and the instructional process. Subsequent sections report the results of the year-long field-test with students with cognitive disabilities.

Whose Future is it Anyway? A Student-Directed Transition Planning Program

In October, 1993, The Arc National Headquarters, with funding from the U. S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Women's Educational Equity Act Program, began a two-year project to develop and field-test a student-directed transition planning program for adolescents with cognitive disabilities. The outcome of this project was Whose Future is it Anyway? (Wehmeyer & Kelchner, in press).

Whose Future is it Anyway? consists of 36 sessions introducing students to the concept of transition and transition planning and enabling students to self-direct instruction related to (a) self- and disability-awareness, (b) making decisions about transition-related outcomes, (c) identifying and securing community resources to support transition services, (d) writing and evaluating transition goals and objectives, (e) communicating effectively in small groups, and (f) developing skills to become an effective team member, leader or self-advocate.

The materials are student-directed in that they are written for students as end-users. Agran (in press) defined student-directed learning as instructional activities in which students have control over their learning, experience opportunities to set goals, define actions based on those goals, implement those actions, evaluate their outcomes and adjust their performances. Whose Future is it Anyway? incorporates these strategies to enable students with cognitive disabilities to learn the skills they need to participate meaningfully in their transition planning process and meeting.

The level of support needed by students to complete activities varies a great deal. Some students who have difficulty reading or writing may need almost one-on-one support to progress through the materials, while others can complete the process independently. However, it is not
the degree to which students are independent in the accomplishment of activities that represents the essence of student-directed learning, but the degree to which students have, and believe they have, control over the process. The materials make every effort to ensure that students retain this control while at the same time receiving the support they need to succeed. For example, although there is a Coach’s Guide (Wehmeyer & Lawrence, in press) to assist teachers in providing adequate support, the identification of the person to serve as coach is left to the student. Students are instructed to identify a teacher or other person to serve as a coach and to take the Coach’s Guide to that person.

Although a comprehensive overview of the materials is not feasible within this article (see Author’s note), a brief overview of the process is warranted. Section 1 (titled Getting to Know You) introduces the concept of transition and educational planning, provides information about transition requirements in IDEA, and enables students to identify who has attended past planning meetings, who is required to be present at such meetings, and who they want involved in their planning process. Students identify people from five areas of their lives (friends, family, school, neighborhood and community) who might participate in planning activities. Later in the section they are introduced to four primary transition outcome areas (employment, community living, post-secondary education and recreation and leisure). Activities throughout Whose Future is it Anyway? focus on these transition outcome areas.

The remainder of the sessions in this section discuss the topic of disability and disability-awareness. Students are encouraged to identify their unique characteristics, including their abilities and interests. Participants then identify unique learning needs related to their disability. This process begins with a discussion of stereotypes associated with disability and the possible negative impact of such stereotypes. Finally, students identify their unique learning needs resulting from their disability.

The second section (called Making Decisions) introduces a decision-making process that students then apply toward making decisions about the four transition outcome areas. This process involves the application of a simple problem-solving process represented by an acronym, “DO IT!” which stands for: (1) Define your problem, (2) Outline your options, (3) Identify the outcome of each option, (4) Take action, and (5)! Get excited. Students learn the DO IT! process by working through each step to make a decision about a potential living arrangement, and then apply the process to make decisions about the three other transition outcome areas. In the final session in this section, students learn to use
the DO IT! process to give informed consent and apply this specifically
to the transition planning meeting.

The third section (called How to Get What You Need, Sec. 101) enables
students to locate community resources identified in previous planning
meetings that are intended to provide supports in each of the transition
outcome areas. Students identify such supports, if available, then gather
information about each community resource. They are encouraged to
think about alternative community supports, including those available to
all citizens (e.g., banks, real estate agents, etc.) and those specific to
people with disabilities (e.g., vocational rehabilitation, supported
employment, etc.).

