

## ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: A PUBLIC SCHOOL-SPONSORED PROGRAM FOR STUDENTS AGES 18 TO 21 WITH SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES LOCATED ON A COMMUNITY COLLEGE CAMPUS: A CASE STUDY

# Vanessa Alvarez Redd, Doctor of Philosophy, 2004

Dissertation directed by: Associate Professor Debra A. Neubert  
Department of Special Education

Since the early 1990's there is a growing interest in providing inclusive age-appropriate experiences to students who are ages 18 to 21, with significant disabilities, and are still enrolled in public schools. These efforts have resulted in local school systems (LSS) developing programs and services that are located in the community and on college campuses. Although there is a body of literature on postsecondary opportunities for these students, little is known about the programs and supports provided, or the views of consumers.

In an effort to extend the literature, a case-study approach was used to gather information on a program located in a community college. Observations, individual interviews, focus groups, and document reviews were used to address the following: (a) What criteria (i.e., rationale for development, allocation of resources, staffing decisions, admission into program, factors that facilitate or act as barriers to program development

and sustainability) are employed in the development and implementation of a public school-sponsored program for students ages 18 to 21 with SD within a community college campus?; (b) What program components described in the literature as best practices for secondary students with significant disabilities are incorporated in this public school-sponsored program located on a community college campus?; and (c) What are the students' and parents' views on the role of this public school-sponsored postsecondary program for students with SD ages 18 to 21 in preparing students for the future? Software designed for use in qualitative research was used to sort and code information, and data were triangulated across methods, informants, and analysts.

Findings suggest that although the LSS developed and operated the program on a community college campus, students received segregated instruction (e.g., functional academics, social skills, independent living skills) and students had limited interactions with typical college students and limited opportunities for self-determination. However, students and parents were satisfied with the program, and students who exited the program experienced no disruption in services during the transition into the adult services system. Implications for future practice and research, and limitations of the study are discussed.

A PUBLIC SCHOOL-SPONSORED PROGRAM FOR STUDENTS AGES 18 TO 21  
WITH SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES IN A COMMUNITY COLLEGE CAMPUS:

A CASE-STUDY

By

Vanessa Alvarez Redd

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Advisory Committee:  
Professor Debra Neubert, Chair  
Professor Ellen S. Fabian  
Professor Frances Kohl  
Professor Margaret J. McLaughlin  
Professor M. Sherril Moon

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

In our society, postsecondary education is associated with better opportunities for success in adult life. Just like the general population, individuals with disabilities who participate in some type of postsecondary education--four-year universities, community colleges, adult and continuing education, and technical schools--increase their participation in employment (Stodden & Dowrick, 1999/2000). Academic and vocational training, however, are only part of the “college experience;” for many, the college environment offers the first taste of adult independence, exemplified by living away from home and taking direct responsibility for day-to-day life. Attending college also means exposure to new ideas and people, more opportunities to make choices, and for some, to take risks. In addition, college is where many lifelong friendships and important support networks are formed.

The significant impact that the college experience can have in shaping the adult lives of individuals with disabilities has been recognized in federal legislation and policy since the 1970's. For over three decades Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 has guaranteed these individuals access to postsecondary programs that received federal funding, which includes all public colleges and universities. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 extended this access to private postsecondary institutions. Furthermore, the ADA mandated that public buildings, transportation, and telecommunications systems, factors that can indirectly affect access, also be accessible to individuals with disabilities.

While Section 504 and the ADA guarantee that individuals with disabilities have access to colleges and universities, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

(IDEA) of 1990 and the IDEA Amendments of 1997 serve as the foundation for ensuring that these individuals are prepared to enter postsecondary settings. Under this law public schools are responsible for providing instruction, transition, and related services that will enable students with disabilities to plan for and participate in postsecondary education and achieve other desired postschool outcomes (IDEA, 1990; 1997).

