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Perceptions of Individuals with Disabilities in the Justice System About Their Transition Preparation

Justine Nicole Howarth

Brigham Young University - Provo

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Perceptions of Individuals with Disabilities in the Justice System
About Their Transition Preparation

Justine Nicole Howarth

A thesis submitted to the faculty of
Brigham Young University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Science

Betty Y. Ashbaker, Chair
Gordon S. Gibb
Darlene H. Anderson

Department of Counseling Psychology and Special Education

Brigham Young University

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ABSTRACT

Perceptions of Individuals with Disabilities in the Justice System About Their Transition Preparation

**Justine Nicole Howarth
Department of Counseling Psychology and Special Education, BYU
Master of Science**

This study gathered information about adults with disabilities who were served with special education services during high school and incarcerated after high school, on their job preparation plan and explored the effects of that preparation on the individual's perception of successful transition after high school. It also investigated what, if anything, could have been done in high school to prevent their entrance or continuation in the criminal justice system. Due to the difficulty in accessing this population, only three individuals were interviewed. However, the rich information provided from this study indicated that to help them live independently and successfully transition into adulthood and avoid incarceration, they needed the following supports: more teaching of practical skills while in high school to help them have better control of their anger and emotions, and help obtaining a job of interest, that would allow financial stability and skills.. This information may be beneficial to teachers developing appropriate Individualized Transition Plans. This information could allow educators to more effectively prepare their students to transition effectively and prevent them from becoming incarcerated.

Keywords: Individualized Transition Plan, transition, post high school, disabilities, delinquency, criminal justice system

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I would like to express my appreciation first of all to my family for the support they have given me during this study. Without their support and encouragement I would not have been so successful and found so much joy in this process. I would also like to acknowledge the great faculty I had the pleasure of working with during this study. Without their continual help, encouragement and guidance during this process this study would not have been possible. Lastly, I would like to express my appreciation to all of my former students both those who participated in this study and those who I had the pleasure of teaching. Without them this study would not have occurred. They have inspired me and they have now helped to make the lives of their peers better.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	ii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	iv
LIST OF TABLES	vi
DESCRIPTION OF THESIS STRUCTURE.....	vii
Introduction.....	1
Transition Plans	1
Statement of the Problem.....	2
Statement of Purpose	3
Research Questions.....	3
Method	3
Participants.....	5
Settings.....	6
Measure.....	6
Validity of Measure	8
Procedure	8
Interviews process.....	9
Interview data and confidentiality	9
Research Design.....	10
Data Analysis	10
Results.....	11
Demographics of Sample.....	11
Research Question 1	11
Research question 1a: Employment preparation	12
Research question 1b: Independent living preparation.....	12
Research Question 2	13
Discussion.....	14

Summary of Results.....	14
Research Question 1.....	15
Research Question 1a.....	16
Research Question 1b.....	17
Research Question 2.....	18
Limitations.....	19
Implications for Practitioners.....	20
Implications for Future Research.....	22
Conclusion.....	23
References.....	24
APPENDIX A: Review of Literature.....	27
APPENDIX B: Interview Form.....	39
APPENDIX C: Consent Form.....	41
APPENDIX D: Request Message for Participation.....	44
APPENDIX E: Interview Transcripts.....	45

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 5

DESCRIPTION OF THESIS STRUCTURE

This thesis, *Perceptions of Individuals with Disabilities in the Justice System About Their Transition Preparation*, is written in a hybrid format. The hybrid format brings together traditional thesis requirements with journal publication formats.

The preliminary pages of the thesis reflect requirements for submission to the university. The thesis report is presented as a journal article, and conforms to length and style requirements for submitting research reports to education journals.

The review of literature is included in Appendix A. The Interview Form is included in Appendix B. Consent Form is included in Appendix C. The Request Message for Participation is included in Appendix D. The Interview Transcripts are included in Appendix E.

Introduction

Many individuals with disabilities struggle with transitioning from high school to adult life. Their success is measured in the areas of employment, post-school education or training, independent living and community access. These four areas of concern for these individuals should be addressed in their Individualized Education Programs (IEP) in the Individualized Transition Plan (ITP). These transition plans are designed to help prepare the student in each of these areas with respect to the goals they hope to attain after high school.

Transition Plans

A successful transition to adulthood is the goal of any child working to be independently functioning. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA) requires that every student with a disability served in special education have a transition plan in place by or before age 16. This plan, included in the IEP, outlines the goals the student would like to achieve after they leave high school, the agencies they can be connected with after high school when their IEP ends, and smaller goals that serve as steps to reach the desired outcomes. The transition plan is key to those with disabilities, as they are in a vulnerable population, (Osgood, Foster, & Courtney, 2010) and they need more preparation than the general population. The National Longitudinal Transition Study (NLTS) and National Longitudinal Transition Study 2 (NLTS-2) findings suggest that despite strong progress made by many youth with disabilities in the four outcome areas, substantial gaps exist between youth with disabilities and their general education peers (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996, Sanford et al., 2011, Wagner, Newman, Cameto, Garza, & Levine, 2005). As a result, transition plans have been an integral part of an IEP, especially in the secondary education setting. Effective transition planning can help those students develop the necessary skills they need to find success in adulthood, such as “how to

maintain a home, manage finances, arrange leisure activities, be successful in the workplace and make important life decisions” (Smith, Polloway, Patton, & Beyer, 2008, p. 1). Students with disabilities might not acquire these skills unless specifically taught, and this deficit could affect their success during adulthood.

There is much research that indicates that not only are individuals with disabilities not as successful in transition as their peers without disabilities, but they are also coming into the criminal justice system (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996; Osgood et al., 2010; Sanford et al., 2011; Wagner et al., 2005). There have been multiple studies showing that as many as 34 percent of individuals in the criminal justice system have a disability (Osgood et al., 2010; Quinn, Rutherford, Leone, Osher, & Poirier, 2005). One study looked at the recidivism with individuals in the criminal justice system. The authors reported that many of those with multiple incidences in the criminal justice system have disabilities. The study also indicated that post-discharge transition planning had a positive effect on the juveniles (Trupin, Turner, Steward, & Wood, 2004).

Statement of the Problem

The problem addressed by this study is that research has provided little evidence to explain why students with disabilities are unprepared for successful transition into adulthood and why they become involved in the criminal justice system. In the state of Utah, audits of transition suggest the state would like to improve the way transition is addressed. As a result, there have been recent changes in Utah in the way schools address transition planning and services (Loving et al., 2012). There is no research comparing the perceptions of students with disabilities and the perceptions of experts in the field of transition. Therefore, this study

investigated the perceptions of high school graduates served in special education in regard to the role of transition services in their post-school activities and in relation to their incarceration.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study was to investigate the experiences of post high school students with disabilities who were involved in the criminal justice system after leaving high school. The more specific research objective was to examine participant perceptions in relation to the efficacy of the transition services received. It also examined actions that might have been taken by the transition team to prevent the participants' entrance into the criminal justice system.

Research Questions

This study addressed the following research questions:

1. Did the participants report that they had an Individualized Transition Plan (ITP) as part of their Individualized Education Plan (IEP)?
 - a. Did participants who had an ITP report that it helped them prepare for their careers/jobs?
 - b. Did participants who had an ITP report that it helped them prepare for independent living?
2. What did participants report when asked whether transition planning and services could prevent incarceration after high school?