Section 4 (called Goals, Objectives and the Future) enables learners to
apply a set of rules, called WIGOUT rules (Writing Instructional Goals
and Objectives for Use in Transition) to identify transition-related goals
and objectives that are currently on their IEP or transition planning
form, evaluate these goals based on their own transition interests and
abilities, and develop additional goals to take to their next planning
meeting. Students learn what goals and objectives are, how they should
be written, and ways to track progress on goals and objectives.

The fifth section (Communicatin') introduces effective communication
strategies for small group situations, like the transition planning
meetings. Students work through sessions that introduce different types
of communication (verbal, body language, etc.) and how to interpret
these communicative behaviors, the differences between aggressive and
assertive communication, how to effectively negotiate and compromise,
when to use persuasion, and other skills that will enable them to be more
effective communicators during transition planning meetings.

The final session (called Thank You, Honorable Chairperson) enables
students to learn types and purposes of meetings, steps to holding
effective meetings, and roles of the meeting chairperson and team
members. Students are encouraged to work with school-district personnel to take a meaningful role in planning for and participating in
the meeting, including eventually chairing a transition planning
meeting.

Students are encouraged to work on one session per week during the
weeks between their previous transition planning meeting and the next
scheduled meeting. The final two sessions review the previous sessions
and provide a refresher for students as they head into their planning
meeting. After all materials development activities were completed, the
Whose Future is it Anyway? process was field-tested with students with
cognitive disabilities attending high school. The following section
describes this field-test.

72
METHOD

Procedures

Field-testing of the *Whose Future is it Anyway?* materials was conducted in an urban school district with students identified as having mild disabilities, primarily learning disabilities and mild mental retardation. Students were recruited from the population of all students receiving special education and involved in vocational preparation courses in three high schools. All such students who were identified as appropriate for instructional activities (e.g., mild mental retardation, learning disabilities) were identified and consent forms sent to the student’s home. Final participants were those who had returned consent forms. Students were served in a variety of instructional settings, including regular education classrooms, resource rooms, and separate classrooms. Instruction began early in the school year (October) and continued through the spring of that school year, at which time all students’ educational planning meetings were scheduled. A certified special education teacher employed by the project was present during the entire field-test and served as the primary facilitator for instructional activities. Students received instruction for approximately one-hour per week for the duration of the school year.

The purpose of the field-test was twofold: (a) to evaluate the materials, including their ease of use and applicability in a wide range of educational settings with students with cognitive disabilities; and (b) to evaluate the effect of the process on students’ self-determination and perceptions about their ability to participate in the planning process. Data reflecting these issues were collected by project personnel before instruction began and after the student participated in his or her planning meeting. In addition, anecdotal information was collected by interviewing students and classroom teachers and recording activity during the planning meeting.

Participants

The sample consisted of 53 students at three high schools. The mean age for participants was 16.91 years (SD = 1.60) and students ranged in age from 15 to 21 years old. Twenty-seven of the students (51% of the sample) were identified as having a learning disability, 16 (30%) as having mild mental retardation, 3 students (6%) were labeled as other health impaired, and 1 student (2%) was identified as having an emotional disorder. Diagnoses were not provided for 6 students. The sample was composed of roughly one-third students each from African-American, Hispanic, and White racial groups, with two students identified as of Asian descent and one student of Middle-Eastern descent.
Males comprised 47% of the sample \((n = 25)\), females 53% \((n = 28)\). The mean age for males was 16.62 \((SD = 1.5, \text{ range } = 15-20)\) while the mean age for females was 17.15 \((SD = 1.67, \text{ range } = 15-21)\).

**Instrumentation**

Measuring self-determination. Pre- and post-intervention data on student self-determination were collected using *The Arc’s Self-Determination Scale* (Wehmeyer & Kelchner, 1995), a student self-report measure of self-determination. Wehmeyer (1992; in press a; in press b) defined self-determination as an educational outcome referring to "acting as the primary causal agent in one’s life and making choices and decisions regarding one’s quality of life free from undue external influence or interference.’’ Self-determined actions reflect four essential characteristics: (a) autonomy, (b) self-regulation, (c) psychological empowerment, and (d) self-realization. Wehmeyer, Kelchner, and Richards (in press) empirically validated this definitional framework with a sample of 408 adults with mental retardation and developmental disabilities and found that self-determined individuals were significantly different from individuals who were not self-determined (indicated by performance or non-performance of behaviors generally agreed upon to reflect self-determination) on measures of each of the four essential characteristics.