In addition to mandating transition services, the federal government has allocated funding to support the development of programs, research, and educational strategies that facilitate the attainment of positive postschool outcomes. As a result, a large body of literature on “transition best practices” has been compiled (Benz, Yovanoff, & Doren, 1997; Heal & Rusch, 1995; Hughes, Hwang, Kim, Killian, Fischer, Brock, Godshall, & Houser, 1997; Kohler, 1996; Kohler & Rusch, 1995; Morningstar, Kleinhammer-Tramill, & Lattin, 1999; Neubert, 2000; Rusch, Enchelmaier, & Kohler, 1994; Rusch & Millar, 1998; Sale, Everson, & Moon, 1991; Wehmeyer, 1998). Many of these authors’ recommended practices have been incorporated into the educational programming in secondary schools (Collet-Klingenber, 1998).

As a result of legislative mandates and transition services, greater numbers of individuals with learning disabilities (LD), speech, health-related, sensory, physical, and other “high incidence” disabilities have attended college (Henderson, 1999). However, individuals with more significant disabilities (SD) have not experienced increased access to college. More often, after exiting public schools, these individuals enter into employment and the adult services system. For instance, in a study of young adults with moderate and severe disabilities who exited high school between 1990 and 1994,

Guy (1998) revealed that 78% of young adults with moderate disabilities were placed in competitive, supported, and enclave employment, while 66% of those with severe disabilities received services in sheltered workshops and activity centers. Only 14% of these young adults were reported to have received any postsecondary training.

Other follow-up and follow-along studies confirmed these findings. Results from the National Longitudinal Transition Study (NLTS) (SRI, 1997) indicated that among students with disabilities who had been out of high school for less than two years, students with mental retardation (MR) had the second lowest rate (12.8%) of participation in any postsecondary school. Only individuals with multiple disabilities had a lower rate (8.6%) of participation. In an extensive literature review of postsecondary outcomes, Peraino (1992) reported that individuals with mild MR (14%) and those with moderate to severe MR (8%) had the lowest rates of participation in postsecondary education. These findings clearly suggest that while individuals with SD have in the past participated in postsecondary education, they did so in small numbers.

Federal mandates to provide free appropriate public education until age 21, and the traditional model for delivering special education and transition services may have contributed to these documented low rates of participation in postsecondary education. Under the existing service delivery model, instead of graduating or leaving school with their same-age peers without disabilities at age 18, students with SD typically continue to receive education and transition services in high school settings until they “age-out” of the public school system at age 21. However, with the growing trend towards inclusive education, parents, practitioners, and researchers have started to question the appropriateness of the traditional approach for delivering these secondary special

education services. Critics have argued that this approach not only segregates students with disabilities from their peers, but it also leads to unnecessary stigma (Smith & Puccini, 1995) and violates the principles of normalization (Bishop, Amate, & Villalobos, 1995).

Concerns regarding the negative impact of serving students with SD over the age of 18 in high schools have generated interest in designing services for these students that are located in age-appropriate environments such as community settings and postsecondary institutions (Bishop et al., 1995; Moon & Inge, 2000; Smith & Puccini, 1995; Tashie, Malloy, & Lichtenstein, 1998). Over the past several years, there has been an increasing trend for public school systems to provide educational opportunities to students with SD ages 18 to 21 within postsecondary settings. For example, The *Transition Coalition* (n.d.) identified 34 programs nationwide, for students with SD ages 18 to 21 that were funded by public schools and located on local college campuses. In the State of Maryland, there are 19 similar programs operated by 12 local school systems (On-Campus Outreach, n.d.).

These students with SD between ages 18 to 21 have been served in various ways. For instance, programs have been developed on two- and four-year college campuses. These programs, often the result of collaborative efforts between the local school system and a postsecondary institution, address the needs of students during their last two to three years of educational entitlement (Hall, Kleinert, & Kearns, 2000; Grigal, Neubert, & Moon, 2001; 2002; Neubert, Moon, Grigal, & Redd; 2001; Neubert, Moon, & Grigal, 2002; 2004). Other school systems have offered individual supports (IS) to students with SD that allows them to attend college and pursue other goals in the

community. A plan based on individual interests and needs is developed for each student and supports are provided by teachers, college personnel, Vocational Rehabilitation, and adult service providers (Hart, Mele-McCarthy, Pasternack, Zimbrich, & Parker, 2004; Hart, Zafft, & Zimbrich, 2001; Page & Chadsey-Rusch, 1995; Tashie et al., 1998).