Method

In this study, post high school adults between the ages of 18 and 25 who have a disability and have been incarcerated were interviewed. The interviews occurred over a three-month period. Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was received prior to the interview. IRB guidelines were followed during this study.

Interviews are a form of qualitative research (Beale, Cole, Hillege, McMaster, & Nagy, 2004; Hiller & DiLuzio, 2004). The process of interviewing can result in many new findings that will provide information related to the focus of study. For the interview to be most effective in retrieving answers that are rich in information from the participant, they should be open-ended questions (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012). Questions about basic demographic information are important to include as part of the interview. All questions on interview protocols should be written to address the research questions (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012).

Interviews were used for this study as an effective method for collecting meaningful information from the participants (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012; Pugach, 2001). The qualitative researcher gathers important information about the participants' lived experiences (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012). Interviews allow the researcher to obtain in-depth responses from the individuals' perspective. Interviews can be an effective form of qualitative research used in the field of education. Interviews have allowed individuals with disabilities to share information, and their stories can provide new insights and move people to action (Pugach, 2001). A semi-structured interview format allows the participant to share information without having to provide strictly guided answers.

The researcher interviewed three individuals over the phone. The interview was recorded so that both the responses given and the way the interviewee answered the question could be analyzed. Both the responses and the way an interviewee responds to a question can give insight into how the interviewee perceives the phenomenon under study (Anyan, 2013). This study gathered information that may help teachers design ITPs that might be more appropriate for post high school success for this population. The interviewer explored with students their experiences to determine how the ITP influenced their success. The responses could not be predicted in

advance; therefore additional questions were used to clarify or to add depth to the comments made during the interview.

Participants

The participants were two males and one female age 21 living in Utah County, Utah. The age range for the study was between 18 and 25 years old. They were individuals with a disability that have been in the criminal justice system at least once after they left high school. The participants were not selected from any specific socio-economic status or race. Participants fluently read and spoke English. Each participant may have known he or she was identified for special education, but did not know what their specific disability was called. They all had a disability. See Table 1.

Table 1

Participants

	Age	Sex	Race	Disability
Participant 1	21	Male	Caucasian /Hispanic	Yes
Participant 2	21	Male	African American	Yes
Participant 3	21	Female	Hispanic	Yes

Settings

The participants chose the settings. Each participant chose to be interviewed over the phone. The researcher conducted the phone interviews from her home.

Measure

Data were collected using the School Transition Interview (see Appendix B) and recorded through GarageBand. GarageBand is a software application for OS X and iOS that allows users to create music or podcasts (GarageBand for Mac). This program can be used to record telephone conversations.

Researchers at Brigham Young University developed the School Transition Interview. The interview guide contained questions about the effectiveness of transition planning for obtaining a job and independent living, and incarceration prevention.

The interview protocol included both demographics and open-ended questions. The eight open-ended questions allowed in depth responses that come directly from the participants' perceptions. The interview questions are found in Appendix B. There were two basic demographic questions: age and the number of years they attended high school. These were important to the study to make sure the participants are in the age group required and to see how many years they were in high school, as this affects the time they had to be prepared to transition after high school.

The next group of questions related to research question one: Did the participants report that they had an Individualized Transition Plan (ITP) as part of their Individualized Education Plan (IEP)? (a) Did participants who had an ITP report that it helped them prepare for their careers/jobs? (b) Did participants who had an ITP report that it helped them prepare for independent living?

The first question, “Did you have an Individualized Transition Plan in high school?” gathered information about their understanding of their transition plan and if they were aware they had one in high school. The next question, “Did you help decide what was in your transition plan? If so how did you contribute to what was in your transition plan?” gave information about how involved they were with developing their individualized plan. This related directly to the research as it gave insight on whether or not the students involvement and awareness of thier transition plan could have made them feel more prepared. The question, “Did high school prepare you for a certain job or career? If so, please explain how high school prepared you for a job or career?” gathered information about how prepared they felt for a job as a result of their preparation in high school which is an essential part of an ITP. It also gathered information about how specific the plan was to a certain job for which the individual was preparing. The next question, “How did your Individualized Transition Plan help prepare you for the job (career)?” provided insight into the perceptions of the participants about how well prepared they were for a job. This question related directly to the research question as it shared the impact of the ITP on transitioning successfully into a job, which is a main component of successful transition. The next question, “How did high school prepare you for living on your own?” gave information on the preparation they had with independent living skills. This question related directly to the question as it gathered information about how effective the plan was in preparing the participant to live independently. The next question, “What do you wish you would have learned in high school?”, gathered information directly what in the ITP could have prevented them from adjudication from their perspective. This directly related to the research question as it gathered information about the specific items in the ITP that the student saw as an aid to successfully avoiding the justice system and allowing for successful transition to

adulthood. Lastly, the protocol included two open-ended questions about their thoughts on what could have helped them from becoming incarcerated directly relating to second research question,: What did participants report when asked whether transition planning and services could prevent incarceration after high school? The first question, “What could have helped prevent you from being incarcerated?” gathered information about anything that the participant perceives could have prevented them from being incarcerated. The final question, “How could your ITP have helped prevent incarceration after high school?”, provided insight about what specific planning that could have been provided in an ITP would have been helpful to them to prevent them from adjudication.

Validity of Measure

The validity of interviewing can be compromised if there is not mutual respect, if there is coercion or if there is manipulation (Beale et al., 2004). The participants chose to participate and the interview was recorded so the tone of voice could be reviewed with the answers to listen for interviewer manipulation or coercion. The questions were open-ended for the freedom of response.

Procedure

The participants were contacted by a personal social media message asking if they would be interested in participating in the study. The participants were found through a recruiting statement sent through the social media site, Facebook, which was sent to “friends.” The recruiting statement was sent to any former students of the researcher would match those needed for the study or who might have connection to any former students that match the study. Those that received the recruiting statements were also invited to share this information with others

allowing them to contact the researcher if they were interested in participating in the study. The participants that had the recruiting statement shown to them had previously added the researcher as a friend by their choice. The researcher did not try to make any participant a friend that had not already become a “friend” by his or her own request. Once the participants chose to participate they indicated the method in which they would like to be contacted (by phone, email or continue through social media). Each participant chose to continue communication through Facebook personal messaging and this method was then used for all communication during the study. Each participant was mailed a consent form and was asked to sign it to indicate they would like to participate in this study. None of the participants were incarcerated at the time of the interview.

Interview process. Each participant chose to complete the interview over the phone. Participants answered the questions over the phone. The range of time for each interview was 10-20 minutes. The researcher asked for the participant’s phone number where would like to be reached and asked for a convenient time for the researcher to interview them. This time was scheduled. One day prior to the interview, each participant received a reminder through a Facebook personal message (the method they chose to have for communication in the study) of the interview date and time and were asked if this time was still available for the interview. The researcher then called each participant at the time previously scheduled and conducted the interview. At the completion of the interview, each participant received a \$20 Visa gift card.

Interview data and confidentiality. After each interview was scheduled the participant was reminded about the anonymity and confidentiality of their responses. The interviews were recorded through Garageband using a computer and after completion the researcher transcribed each. The interview responses were organized into themes based on the following categories:

demographics, transition preparation perceptions, and adjudication prevention perceptions. These categories were formed through the interview questions. The participants' names and personal contact information were removed from all documents and a number replaced each name.