*The Arc’s Self-Determination Scale* (Wehmeyer & Kelchner, 1995) is a 72-item scale that provides data on each of the four essential characteristics as well as overall self-determination. Section I measures student autonomy, including the student’s independence and the degree to which he or she acts on the basis of personal beliefs, values, interests and abilities. Higher scores on this section reflect more autonomy. The second section measures student self-regulation, specifically in two subdomains; interpersonal cognitive problem-solving, and goal-setting and task performance. Higher scores reflect effective social problem-solving and goal-oriented behaviors.

The third section of the scale is an indicator of psychological empowerment. Psychological empowerment consists of the various dimensions of perceived control (Zimmerman, 1990), including the cognitive (personal efficacy), personality (locus of control), and motivational domains of perceived control. People who are self-determined take action based on the beliefs that (a) they have the capacity to perform behaviors needed to influence outcomes in their environment, and (b) if they perform such behaviors, anticipated outcomes will result. Students choose from items measuring psychological empowerment using a forced-choice method. High scores reflect positive perceptions of control.

The final section of *The Arc’s Self-Determination Scale* measures student
self-realization. Self-determined people are self-realizing in that they use a comprehensive, and reasonably accurate, knowledge of themselves and their strengths, and limitations to act in such a manner as to capitalize on this knowledge in a beneficial way. High scores reflect high levels of self-realization.

The Arc's Self-Determination Scale was normed with 500 students with and without cognitive disabilities in rural, urban, and suburban school districts in five states. Information about this process is available in the procedural guidelines for the Scale (Wehmeyer, 1995). The Scale's concurrent criterion-related validity was established by showing relationships between The Arc's Self-Determination Scale and conceptually related measures. The Scale had adequate construct validity, including factorial validity established by repeated factor analyses, and discriminative validity. The Scale had adequate internal consistency (Chronbach alpha = .90).

Measuring locus of control. Student locus of control was measured using the Adult version of the Nowicki-Strickland Internal-External Scale (ANS-IE; Nowicki & Duke, 1974), a widely used measure of this construct. Rotter (1966) defined locus of control as the degree to which a person perceives contingency relationships between his or her actions and outcomes. People who see themselves as in control of outcomes in their lives have an internal locus of control, while people who perceive outcomes as controlled by others, fate or chance, hold an external locus of control. The ANS-IE consists of 40 items answered with a "yes" or "no" and higher scores reflect more external orientations. The scale has reported split-half reliability figures ranging from .74 to .86, with Test-Retest Reliability figures ranging from .63 to .76. Although normed with adults without disabilities, the instrument has been used to determine locus of control orientation for individuals with cognitive limitations (Wehmeyer, 1993a; 1994c). Wehmeyer (1993a, 1993b) determined that the factor structure of the ANS-IE, when used with individuals with mental retardation, was comparable to that for youth and adults without disabilities and that the scale was reliable for use with individuals with mental retardation.

Measuring self-efficacy and outcome expectancy for educational planning. Self-efficacy and efficacy expectations are two related constructs, introduced by Bandura (1977), that have been linked together for the present discussion. Self-efficacy refers to the "conviction that one can successfully execute the behavior required to produce a given outcome" (Bandura, 1977, p. 193). Efficacy expectations refer to the individual's belief that if a specific behavior is performed, it will lead to the anticipated outcome. To provide information about the degree to which students believed (a) they could perform the behaviors they needed to
successfully participate in their planning meeting, and (b) that if they did perform these behaviors, the desired outcome would result (e.g., they would be allowed to participate in their meeting), project personnel developed a 20-item questionnaire. Based on similar questionnaires designed to measure self-efficacy and outcome expectancy for social skills (Ollendick, Oswald, & Crowe, 1986), this questionnaire was composed of 10 questions (see Table 1) about students’ abilities to participate in an educational planning meeting, and 10 questions (see Table 2) that mirror the first 10, but reflected the anticipated outcomes if the student acted. Students responded by indicating one of four responses (No, A little, Probably, Definitely yes). Responses were scored with 0 points for a “No” response, 1 point for an “A little” response, 2 points for a “Probably” answer, and 3 points for a “Definitely yes” response. High scores on both the self-efficacy and outcome expectancy questions and the total score represented positive beliefs about students involvement in their educational planning process.