Although programs and services for older students with SD continue to proliferate, there is insufficient empirical evidence to support these approaches. To date, Neubert, Moon, & Grigal (2004) documented the activities afforded to 163 students with SD in programs in postsecondary settings. However, data were collected only from program teachers. Zaft, Hart, & Zimbrich (2004) found that participation in postsecondary education correlated positively with two employment variables (competitiveness and independence) in a matched cohort study of 20 students with SD who participated in postsecondary education and 20 students with SD who remained in high school. Page and Chadsey-Rusch (1995) elicited the views of students, families, and educational personnel regarding the college experiences of students with MR who received individual supports. The perspectives of students and families who participated in programs that operate from a college campus have yet to be explored. It is also necessary to conduct studies that document whether such programs reflect what has been identified in the transition literature as best practices. It remains unknown how programs and services within postsecondary settings differ from or build on the skills taught in high schools.

A body of literature is needed to serve as a resource for researchers and practitioners who wish to initiate and expand inclusive programs and supports within

college campuses, and for those with an interest in generating theories regarding postsecondary opportunities for students with SD ages 18 to 21. Clearly, there is a need for research that provides descriptive information on program development and implementation, essential program components (e.g., curriculum, cooperative agreements, staffing patterns), and student experiences and outcomes. Little is known about how to serve these students within a college environment, and whether students benefit from their postsecondary experiences personally and in terms of post-school outcomes.

#### *Statement of Purpose and Research Questions*

The purpose of this study was to describe the characteristics of a public school-sponsored program for students with significant disabilities ages 18 to 21, and to gain insight into the perspectives of consumers (i.e., students and parents). The following research questions were addressed using qualitative research methodology; specifically, a single case-study design:

1. What criteria (i.e., rationale for development, allocation of resources, staffing decisions, admission into program, factors that facilitate or act as barriers to program development and sustainability) are employed in the development and implementation of a public school-sponsored program for students ages 18 to 21 with SD within a community college campus?
2. What program components described in the literature as best practices for secondary students with significant disabilities are incorporated in this public school-sponsored program located on a community college campus?

3. What are the students' and parents' views on the role of this public school-sponsored postsecondary program for students with SD ages 18 to 21 in preparing students for the future?

#### *Methodology*

A qualitative single case-study was employed to gather descriptive information on a program that operated out of a community college campus in a county situated in the north central region of Maryland. Such qualitative methods are increasingly being used in special education to explore and document unique phenomena and innovative practices such as public school-sponsored programs that serve students with significant disabilities ages 18 to 21 in postsecondary settings (Bogdan & Lutfiyya, 1996; Ferguson & Halle, 1995). Program A was developed by the local school system to provide age-appropriate experiences for older students with SD who were still enrolled in public school and working towards earning a certificate rather than a standard high school diploma. The program had been in operation since 1994 and typically served 10 to 18 students each academic year. Included were students who were between the ages 18 to 21, and had been labeled as having mild to severe MR, severe LD or SED, multiple disabilities, or other health impairments. Students who participated in the program were also identified as needing assistance from community rehabilitation programs (CRP) to secure employment and live independently after exiting the public school system. According to TASH (2000) these students meet the definition for individuals with significant disabilities.

Program A was selected for this study for several reasons. First, it was nationally recognized in 1999 as an exemplary program. Second, it was located on a

community college campus. A community college was viewed as having advantages over four-year colleges and universities in this study because most communities have access to community college settings. In addition to being more readily available, community colleges and school-sponsored transition programs for students with SD ages 18 to 21 and have common characteristics such as shared funding sources and a similar mission to serve local graduates during their first two years after high school (Moon & Inge, 2000). The availability of community colleges and shared characteristics make it more likely that programs for students with significant disabilities ages 18 to 21 will be developed in community college settings. Thus, information from programs located in community colleges may be more useful to individuals interested in replicating or expanding similar programs for students ages 18 to 21.

After Program A was identified as the subject of this case study, data were collected during the 2001-2002 school year, over a period of 9 months. A multiple method approach that included individual interviews with key informants (e.g., students, teachers, college personnel, administrators, employers, same-age peers), observations of students at the college and in community settings, an analysis of related documents, and student and parent focus groups was employed to collect information related to program development, implementation and components, and student experiences. Four interview protocols used to guide individual and focus group interviews were developed specifically for this case-study.