Research Design

This phenomenological study was designed to investigate the lived experiences of students with disabilities who were served in special education during their high school years and had since been incarcerated. Studying lived experience “aims at establishing a renewed contact with original experience” (Manen, 1990, p. 31) as a means to analyze and posit the significance of the experience in the respondent's life.

This orientation assumed that one cannot truly understand the impact of past experiences until one reflects on their influence on the present. Individual lived experience is best studied using in-depth interviews (Marshall & Rossman, 2011) with prompts or questions designed to elicit the respondent's description of the experience without offering explanations or interpretations (Merleau-Ponty, 1962). The participant's contribution is to provide thick description of past experiences with reflection, and the researcher's contribution is to analyze the data for themes that may connect the past with the present (Manen, 1990).

Data Analysis

The qualitative data from the interview was summarized using descriptive analyses. This involved identifying these themes based on categories from the interview: demographics, transition preparation perceptions, and adjudication prevention perceptions. Themes were then found among the interview responses that emerged through “theoretical framework and methods

[that] match what the researcher wants to know” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 80). Each theme was “important in relation to the overall research question” trying to be answered (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Results

This study reported the perceptions of three adults with disabilities regarding their transition preparation in high school and their adjudication after high school. They discussed how prepared they felt prepared for a job and independent living from high school, their understanding of their ITP, what they wished they learned in high school, and most especially what they think might have helped them from being incarcerated after high school.

Demographics of Sample

All three reported their age was 21, confirming that they fit the age requirement for the study, which was between the ages of 18 and 25. Each individual in the study was also asked how many years he or she attended high school. They attended between three and five years of high school and each earned a high school diploma. Since each participant indicated at least three years of high school, they all had the time available for some transition preparation.

Research Question 1

During the interview, participants were asked if they had an ITP in high school. Every participant eventually indicated that they had one, but one of them was unsure what an ITP was saying “Um, a teacher like you?” and another participant just said, “I don’t know what that means.” Once each participant received an explanation they all remembered having an ITP in high school. Two of the participants indicated that they helped with the preparation of their ITP in high school and said “I told them my ideas” and the other said, “we just said some goals and

what I wanted to do after high school.” These two participants helped prepare their ITP by sharing their ideas for the goals written in the ITP. The other participant said he didn’t help decide what was in his ITP and when asked who helped put his plan together he said “my mom.”

Research question 1a: Employment preparation. Participants were asked if high school prepared them for a job or career, and how the ITP helped them prepare. All three indicated that high school helped them prepare for a job or career. Each indicated that high school prepared them for a career through “the transition classes, and reading” also “math.” One participant said that he was in a peer tutoring class where he learned the skills of “helping the Special Ed kids for stuff that they needed help with”, which helped him with the job he is currently in where he, in turn, now works with people with disabilities. Another participant said that she learned skills for getting a job overall, but also specifically for the career she was interested in at the time, which was nursing. All three shared how the ITP prepared them for jobs and careers. They said that because of what was written in their ITP they learned many skills. One participant said, “it taught me some techniques on like maybe on what I needed to use, like using a computer and how to write a paper and stuff like that.” She further said she learned study skills and that a goal that was part of her ITP was to “go to college.” Another participant said “it taught me how to interact with people at work while the other participant shared that his ITP helped him learn “how to help the adults with their problems” speaking of the adults with disabilities with whom he works.

Research question 1b: Independent living preparation. The participants were asked whether high school prepared them to live independently. One individual reported that “it didn’t” and shared that he is not living independently. Another participant shared that high school taught him that he needs to control his anger when he said “not get mad or punch things

or throw things or fight things” in regards to skills needed to successfully live independently.

The third individual shared that she was in “some classes that showed you ... how to budget” that helped her to prepare for living independently after high school. She shared that a “financial class” was the only preparation she remembers for living independently after high school.

Research Question 2

All three participants were asked what they wished they had learned in high school. One individual said “all the things I wanted to learn, I did learn,” which he went on to share included “math, get my reading score up, and interact with people.” The other two participants gave a list of items they wished they learned. One of the participants said he wished he learned more science like the skills of growing vegetables and also wished he learned how to “pay attention more.” The other individual said she wished she learned “how to live in the real world”. She indicated that these were skills such as filling out an application for a house or for work, and finding a job she was interested in.

The participants were asked what might have helped them avoid becoming incarcerated after high school, and how their ITP could have helped them avoid becoming incarcerated after high school. The two male participants said they felt that they might have avoided becoming incarcerated if they were taught better ways to handle their aggression like “no more fighting” and “not talking back.” One of them shared what would have helped prevent him from incarceration would have been to “teach me how to control my anger.” The other listed “learning right from wrong” and “minding my own business.” Although nothing was asked about the reasons these two males were incarcerated after high school, they eluded that fighting and their temper issues were a problem with incarceration and if they had learned those skills in high school it would have helped them. One of the participants answered, in response to what

would have helped prevent him from becoming incarcerated after high school, “Um, not beating up people so much.” The female participant said that she might have avoided becoming incarcerated after high school if she was taught the skills to “live in the real world.” She added more real life skills such as job interviewing, finding appropriate roommates, and finding housing. She said “maybe if they would have shown us how to get a job we wouldn’t have to go in and be like, grab something from the store and been like, put it in your pocket and just walk out.” This skill, she felt, would have prevented her from feeling the need to steal. She also said if she was taught “how to pick those right roommates, [to] not to get you in trouble.” She wanted to know how to choose a roommate.

The statements shared by the three participants answered the research questions in this study and gave insight what needs to be done next to help teachers see more success with the transition to adulthood of their students with disabilities.

Discussion

The central purpose for this study was to explore the perceptions of individuals with disabilities that had been incarcerated after high school to find out what could have helped them from becoming adjudicated and how their ITP could have helped. The findings from this study gave us the perceptions of three individuals that fit this description and provided us with their thoughts on the transition preparation they had in high school as well as their thoughts on what they wished they had learned to help prevent them from being adjudicated.

Summary of Results

This study examined the number of years these individuals attended high school. It is in the law that individuals with an IEP must have transition addressed and formally recorded in

their IEP by the age of 16, which is called the ITP. This means that they need to attend high school to have transition preparation occur. By finding out that these individuals attended high school in between three to five years; we know that they should have had some transition preparation according to the law in IDEA.

Research question 1. Do adults who were served in high school in special education report that they had an individualized transition plan (ITP)? Based on the information from three interviews, the participants remembered having an ITP, but did not remember it by the term Individualized Transition Plan without an explanation of the term. Most remembered contributing to their plan by providing the goals or careers they were interested in that were part of their transition preparation focus, but do not remember contributing in any other way. While it is possible that students remember having an ITP in high school, this data suggests that it might be that students with disabilities who have ITPs may not have been as involved in them as they should or they are not remembering their involvement. It would be beneficial to have more participation of students with their ITP so that they make sure to have the goals they specifically are interested in for transition preparation. If they were more involved in their ITP preparation and planning they may have felt they contributed more to them. This in turn might make them more successful as their plans would be more personal to them. If the students feel a personal connection to the goals that are written in their ITPs then they are more likely share their desires of what they would feel they need to learn or the path for employment and independent living they would like help with. As a result, this might lead to better success in these areas and less criminal involvement.