To provide evidence of the validity of this questionnaire, we administered a general scale of self-efficacy to students at the same time. The Self-Efficacy Scale (SES; Sherer, Maddux, Mercadante, Prentice-Dunn, Jacobs, & Rogers, 1982) is a 23-item self-report scale measuring a general level of belief in one’s own competence. Unlike many self-efficacy measures, the scale measures expectations that are not linked to specific situations. Respondents answer a series of statements about themselves using a likert-type response system ranging from “disagree strongly” to “agree strongly.” The SES has been shown to have good criterion-related validity, predicting differences in vocational and educational goal achievement, and adequate construct validity as shown

Table 1
Questions on Self-Efficacy for Educational Planning Questionnaire

<table>
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<th>Question</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. If your teacher asks, can you explain why you have an IEP meeting?</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. If someone asks, can you tell him or her your rights in the IEP meeting?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Do you know what the people who are at your IEP meeting are supposed to do?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. When someone wants to know what you do best, can you tell him or her?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. If your parents ask, can you tell them your IEP transition goals?</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. If you don’t understand something at a meeting, can you ask questions that help you understand?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. If someone asks, can you tell him or her your job interests?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. When you are working on something, can you ask for feedback from other people?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. If you disagree with someone at a meeting, can you deal with differences in opinion?</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Can you identify skills that should be worked on by your IEP transition goals?</td>
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76
Table 2

Questions on Outcome Expectancy for Educational Planning Questionnaire

1. If you participate in your IEP meeting, will that affect the transition goals chosen?
2. If you speak up, will your rights in the IEP meeting be respected?
3. If you participate in your IEP meeting, will you have an important role?
4. If you tell someone what you do best, will your transition goals include this?
5. If you know your transition goals, will you have some control in how you reach these goals?
6. If you ask a question at your IEP meeting, will you get an answer that helps you understand better?
7. If you communicate your job interests, will your transition goals reflect these?
8. If you ask for feedback on something you are doing, will the answer help you?
9. If you disagree with someone at your IEP meeting, will they listen to your opinion?
10. If you know what transition skills you need, will you be allowed to help choose your own IEP goals?

by correlations with related scales. The instrument's internal stability has been measured at .86. Total scores from the Self-Efficacy/Outcome Expectancy for Educational Planning questionnaire were significantly correlated with scores from the SES (r = .36, p = .008) as were Self-Efficacy scores from the questionnaire (r = .41, p = .002). Outcome expectancy scores from the questionnaire were not significantly correlated (r = .19) with the SES scores, but since the SES measures only self-efficacy, this was not surprising.

Analyses

To examine changes in self-determination, locus of control and self-efficacy/outcome expectancy, pre- and post-intervention scores were subjected to repeated measures analysis of variance using SPSS for Windows (Norusis, 1992). In previous research efforts, Wehmeyer (1993a) determined that young women with learning disabilities were particularly at risk for maladaptive perceptions of psychological empowerment and self-determination. As such, we were particularly interested in the impact of the process on males and females individually, so separate repeated measures analyses of variance were conducted by gender. Finally, we were interested in determining the degree to which student skills and beliefs at the onset contributed to their self-efficacy and outcome expectancy scores at the end of the field-test. To examine this, we conducted regression analyses for self-efficacy and outcome expectancy for educational planning scores, with locus of control (from the Nowicki-Strickland), self-regulation,
psychological empowerment, autonomy, and self-realization scores (from The Arc's Self-Determination Scale) as independent variables.