Raw information was converted into text and entered into the computer using NUD\*IST 4 (1997) software, which was specifically designed to facilitate organization

and management of qualitative data. A combination of priori and inductive coding techniques were used to generate codes for data analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994). A provisional list of categories was generated using the research questions and interview guides as guidelines. All data were reviewed, sorted, and coded by a research assistant and me. The process used to develop initial categories was repeated when generating pattern codes and searching for emerging themes or patterns in the data (Miles & Huberman, 1994). To increase the reliability of the categories, I conducted inter-coder reliability checks during the data analysis.

In addition to the pattern coding, I conducted a content analysis to identify or verify any emerging patterns or themes (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 1990). Content analysis, which involved counting the number of times that certain phenomena occur (e.g., positive comments about the program, opportunities to interact with same-age peers without disabilities), served to provide additional detail or to confirm or refute explanations for identified patterns.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, I incorporated several procedures to enhance this study's quality and strengthen its credibility. During all phases of data analysis, I actively searched for disconfirming evidence to test emerging patterns or themes (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 1990). When negative cases have been taken into account, any patterns or themes that emerge from the data tends to be more convincing. Additionally, the triangulation of data across methods, sources, and analysts helped to establish the consistency of findings (Patton, 1990; Yin; 1994).

Ultimately, in qualitative research it is the reader who must judge the credibility of a study. To make certain that readers had the necessary information to make this

determination, I carefully documented and described the procedures and discussed the study's limitations and conditions under which the findings were generalizable.

In addition to supplying the data needed to determine credibility, I provided detailed descriptions that were necessary for establishing external validity. In qualitative research, external validity is not achieved through statistical analysis but rather through establishing comparability and translatability (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). Comparability can be described as the degree to which components of a study are sufficiently described and defined that the results may be used by other researchers as a basis for comparison with similar studies or populations. A related construct, translatability is the degree to which the theoretical frames, definitions, and research techniques are accessible and understood by other researchers in related disciplines.

Potential bias as the result of the researcher's presence in the setting is a primary concern with qualitative research. To address this issue, I incorporated procedures that promoted trust and built rapport with informants, and guarded against preconceived assumptions (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994). For example, I spread site visits over the course of the academic year, thus extending time in the setting. I also built in opportunities to spend time away from the site to avoid co-optation. Finally, I documented my thoughts and insights in field notes and memos; and when possible, I requested participant feedback from participants to verify information.

### *Significance of Case Study*

Since IDEA was reauthorized in 1990, students with disabilities have been guaranteed special education and transition services until age 21. With the increasing

emphasis on inclusion and age-appropriate education, how and where older students with SD should be served has become a prominent issue among researchers, educators, and families. Numerous public school systems have in recent years, developed programs and services on 2- and 4- year college campuses (Hart, Zafft, & Zimbrich, 2001; Grigal et al., 2001; Hall, 2000; Neubert et al., 2004; Neubert et al., 2001; On-Campus Outreach, n.d; Transition Coalition, n.d.). It seems however, that their development has been based largely on the philosophical belief in “normalization” and the desire to include students with SD in age-appropriate settings, rather than empirical evidence. Findings from this case-study provides the much needed data on program development, components, and implementation, and the experiences and outcomes of students who received services in postsecondary settings. It also highlighted several unique phenomena that have previously been undocumented in the literature. These include the extensive collaboration between the local school system and local community rehabilitation program (CRP), and the program’s ability to operate and secure services from college and community agencies without formal written agreements.

Along with documenting unique practices, through this case-study students’ and parents who participated in a postsecondary program were finally given a voice. Prior to this case-study, not much was known about students’ and their families’ views of these alternative programs and services. Unfortunately, these consumers of special education services have had few opportunities to express their opinions in previous research.

Before systematically implementing alternative approaches such as postsecondary programs and supports for students with SD ages 18 to 21, we as special educators must be certain that these alternatives do indeed provide inclusive and normative experiences, prepare students for adult living, reflect best practices in transition, and enable students to attain their goals. One of the main criticisms of secondary special education transition services is that we are sometimes too eager to recommend new strategies, services, and programs, even though there may be insufficient empirical evidence to support them (Green & Albright, 1995; Kohler, 1993). Furthermore, in this current climate of shrinking educational budgets, and increased emphasis on standards and accountability, philosophical beliefs regarding how students with disabilities should be educated, and good intentions may be insufficient to justify the development or expansion of alternative programs and services. This case-study offers valuable empirical evidence that may be used to supplement these philosophical beliefs and personal values. Efforts to develop or expand postsecondary programs and services without the benefits of research may make replication by others more difficult, and result in the development of programs and services that continue to segregate students with disabilities from their peers, and do not lead to improved postschool outcomes.