We know the importance of transition preparation in high school and for those served in special education with an IEP; it is legal requirement to address transition in high school. There

are limited services that these students can access after they age out or graduate from the special education services. Therefore learning the skills they need for successful transition after high school hold even more importance while they are still in high school. These participants knew they were served with an ITP during their high school experience, but share the limited skills they were taught and many more they wished their ITP and high school experience addressed more of the skills of employment and independent living. This aligns with what we see in previous research indicating there are huge gaps in the success of those with disabilities compared to those without disabilities. These skills are areas to teach more in depth in school as research shows that students with disabilities need more in depth teaching in order to learn (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996; Osgood et al., 2010).

Research question 1a. In regard to ITP preparation on employment, participants reported that the ITP helped them prepare for jobs and/or careers. They all expressed that they worked on a few job skills or skills specific to their jobs they have now. Some expressed that they learned skills or a job they did not currently have or are not currently working towards.

However, the participants expressed that they didn't learn all the skills they needed for jobs/careers. According to the research conducted in the NLTS, we know that students with disabilities have a harder time than those without disabilities in obtaining a job (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996). Many are unable to keep the job they obtain (Zigmond, 2006). One of the participants expressed the need for learning how to find a job that she was interested in, indicating that having that specific skill would have helped her find a job more successfully so she could financially support herself. The research also showed that the jobs that those with disabilities did obtain did not pay enough to support them enough to live independently (Zigmond, 2006). This directly supports the concern that one participant expressed with her need to steal to provide her

with what she needed as well. This could also be a factor for that participant who is currently not living independently.

Research question 1b. In regard to ITP preparation on independent living, two of the participants said that the ITP prepared them for independent living through teaching about finances and money. The other said it did not prepare them as they are not living independently yet. They listed that the ways they were prepared were through financial classes taken in school and learning they needed to control their temper. One participant indicated this was all that he remembered about any independent living preparation from school. This data shared with us that there may be little preparation in teaching skills these students need to live independently after high school and matches the research that show that individuals with disabilities are not living independently at the same rate as their peers without disabilities (Sanford et al., 2011; Zigmond, 2006).

Two of the participants listed life skills they wished they had learned prior to leaving high school, such as applying and obtaining a job they were interested in, interviewing, finding roommates, finding housing and applying for college. These social and life skills are important to learn for a successful adulthood. Research has shown that vulnerable populations like those with disabilities need extra help in learning the skills to transition successfully into adulthood (Osgood et al., 2010). Similar to the Osgood research, in this study the individuals also felt they needed to have learned more skills in living independently. We know that the research indicates that only 44 percent of the NLTS study participants were actually living independently when they were interviewed (Sanford et al., 2011, p. 39). Although two of the three participants in the current study said they were living independently, one stated that he was not living independently. All three felt they were not taught all they needed to know to live independently

after high school. The two participants, who reported they were living independently only three years after high school graduation, reached this skill faster than NLTS study participants; however the one participant who said he was not currently living independently matched the NLTS findings. These findings suggested that those without disabilities acquired independent living status about two years following high school, on the average, compared to the four to six years required by those with disabilities (Sanford et al., 2011).

Research question 2. What could have done in high school to help prevent incarceration after high school? We know from research that individuals with disabilities spend more time in jail than those without disabilities (Quinn et al., 2005, Teplin, Abram, McClelland, Dulcan, & Mericle, 2002, Wagner et al., 2005). In fact there are four times as many youth with disabilities in the criminal justice system at 34 percent than in the regular school system at 8 percent (Quinn et al., 2005). A study on a program called “STAYOUT” for youth in the criminal justice system that was designed to help them transition into successful adult life after leaving this system indicated that those involved with work and/or school were more successful (Waintrup & Unruh, 2008). One participant matched with the research saying that that learning skills to “live in the real world” such as getting a job and living on her own would have helped them to avoid incarceration after high school since they would be able to provide for themselves and avoid stealing. However, the two male participants indicated that some type of preparation on aggression and controlling their temper would have helped them avoid incarceration after high school. It is possible that what the participants indicated were skills they needed to learn during their transition preparation, would be positive factors in preventing adjudication.

There are likely other factors that can play a role in how a person ends up in the criminal justice system outside of what was shared by these individuals. However, their perceptions of the underlying factors are important. Their perceptions of the skills that might have helped them be more successful and avoid adjudication are potentially good areas to include in future transition curricula. The skills that they indicated a lack of proficiency in did not help them to avoid incarceration.

Limitations

This study was limited in its scope because of the nature of the population in the study. The population was a representation of individuals from Utah County only. This was a convenience sample of former students who had been incarcerated after leaving high school and were willing to be interviewed. It was a small number of individuals due to the difficulty in finding willing participants, from a small convenience sample pool of individuals, who were in the correct age group, had a disability, were former high school students and were incarcerated after high school. A few individuals did not return consent forms after verbally expressing their desire to participate; this prevented them from participating in the study.

Including a random sample of unknown adults would likewise have strengthened study findings. The participants were individuals who have been at risk and/or are at risk and have been in trouble with the law. These individuals also have a disability.

A potential limitation to this study is that the researcher is the former teacher of the participants and this may have caused the participants to answer differently than if they were in the presence of an unfamiliar interviewer. However, the individuals were assured that the information would remain anonymous. Because they did not have the questions to review beforehand, the answers are more likely to be truthful than if they were preplanned. The

answers were also more likely to be truthful because the participants previously gained the researcher's trust as they were former students.

Another limitation is that someone may have replied to the query falsely reporting that he or she has been incarcerated. All indicated that they had previously been incarcerated, but there is no documentation in this study or any questioning about their criminal records to prove incarceration, only their personal response that they had been incarcerated after high school.

In summary, this study was limited in its scope due to the population sampled. Because the participants were not a randomized sample and there were only three participants, results of this study cannot be generalized to the larger population. Nevertheless, study findings could be considered a preliminary step to improving transition services for individuals with disabilities who have been incarcerated or who are at risk for incarceration. The study sheds valuable insights stemming from the perceptions of a small group of individuals in Utah County in relation to their transition preparation in a high school setting.

Implications for Practitioners

The data consist of the responses of three adults who have been incarcerated after high school and have now reflected on what they did and didn't learn in high school. Study results can benefit those teaching and managing the IEPs and ITPs of students with disabilities at the high school level in many ways. For example, teachers would do well to focus on the skills and subject area content mentioned in the interviews. Social skill instruction, including anger management techniques, work related social skills, independent living skills, communication skills and skills related to understanding and connecting to the ITP are areas deserving increased emphasis before students leave high school.

Teachers need to incorporate more social skills instruction. The two main areas important to two study participants are aggression and work, as they felt these directly related to their incarceration. Other skills to teach would be those that an adult needs to be a responsible citizen as it would prevent them in acting in a way that would get them in trouble, such as stealing. These skills could be part of a social skills curriculum especially for the students that teachers or IEP case managers might feel would be more at risk for these behaviors. Another teaching area would be the social skills that are used in a work setting. One of the individuals shared that skills of communicating with people at work has helped him and those skills are necessary to keep the job he obtained, thus allowing him to financially support himself. With this ability to financially support them, there would be less pressure to break the law to survive and this could lead to less incarceration as one individual expressed.