RESULTS

For the group as a whole, there were significant differences between pre- and post-intervention scores on the total score from the Self-Efficacy/Outcome Expectancy for Educational Planning questionnaire \([F(1, 49) = 11.64, p = .001]\), the self-efficacy scores from this questionnaire \([F(1, 49) = 9.39, p = .004]\) and outcome expectancy scores \([F(1, 49) = 4.68, p = .035]\).

When examined by gender, however, the findings were quite different. There were no significant differences pre- and post-intervention on any item for males. However, for females, there were significant differences in pre- and post-intervention scores on the locus of control scale \([F(1, 26) = 5.89, p = .02]\), the total scores from the Self-Efficacy/Outcome Expectancy for Educational Planning questionnaire \([F(1, 26) = 15.63, p = .001]\), the self-efficacy scores from this questionnaire \([F(1, 26) = 13.25, p = .001]\), and the outcome expectancy scores \([F(1, 26) = 8.24, p = .008]\). With the exception of ANS-IE scores, all changes were in a positive direction. Table 3 provides data for all dependent measures, both pre- and post-intervention, as a function of the total group and by gender.

Multiple regression analyses indicated that students’ self-realization, autonomy and locus of control pre-intervention scores contributed significantly to the variance for post-intervention self-efficacy scores, with all self-determination domain and locus of control scores

Table 3

Mean scores for all dependent variables.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Pre-Intervention Scores</th>
<th>Post-Intervention Scores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Group</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANS-IE</td>
<td>16.13</td>
<td>16.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD Total</td>
<td>96.34</td>
<td>98.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD Auto</td>
<td>63.85</td>
<td>66.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD SReg</td>
<td>9.77</td>
<td>10.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD PsyE</td>
<td>12.55</td>
<td>12.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD SReal</td>
<td>10.17</td>
<td>9.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEOFTot</td>
<td>37.64</td>
<td>38.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE</td>
<td>17.74</td>
<td>17.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OE</td>
<td>19.91</td>
<td>20.96</td>
</tr>
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accounting for 21% of the variance ($R^2 = .211$). Conversely, none of the factors contributed significantly to variance in the outcome expectancy scores.

**Discussion**

Although the empirical evaluation of *Whose Future is it Anyway?* yielded only limited support for its impact, we believe that, taken as a whole, the field-test results, using both empirical and anecdotal information, support the potential efficacy of involving students in the transition planning process. Before discussing these findings, it is important to note that results must be interpreted cautiously because there was no control group comparison available. This caveat acknowledged, we believe that the findings nonetheless contribute useful information where little or none currently exists.

There were significant changes in students' scores on self-efficacy and outcome expectancy for educational planning, indicating that students believed they possessed more skills necessary to participate in their planning meeting and felt that if they exhibited these actions, preferred outcomes related to their involvement in the meeting would occur. However, when the analyses were conducted based on gender, it became evident that these changes were primarily among young women with disabilities.

This is important for several reasons. Wehmeyer (1993a) found that young women with disabilities were disproportionately at risk for holding perceptions of themselves and their environment which were not conducive to self-determination, or positive adult outcomes. Research indicates that young women with cognitive disabilities graduate to less positive adult outcomes (Sillington & Frank, 1995; Wagner, 1989). We propose that one reason for this outcome is the fact that young women feel disempowered and that one way to reverse this is to involve students in the educational planning and decision-making process.

Anecdotal information from students suggested that they did enjoy, as well as benefit from, the process. When asked to identify their favorite part of the program, students identified: (1) finding out about community resources; (2) learning about jobs; (3) learning about 'myself' and testing; (4) learning about the law (IDEA); (5) getting to talk about my future and what I'm going to do when I graduate; and (6) learning to do something on my own. When asked to identify their least favorite part, students identified only the "writing" involved. When asked what they learned about themselves, students responded:
• “I can be more independent, go out on my own, do more on my own.”
• “I can go out and get help when I need help. People can help give me support.”
• “I learned we needed some more schooling.”
• “I learned I needed to set goals for myself about what I want to do after I graduate.”
• “In the ARD (Admission, Review and Dismissal meeting) you have a say-so, what you feel you can do and what you can’t do. It’s not one person’s decision, it’s like a group decision. Your opinion does count for something.”
• “I set some goals. My goals after high school are to get my own apartment and a job. My goal is to graduate from high school.”