#### *Limitations of Case-Study*

In an effort to address the gaps in the knowledge-base related to public school-sponsored programs that serve students with SD ages 18 to 21 within postsecondary setting, a qualitative case-study approach was used to provide an in-depth description of a single postsecondary program located on a community college campus, develop a better understanding of the experiences and perspectives of the students and their

parents, and compare the descriptive data to the existing literature on best practices. When considering the findings however, several limitations must be taken into account. First, the program described in this case-study possessed unique characteristics and may not be generalized to other programs that serve students with disabilities. Also, data were gathered from students, parents and alumni who volunteered to participate in individual interviews and focus groups. Thus, the experiences and perspectives of these participants may not be representative of all students with disabilities and their families. Although every attempt was made to triangulate data, clearly absent from this case-study are the perspectives of college personnel who were involved in program development, and current administrators who could have addressed policy issues. The descriptions of program development are based solely on the recollections of school personnel, and documentation from the LSS. Finally, using the participant observer approach allowed me to develop rapport with key informants, and obtain the in-depth descriptions of the program and students' experiences. However, my participation in some program-related activities may have inadvertently resulted in potential "bias."

### *Definition of Terms*

*Adults with significant disabilities.* For the purposes of this study these are individuals with disabilities who have already exited the public school system and: (a) require extensive ongoing support in more than one major life activity to participate in integrated community settings and to enjoy a quality of life that is available to citizens with fewer or no disabilities, and (b) require support for life activities such as mobility, communication, self-care and learning necessary for independent living, employment, and self sufficiency (The Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps, 2000).

*Community-based instruction.* A method of instruction in which students are taught to perform skills within the actual community (e.g., home, work, college campus), rather than teaching them in a classroom and expecting them to generalize to various settings (Sitlington, Clark, & Kolstoe, 2000).

*Community Rehabilitation Program.* For the purposes of this study, a community rehabilitation program is defined as a program that provides services (e.g. supported employment, sheltered employment, residential services, vocational evaluations) to individuals with disabilities. In general, such services are provided to individuals with disabilities who have exited the public school system. Also, in order to serve these individuals, community rehabilitation programs often receive funds from state funding agencies.

*Developmental Disabilities Administration.* The Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) is the state agency that uses state general funds to provide follow-up support services to individuals with developmental disabilities. Funding is provided to such individuals based on eligibility criteria and priority group categories. Individuals with disabilities between the ages of 21 and 22 who have graduated from school may be eligible to receive funding for services under DDA's "Transitioning Youth" category (Curran, Krevor-Weisbaum, & Schwartz, 1993).

*Division of Rehabilitation Services.* The Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) is the state agency that receives federal funding to provide time-limited employment services under the Vocational Rehabilitation Act, to individuals with disabilities (Curran et al., 1993).

*Exemplary program.* For the purposes of this study, an exemplary program is a program that has received national or state recognition for implementing activities that fostered improved postsecondary experiences and student outcomes.

*High school certificate.* A document awarded only to students with disabilities who do not meet the requirements for a diploma but who have met the following standards: (a) was enrolled in an education program for at least four years beyond grade eight or its age equivalent and has reached age 21; (b) was determined by an IEP team to have developed appropriate skills to enter the world of work, act responsibly as a citizen, and enjoy a fulfilling life (Maryland State Department of Education, 1999).

*High school diploma.* A document awarded to students who have: (a) met the credit requirements for English, mathematics, science, social studies, fine arts, physical education, health, technology and education; (b) satisfied requirement in foreign language, advanced technology, or career and technology program; (c) have completed service learning hours; and (d) passed the State tests (Maryland State Department of Education, 1999).

*Mental retardation.* Includes individuals with substantial limitations in present functioning. The condition must have manifested before age 18 and is characterized by significantly subaverage intellectual functioning that exists concurrently with limitations in two or more adaptive skill areas (American Association on Mental Retardation, 2001).