Teachers also need to incorporate teaching practical life skills in their curriculum. One participant called these skills the ability to “live in the real world”. Practical life skills such as filling out a job application or searching for housing must be taught explicitly so students understand not only what to do, but when to appropriately use the skill. These vital skills should be paired with the academics being taught in school. If more students with disabilities learned these vital life skills they would likely find more success as adults and have less incarceration incidents. The social skills and practical life skills that were shared by the three individuals as weaknesses directly match areas of the deficit of those with disabilities from previous studies.

Another instructional area to address based on the results of this study is to connect the students to their IEPs and ITPs. These documents are intended to guide the instructional focus in high school settings. These documents include transition planning. The participants in this study did not all feel they were the main contributors to the IEP process. One participant did not feel

he contributed at all. If they are not personally invested in their IEPs and ITPs then they may not be addressing perceived needs. If future students were more actively engaged in their IEPs and ITPs and felt the ITP addressed their goals, they may be more likely to acquire the skills needed to be successful.

Teachers develop curriculum to help them teach the academic content and life skills their students need. This research highlights specific areas of curricular importance, based on the perceptions of former high school students. If these results are considered in light of previous findings and combined with teacher knowledge and effective teaching practices, increased instances of successful transitioning to adulthood and less adjudication are likely to occur.

Implications for Future Research

Additional research is needed to determine how to more effectively develop, implement, and assess the effects of a carefully planned ITP. Future research could include studies using a larger sampling of adjudicated individuals with disabilities as well as different age groups. Including a larger number of questions would likewise allow for a more comprehensive analysis of factors relating to successful post-secondary outcomes for this particular group of at-risk students.

Additional research should be conducted examining the implementation of some of the suggested content areas that were shared by the participants in the current study. As mentioned previously, subject areas to be addressed include social skills (both for anger management and work social skills), independent living skills and skills to understand and connect to their ITP. Future studies should be paired with follow up interviews, evaluating whether implementation in these content areas helped provide more success and less adjudication. Researchers would do

well to examine the instructional areas in more depth and consider current findings in light of previous research.

Future studies might examine the perceptions of youth currently in high school to identify subject areas of particular importance. After the subject areas and skills are identified, additional studies are needed to evaluate the application of those skills and to perform a longitudinal follow up. These studies could provide important insights, potentially disclosing the best approaches to take in implementing the IEP and ITP and the subsequent effect on the successful transition of individuals with disabilities to post-secondary settings.

Conclusion

This study examined the perceptions of three individuals with disabilities who were incarcerated after high school. Interview questions specifically related to their transition preparation in high school and the skills needed to achieve success in the work place and avoid incarceration. Participant responses suggested that the increased teaching of practical life skills in high school might have helped them better control their anger and emotions, obtain a job of interest and achieve financial stability. The acquisition of these skills might have allowed them to live more independently, avoid incarceration, and successfully transition into adulthood.

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APPENDIX A: Review of Literature

Disabilities

A disability is defined as “a limitation in the ability to pursue an occupation because of a physical or mental impairment” (Merriam-Webster dictionary). In the education system in Utah, there are thirteen categories in which a student can be classified for special education with a disability that can be physical or mental. These disabilities have an effect on the students’ learning and progress in education as indicated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA).

There are two general categories of student with disabilities: severe/profound and mild/moderate. Mild/moderate disabilities are higher functioning disabilities such as, Specific Learning Disabilities, Emotional Behavior Disorder and even Other Health Impaired. These students perform academically in higher ranges and their abilities are less impaired than those with severe disabilities. Each of these students who is classified with one of these disabilities that impacts their learning can then receive special education services. One of those services is their right to an Individualized Education Program (IEP) that incorporates goals for their progress in academics and other areas. This IEP plan has another section added in secondary education and is called the Individualized Transition Plan (ITP) (Utah Board of Education Special Education Rules and Regulations).

Transition for Students with Disabilities

Individuals with disabilities struggle with transitioning from high school to adult life. This success is measured in the areas of employment, post-school education or training, independent living and community access. These four areas are areas of concern for these

individuals and are what will be addressed in their IEP's in the ITP section or their Transition Plan.

Transition plans. A successful transition to adulthood where a child is independently functioning is the goal of any child. IDEA states the every student with a disability that is served with special education services must have a transition plan by or before age 16. This plan entails the goals the student has to after they leave high school, the agencies they can be connected with after high school when their IEP ends as well as smaller goals that serves as steps to reach their desired outcome. This transition plan help is key to those with disabilities, as they are in a vulnerable population (Osgood, Foster, & Courtney, 2010), and they need more help than the usual population. The National Longitudinal Transition Study (NLTS) found that despite strong progress made by many youth with disabilities in the four outcome areas, the NLTS found substantial gaps between youth with disabilities and their peers in the general population (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996). As a result, transition plans have been an integral part of a student's IEP, especially in the secondary education setting. This plan can help those students develop the necessary skills they need to find success in adulthood (Smith, Polloway, Patton, & Beyer, 2008). Some of these skills that are needed for adulthood are "how to maintain a home, manage finances, arrange leisure activities, be successful in the workplace and make important life decisions" (Smith et al., 2008, p. 1). Each of these examples are skills that unless taught, might not be acquired by students with disabilities and could effect their success during adulthood.

In a study of "vulnerable populations," special education was one of the seven categories. These vulnerable populations are studied to see what the post-secondary outcomes are for each group. In this study, Osgood states that "Vulnerable populations deserve special

attention during the transition to adulthood not only because they have more trouble meeting life's challenges but because all young adults are facing especially big hurdles today" (Osgood et al., 2010, p. 13). Students with disabilities experience a myriad of difficulties in their adult life. These include struggles in any of the four main transition categories such as employment, post-school education or independent living (Osgood et al., 2010). There is a significant difference in the number of students with disabilities that complete post-school education as compared to those without disabilities (Osgood et al., 2010). Osgood reported "57 percent of youth from special education have full-time employment three to five years after high school, compared to 69 percent for other youth" (Osgood et al., 2010, p. 10). These statistics indicate only some of the struggles that have been reported as effecting students' success as they transition into adulthood.

In the state of Utah, there has been a stronger focus on building transition preparation for students with disabilities. Much research that indicates similar outcomes as the NLTS and National Longitudinal Transition Study 2 (NLTS-2) that have started the efforts to have transition be a larger focus than it has been in the past. The state office of education is seeing the same need to prepare the students for after high school (Loving et al., 2012).

After students that are classified in special education leave high school they have until they earn a diploma or reach age twenty-two before the special education services end. There are limited services to help these individuals after high school. Agencies that can provide services to help the student such as Vocational Rehabilitation and the Division of Services to People with Disabilities have limited funds and waiting lists preventing these individuals from receiving services right away. The limited access to resources can be a detriment to their success after high school as well.

Assumptions can be made that more support is needed if we are to increase success with those with disabilities in their transition to adulthood. Some services are available to students that are classified as having a disability such as the Division of Services to People with Disabilities (DSPD) and Vocational Rehabilitation. These supports are services that aid a student in those areas such as post-secondary education or employment. There are funds distributed to these agencies to help individual students, however not all students are able to receive funds. These services also are limited to a short period of time such as a few months after a student is able to earn a job. After those funds are used or the time period has been met those services end. These services are beneficial for such as short period of time that better results in success in adulthood still remain low.