The fact that there were no significant differences between pre and post-intervention scores on self-determination and locus of control scores limits the degree to which we can ascribe “success” to the curriculum, despite gains in self-efficacy and outcome expectancy. There are probably a number of reasons that these measures did not show change over time and which also account for the fact that locus of control scores did not follow the same trend as other scores. On a measurement level, both the ANS-IE and The Arc’s Self-Determination Scale are measures of global constructs. As such, changes across time result from very robust changes in environments, circumstances, learning or development. Locus of control and self-determination form based on input variables across multiple environments (home, school, community) and across the life span. Focusing on only one environment limits the potential that change will occur.

Similarly, it may be unreasonable to expect that any single-year intervention could overcome years of negative perceptions and beliefs based on students’ experiences. Students, and particularly young women, with disabilities, have come to believe that they don’t have control over their lives, particularly in educational settings. One attempt to provide control should not be expected to reverse these beliefs.

During our field-testing we encountered situations that illustrated how difficult it is to change the system and begin to rebuild students’ beliefs. Despite the best intentions and sincere efforts on the part of the project personnel and the school personnel to enable students to play a more meaningful role in the process, the process broke down on several occasions. Team members were added to the team at the last minute who were unaware of students’ involvement in the field-test. Personnel who were involved in the instructional activities were transferred or left the school district, with replacements unaware of students’ activities. Finally,
the time constraints involved with having meetings for all students too frequently curtailed the opportunities for students to participate and often gave the impression that the decisions were made before the meeting began. It will undoubtedly take several years of coordinated efforts to overcome some of these hurdles, and more like them, and provide students with disabilities experiences in their planning meeting that will begin to reverse their expectations.

Although there were no significant differences in self-determination total and domain scores pre- and post-intervention, the regression analysis did suggest that student self-determination plays a role in student involvement. Two of the three variables which predicted positive self-efficacy and outcome expectancy were subscale scores on The Arc's Self-Determination Scale.

In the end, our experiences proved that these barriers are not insurmountable and that student involvement in transition planning is an achievable and beneficial goal. In addition to the gains in self-efficacy and outcome expectancy scores, students were able to participate in a meaningful manner, as illustrated by the following examples:

- In one meeting the student was quite animated, bringing up her ideas for discussion. Her efforts were acknowledged and input taken seriously. During the meeting this student pointed out that the school’s vice-principal should have been at the meeting, an observation echoed by the meetings chair;
- In another meeting, a young woman participated, expressed her ideas and opinions regarding her placement and graduation. After the meeting the student’s teacher stated that the meeting was the first at which she has not cried and had to leave;
- One student stated that she was going to be in the work study program next year, but she did not believe that this would have happened if she had not spoken up during her meeting and stated her preference;
- A student who was unhappy with the classes she had been assigned to during the past year spoke up, disagreeing with her father’s preference and convincing him to change his mind because she was able to verbalize the reasons for her viewpoint.

While there remains much to be accomplished to validate the efficacy of student involvement in transition planning, and particularly the efficacy of the program described, we believe that the present study provides evidence that student involvement in transition planning is both beneficial and achievable.
References


**Author Notes**

Address all correspondence to Dr. Michael Wehmeyer, Assistant Director, Department of Research and Program Services, The Arc National Headquarters, 500 East Border Street, Suite 300, Arlington, TX, 76010. Funding for this research was provided by Grant # S083A90527 from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Women's Educational Equity Act program awarded to The Arc (formerly Association for Retarded Citizens of the United States). The contents of this report do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education and endorsement by the Federal Government should not be assumed. Information about ordering *Whose Future is it Anyway?* and additional information on The Arc's Self-Determination Scale can be obtained from Dr. Wehmeyer.