Areas of transition. Transition covers four major areas: Employment, Post-School Education, and Independent Living and Community Access. Each of these areas is addressed in a student's transition plan in the IEP. The areas addressed depend on what is individually needed for each student. Goals and services are found to help promote progress towards each of these areas of the ITP.

The NLTS completed in 1996 explored areas of Post-Secondary Education, Employment, Residential Independence. There were eight thousand students with disabilities with eleven categories of Special education in this study. This was a very comprehensive study of the transitional outcomes of those with disabilities. The NLTS offers a unique opportunity to examine post-school outcomes from a longitudinal perspective for a nationally representative sample of youth with disabilities (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996). The NLTS also enables us to examine a diverse set of post-school outcomes (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996).

The NLTS-2 was conducted in several waves that began in 2001. Wave two addresses questions about the students' transition outcomes. This study was over ten years and studied "experiences and achievements" of youth with disabilities (Wagner et al., 2005, p. ES-1). The participants were ages thirteen to sixteen and had received special education services. In this ten-year study they studied the thirteen categories in a random sampling of disabilities and the study was completed in five waves. They first found the academic levels of the students participating. They then followed up with transcripts of the students reported annually. This was a large study or over 11,000 participants.

These two studies have been the only major studies to collect transition information on large populations of students with disabilities. The information and statistics from these studies has provided for much of our information of the concerns of students with disabilities and their lack of success in transitioning into adulthood.

Employment. The NLTS found that some disability categories showed strong gains in outcomes over time, but still lagged behind their peers. There have been increases in employment success for those with disabilities, students with mental retardation earning employment is significantly below those without disabilities (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996). Other studies were done to show similar findings with those that were diagnosed Emotional or Behavior Disorder (Zigmond, 2006). Of those that were able to attain a job then did not stay in that job and lacked an increase in both wage and hours. These jobs that they were able to earn also did not allow them to earn enough to live independently (Zigmond, 2006). This states that progress has been made that improves how children with disabilities succeed after graduation in employment; however, even with this great improvement there is a huge gap between those with

disabilities success and the peers without. More transition services are needed especially to help them to be successful as soon after leaving school as possible (Zigmond, 2006).

Post-Secondary education. In the NTLs, one part of research was on the percent of students that were continuing on to post-secondary education after high school. The study found that when youth with disabilities had been out of school up to two years, only fourteen percent were reported to have attended some type of postsecondary school during the preceding year, compared with fifty-three percent for youth in the general population who had been out of school about the same length of time (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996). The out come of continuing on to post-secondary education is no very likely for those that have a disability, especially right out of high school. The statistics improve when the students have been out of high school three to five years. “78% of graduates in the general population had attended postsecondary schools, in contrast to 37% of youth with disabilities” (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996, p. 4). This information might show that students with disabilities are not prepared to continue onto post-high school education when they leave high school. The level of residential independence among youth with disabilities was significantly below that of youth in the general population (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996).

Independent living. The NLTS-2 provided information that indicated that there was less success with living independently for those with disabilities than with those without disabilities. Individuals were interviewed after leaving high school and the study found that “young adults with disabilities were less likely to be living independently than were their same-age peers in the general population, of whom 44 percent were reported to be living independently at the time of the interview” (Sanford et al., 2011, p. 39). Those that were living independently after high school who had dis abilities were more likely to be living independently four to six years after

high school rather than two years (Sanford et al., 2011). This indicates that those with disabilities are not as successful with independently living, which is part of successful transition to adulthood. These individuals that were interviewed were also interviewed were also asked about parenting and marital status when inquiring about independently living. There was not a large difference between those with and without disabilities that had or were fathering a child however there was a difference in those involved in marital relationships. “Young adults with disabilities were less likely to be married or living in a marriage-like relationship than were their same-age peers in the general population, of whom 24 percent reported to have been married or living in a marriage-like relationship within 6 years of leaving high school” (Sanford et al., 2011 p. 43).

The last part of the Independent living portion of the interview asked about their financial independence. Having financial independence was measured by them having and maintaining bank accounts, a skill that independent adults most likely have. They found that “young adults with disabilities were less likely to have a checking account or credit card than were their same-age peers in the general population, of whom 71 percent and 55 percent, respectively, reported to have achieved this level of financial independence” (Sanford et al., 2011 p. 46). This information stresses the importance of addressing these independent living skills with those that have disabilities as they are behind their peers in these areas.

Community access. Criminal involvement. Those with disabilities are increasing the jail system (Quinn, Rutherford, Leone, Osher, & Poirier, 2005; Teplin, Abram, McClelland, Dulcan, & Mericle, 2002). Those with disabilities, especially those with mild to moderate classifications find themselves in situations that can hurt their progression into adulthood. Crime is another serious issue facing those with disabilities. “...Young adults formerly in the foster care, special

education, and mental health systems have high rates of criminal behaviors” (Osgood et al., 2010, p. 10).

The NLTS-2 presented research in the involvement of those with disabilities in the Criminal Justice System (Sanford et al., 2011). In this study they found that more students with disabilities are involved in the criminal system than those without disabilities (Wagner et al., 2005). In a study researching the number of youth with disabilities in the criminal justice system it reported that there was four times as many youth with disabilities in the criminal justice system at thirty-four percent than in the regular school system at eight percent (Quinn et al., 2005). Of these individuals with disabilities in the criminal justice system 47.7 percent were classified as having Emotional Disturbance and 38.6 percent were classified as having Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD) (Quinn et al., 2005).

Another study shared similar information about individuals with disabilities being pulled over by the police. It indicated that for minor traffic violations individuals with disabilities rates were higher than the general population (Sanford et al., 2011). This study went further to say that “Overall, 13 percent of young adults with disabilities had spent a night in jail, and 13 percent had been on probation or parole” (Sanford et al., 2011, p. 59). The disability that has the highest rate present in the criminal justice system is Emotional Disturbance students (Sanford et al., 2011). In comparison to the other disabilities beside Emotional Disturbance, those with SLD were the next most likely to be involved in criminal acts (parole, probation, other-than-traffic violations (Sanford et al., 2011). Those who completed high school were one-third less likely to be involved in the criminal justice system (Sanford et al., 2011). “Rates of young adults with disabilities being involved in the criminal justice system within 2 years of preceding the interview did not differ significantly by household income, race or ethnicity” (Sanford et al., 2011, pg. 64).

A study was done involving juvenile offenders that had been incarcerated for 6 months or more and were transitioning into the community. The participants also had mental illness (Trupin, Turner, Stewart, & Wood, 2004). They were studying recidivism among the offenders. A few of the top mental disorders involved are depression, bio-polar, dysthymia, and attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (Trupin et al., 2004). This study shared information that many of those in the criminal justice system that have multiple incidences in the criminal justice system have disabilities. This information might indicate that not only are there students with disabilities in the criminal system, but also they are likely to repeat offenses without a transition program to help them. This study indicated that post-discharge transition planning had a positive effect on the juveniles (Trupin et al., 2004). Better transition planning might allow these individuals to be more successful and have less time and incidences in the criminal justice system.

Predictors for Success

Research was done on a project called “STAY OUT” that focused on helping young juvenile offenders with transitioning. “Findings from this research indicated that youth who become engaged in work and/or school fared better in their transition than those who did not become engaged. Therefore, employment and further education may serve as protective factors to reduce recidivism and improve post-school outcomes in the lives of formerly incarcerated adolescents with disabilities” (Waintrup & Unruh, 2008, pp. 128-129). This study shows that there may be predictors that would help those with disabilities to be successful in transitioning to adulthood successfully and avoid the criminal justice system if taught to them. More research is needed to establish predictors for success.

Purpose for the Study

More support is needed for children transitioning to adulthood, especially those with disabilities. Part of the reason few effective programs exist is the lack of good data. “Another requirement for developing more effective support for vulnerable youth in transition is more and better research” (Osgood et al., 2010, p. 17). Some research has been done like the NLTS in special education. However very little data is provided on “how they fare during the transition to adulthood” (Osgood et al., 2010, p. 17).

One study was done that looked at the “predictor variables on key postschool outcomes” (McCall et al., 2011, p. viii). They indicated that “negative student engagement (e.g., being bullied, being suspended)” and “positive school engagement (e.g., student connectedness to school, grades, involvement in extracurricular activities)” (McCall et al., 2011, p. viii) had an effect on their success outside of school. They also investigated “criterion variables” such as “high school graduation, postsecondary education, fulltime employment, and involvement in the criminal justice system (i.e., arrest)” (McCall et al., 2011, p. viii).

Post-school outcome surveys are one way that transition’s effectiveness has been measured. Questionnaires are done on those that have aged out or graduated from high school to find out how they have or have not reached their goals. The NLTS study is one of these follow-up studies that investigated such areas as post-school education, employment, independent living and integration in the community (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996). However this information includes statistics on what occurred after aging out or graduating high school and very little information about why individuals feel they are not successful. Information about how those individuals with disabilities feel could give insight on where educators could focus their teaching to be most successful.

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APPENDIX B: Interview Form

Transition Interview Form

Demographics

What is your age?

How many years did you attend High School?

Prompt: If answer less than 4 years, ask why? (GED, dropped out, attendance)

Transition Preparation Perceptions

Did you have an Individualized Transition Plan in high school? **(ITP is a written plan that is found in the students Individual Education Plan (IEP) that addresses the “postsecondary goals for that student related to training, education, employment and where appropriate, independent living skills” with “transition services (including courses of study) needed to assist the child to reach those goals.” Utah Rules and Regulations, Sec. 300.320 (b))**

Did you help decide what was in your transition plan? If so, how did you contribute to what was in your transition plan?

Did high school prepare you for a certain job or career? If so, please explain how high school prepared you for a job or career?

How did your Individualized Transition Plan help prepare you for the job (career)?

Prompt: What skills did you learn?

How did high school prepare you for living on your own?

What do you wish you would have learned in high school?

Adjudication Prevention Perceptions

What could have helped prevent you from being incarcerated?

How could your ITP have helped prevent incarceration after high school?

APPENDIX C: Consent Form

Consent to be a Research Subject

Introduction

This research study is being conducted by **Justine Howarth and Professor Betty Ashbaker** at Brigham Young University **Counseling and Psychology Special Education Department** to determine the perceptions of students with disabilities regarding their job preparedness and their perceptions of what was needed in high school to keep them out of the criminal justice system.

You were invited to participate because **your views would be beneficial in this study.**

Procedures

If you agree to participate in this research study, the following will occur:

- you will be interviewed for approximately twenty (20) minutes about perceptions on your transition preparation in school and what could have prevented your admittance to jail.
- the interview will be audio recorded to ensure accuracy in reporting your statements
- the interview will take over the phone or through webchat at a time and date that is convenient for you.
- total time commitment will be [20] minutes

Risks/Discomforts

The possible realistic risks or discomforts you may occur would be emotional discomfort or embarrassment.

The researcher will minimize these risks by keeping your interview information anonymous.

Benefits

There will be no direct benefits to you. It is hoped, however, that through your participation researchers may learn about perceptions of those with disabilities that have entered the criminal justice system on their transition preparation and these beliefs may be able to assist the those in the education system in improving their methods of assisting and preparing their students to transition from high school to society successfully and not enter the criminal justice system.

Confidentiality

The research data will be kept **in a secure location** and only the researcher will have access to the data. At the conclusion of the study, all identifying information will be removed and your name will be replaced with an ID number. The data will be kept in the researcher's locked **office**.

Compensation

Participants will receive a \$20 Visa gift card after the completion of the interview.

Participation

Participation in this research study is voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at any time or refuse to participate entirely.

Questions about the Research

If you have questions regarding this study, you may contact Justine Howarth at gottalovepink3@gmail.com for further information.

Questions about Your Rights as Research Participants

If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant contact IRB Administrator at (801) 422-1461; A-285 ASB, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT 84602; irb@byu.edu.

Statement of Consent

I have read, understood, and received a copy of the above consent and desire of my own free will to participate in this study.

Name (Printed): _____

Signature _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX D: Request Message for Participation

There is a research study is being conducted by **Justine Howarth and Professor Betty Ashbaker** at Brigham Young University **Counseling and Psychology Special Education Department** to determine the perceptions of students with disabilities regarding their job preparedness and their perceptions of what was needed in high school to keep them out of the criminal justice system. You were invited to participate in this interview because **your views would be beneficial in this study.**

If you would like to participate in this study and/or know of someone who would like to participate, please contact Justine Howarth by email at gottalovepink3@gmail.com.

Thank you for your consideration.

APPENDIX E: Interview Transcripts**Transition Interview Transcript****9/19/14****Participant #1**

I: Ok, What is your age?

P: Twenty-one.

I: How many years did you attend high school?

P: Three.

I: So did you graduate or did you leave with a GED, because usually high school is about 4 years?

P: Diploma.

I: So you graduated with a regular diploma?

P: Yeah.

I: Ok. Did you have an individualized transition plan in high school?

P: Yeah to get out of high school.

I: Ok, an Individualized Transition Plan is a plan that is created in your IEP. Do you remember your IEP?

P: No.

I: Ok, it was a plan that was put together for you that addresses your goals outside of high school

like, education, employment, living alone and those types of skills.

P: Oh, yeah, I remember those.

I: You remember those?

P: Yeah (laughter)

I: Ok, yeah, it's kind of a wordy thing. So yeah an Individualized Transition Plan, did you have one of those in high school?

P: Yes.

I: Ok, did you help decide what was in your Transition plan?

P: Uh, huh.

I: Ok, So how did you contribute to what was in your transition Plan?

P: Um getting jobs after high school.

I: Ok, and did you decide what those jobs were going to be?

P: Yeah.

I: Ok, for your contribution, did you tell the person that created the plan, or did they come up with the ideas? How did you contribute to that?

P: I told them my ideas.

I: Ok, so you came up with the ideas. Ok, did high school help prepare you for a certain job or career?

P: Yep.

I: Ok, so how did it prepare you for that job?

P: For like helping the Special Ed kids for stuff that they needed help with.

I: Ok, did they give you any classes or any training in it?

P: Peer Tutoring.

I: Oh Peer tutoring. Yeah you did that didn't you. Ok, yeah that was good training...

P: For you and for Mrs. Johnson.

I: Oh yeah you did multiple ones, ok. How did your Transition help prepare you for the job?

P: Um, with schooling and letting them know I had experience in high school with disabilities adults.

I: ok, what skills did you learn?

P: Um, how to help the adults with their problems.

I: Ok, how did high school prepare you for living on your own?

P: Not get mad or punch things or throw things or fight things. (laughter)

I: Ok, Anything else?

P: Temper.

I: Ok, controlling your temper. What do you wish you would have learned in high school?

P: Science. (laughter)

I: Ok, science. Explain a little bit.

P: Like because in science, with science there is a lot of things that you need to know about science like, um, what can I use for an example, growing vegetables or planting stuff.

I: Ok, yeah, so definitely for living on your own. Anything else you wish you would have

learned in high school?

P: Pay attention more.

I: Paying attention more, ok, alright, anything else?

P: Nope.

I: Ok, two more questions. What do you think would have helped you from being incarcerated?

P: Um, not beating up people so much.

I: Ok, how could your Transition Plan have helped prevent you from being incarcerated after high school?

P: Um, learning right from wrong.

I: Ok, anything else?

P: And minding my own business.

I: Ok, so if that was in your transition plan, you would have felt like that would have helped you a little bit better?

P: Yeah, pretty much.

I: Ok, those are all the questions that I have. Thank you.

*Note: This participant shared prior to the interview that he works with adults with disabilities is making reference to in some of the interview questions when he talks about skills he learned for the job he is in currently.

Transition Interview Transcript

Participant #2

12/17/14

I: What is your age?

P: Twenty-one.

I: How many years did you attend high school?

P: Five.

I: Ok, Did you have an individualized Transition Plan in High School?

P: Um, a teacher like you?

I: So an Individualized Transition Plan was part of your IEP and it was a written plan about your post educational goals, like training, education, jobs, and independent living skills.

P: Yeah I did.

I: Ok, Did you help decide what was in your transition plan?

P: No.

I: You didn't, ok. Who helped, or who helped put that transition plan together?

P: My mom.

I: Your mom, ok. Did high school prepare you for a certain job or career?

P: Yes.

I: Ok, what in high school helped you prepare for a job or career?

P: The transition classes, and reading.

I: Ok, anything else?

P: Uh Math.

I: Ok so Math, Reading and your transition classes. And how did, what in particular in those classes helped you prepare?

P: Uh Reading like the paperwork, and the money for the math, and for transition, how to talk to people.

I: Ok, how did your transition plan help prepare you for a job or career?

P: It taught me how to interact with people at work, and how to do stuff.

I: How did high school prepare you for living on your own?

P: I don't.

I: So it didn't.

P: Uh, Uh.

I: What skills did you learn, like for your transition plan, you said it helped you to get a job or career, do you remember and skills you learned that really helped you with finding a job or career?

P: I don't remember.

I: Ok, What do you wish you would have learned in high school?

P: All the things I wanted to learn, I did learn.

I: Oh you did? Ok, and what were some of those things?

P: Math, get my reading score up, and interact with people.

I: Ok, so those were your main things, there is nothing else you wish you would have learned?

P: No.

I: Ok, what do you think would have helped you from getting incarcerated?

P: Fighting, no more fighting.

I: Ok, not fighting, anything else?

P: Um, not talking back.

I: Ok, anything else?

P: No.

I: Ok, how could your transition plan have helped you to prevent you from being incarcerated after high school?

P: I don't know.

I: Ok, is there anything, like in that plan that could have been written or prepared or anything like that that would have helped you to not be incarcerated?

P: Teach me how to control my anger.

I: Ok, anything else?

P: No.

Transition Interview Transcription**12/20/14****Participant #3**

I: What is your age?

P: I'm twenty-one.

I: Ok, How many years did you attend high school?

P: Four.

I: Ok, Did you have an Individualized Transition Plan in high school?

P: I don't know what that means.

I: An individualized Transition Plan is part of the IEP, and it addresses goals for education and employment, job skills, independent living skills.

P: Oh yeah.

I: Ok, so you did have one?

P: I did.

I: Did you help decide what was in your transition plan?

P: Yes.

I: How did you contribute to what was in your transition plan?

P: Ummm.....

I: Like did someone sit down and talk to you?

P: Did someone talk to me about it?

I: Yeah, did you run the whole thing or did you just say some goals or..

P: We just said some goals and what I wanted to do after high school.

I: Ok, did high school prepare you for any certain job or career?

P: umm, I don't even remember (laughter). Ummm... yes.

I: Just a job in general, or something specific or both?

P: Umm, both.

I: What career? Do you remember what you planned for in high school? Like a specific career?

P: I think it was, I don't even remember. I think it was nursing.

I: Ok.

P: But then yeah.

I: We always switch what we want to do anyways.

P: Yeah.

I: Everybody changes their mind. (laughter)

P: yeah (Laughter)

I: How did your Transition plan help prepare you for a job or career?

P: It taught me some techniques on like maybe on what I needed to use like, using a computer and how to write a paper and stuff like that. You know?

I: Yeah skills like that. Do remember what other skills you might have, um were part of your transition plan? Do you remember any specific skills in your transition plan that were worked

on?

P: Just right after high school, just go to college.

I: Did you get any preparation on going to college like applying for college or anything like that?
Like applications or study skills.

P: I really don't remember. Like the study skills yeah, but not like to learn how to do an application for college or anything like that.

I: Ok, how did high school prepare you for living on your own?

P: There were some classes that showed you how to like, shoot I forgot what class that was.

I: Transition.

P: I can't even talk today.

I: You're fine.

P: Yeah like for sure how to budget.

I: Oh like a financial class?

P: Yeah like a financial class, yeah.

I: Ok so you learned like budgeting skills, any other skills for learning on your own?

P: That was pretty much it.

I: You did remember any classes for finding housing to live in, or finding roommates or anything like that?

P: No.

I: Ok, what do you wish you would have learned in high school?

P: Just more like how to live in the real world. You know like, how to fill out a house application, or like a work application, or something to get you prepared for like after high school, like how to find a good job in what you're interested in, or you know.

I: Yeah, yeah the practical skills.

P: Yeah.

I: Ok. What could have helped prevent you from being incarcerated?

P: Just, it could have helped on like really helping us out by, how do I explain this, I cant talk today for some reason,

I: no you're fine.

P: I'm usually like talkative but, umm, its just like they would have shown us on how, like maybe if they would have shown us how to get a job we wouldn't have to go in and be like, grab something from the store and been like, put it in your pocket and just walk out.

I: Right.

P: And maybe a job application would have helped, like teaching us how or how to do an interview or like, you know, like to pick or how to know what kind of roommate you're, how to choose people out.

I: How to choose the right person.

P: Right person or where your gonna wanna live and like if you have roommates you know how to pick those right roommates, not to get you in trouble.

I: Right. Ok, and obviously being able to apply for a job and get a job would be able to provide for you.

P: yeah.

I: ok that makes sense. How could your transition plan have helped prevent you from incarceration after high school?

P: How has it helped?

I: No how could it have helped the transition plan that you had, how could it have helped you from incarceration after high school?

P: ummmm...

I: Like maybe, you had said it focused on some outcomes for like going to college and things like that, was there things that could have been written in there or done in your transition plan that would have prevented you from being incarcerated?

P: Just more like how to look for that right job.

I: Ok looking for those right skills, like what you had said before.

P: Yeah.