*Individual supports.* Existing supports available through the college, vocational rehabilitation, local school district, and other relevant service agencies that enable a student with a significant disability to participate in postsecondary education and

community activities. Specific supports and services are identified, and an individualized plan that is based on the student's interests and needs, is developed and implemented (Weir, 2001).

*Parent.* Parent or guardian of an 18-to-21 year old son or daughter who is enrolled in a program that serves students with significant disabilities on a college campus.

*Postsecondary programs and services.* Programs and services for students with significant disabilities ages 18 to 21, who are still enrolled in public schools, and who are expected to earn an alternative exit document such as a high school certificate or IEP diploma. These programs and services are funded by local school systems and are located outside of the high school in various settings within the community such as two-year community colleges, four- year colleges or universities, vocational training schools, adult education centers, shopping malls and local community rehabilitation facilities (Grigal et al., 2001; Neubert et al., 2001).

*Program teacher.* An individual who is an employee of the public school system but is responsible for the daily operations of a program that serves students with significant disabilities ages 18 to 21, located within a postsecondary setting. This individual may have the title of special educator or program coordinator.

*Qualitative case-study.* A research method in which the focus of the study is on a single group, program, or organization. It entails immersion in the setting and use of multiple methods, and rests on the researcher's and participant's worldviews (Marshall & Rossman, 1999).

*Reputational-case selection.* A sampling procedure in which cases are selected based on expert recommendation (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993).

*Students with significant disabilities.* For the purposes of this study these include students who: (a) have been labeled as having severe to mild MR, severe LD or SED, multiple disabilities, or other health impairments (b) are enrolled in public schools and between ages 18-21, (c) receive special education services through a special program at a college campus, (d) are working towards earning a Maryland high school certificate, and (e) require extensive ongoing support in more than one major life activity (e.g., mobility, communication, self-care and learning) on order to participate in adult life (TASH, 2000). It does not include students with disabilities (e.g., mild LD, SED, and significant physical or sensory impairments) who, with support are able to meet the requirements for earning a standard high school diploma.

*The Governor's Initiative for Transitioning Youth.* In 1989, this initiative was implemented in the state of Maryland. The goal of this initiative was to coordinate the State's programs and services to students with developmental disabilities who were transitioning out of local high school systems at age 21 and would likely require supported employment services in order to maintain (Curran et al., 1993).

*Transition services.* For the purpose of this study, transition services are defined as any related services, instruction, or activities which prepare young adults with disabilities to assume the roles and responsibilities of adult life.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter includes the relevant literature and research related to educational opportunities for individuals with mental retardation (MR) and significant disabilities (SD) that are located in postsecondary settings. In the first section of this chapter, I will provide an overview of the major philosophical, legislative and historical events that have influenced the development of postsecondary education for individuals with SD. Next, I will review the literature pertaining to postsecondary programs and supports for this population. In the final section, I will discuss student and parent perspectives of the transition process.

### *Influences on Postsecondary Education for Individuals with Disabilities*

During the early and mid 20<sup>th</sup> century few services were available for individuals with SD within the community. Many received services in segregated institutions, while others remained at home with their families, receiving little or no outside support (Hardman, Drew & Egan, 1999). However, since the 1960's the emergence of theories regarding human services, legislative actions, disability rights movements, and the development of innovative educational approaches have significantly impacted services for these individuals and their families. As a result, more and a greater variety of services, including postsecondary education, have become available to individuals with disabilities. A discussion of these related factors that have influenced the development of postsecondary programs for individuals with significant disabilities follows. These include: (a) normalization and social role valorization, (b) legislation, (c) the inclusion movement, and (d) best practices in transition.

*Impact of Normalization and Social Role Valorization on Postsecondary Education*

“Normalization” is a concept that stemmed from the institutional reform efforts of the 1960’s. The normalization principle was first formally developed in Scandinavia by Bengt Nirje (1969) in an effort to reform human services for individuals with MR.

The normalization principle formalized by Nirje (1969) called for making available to all mentally retarded people patterns of life and conditions of everyday life which are as close as possible to the norms and patterns of mainstream society...The principle applies to all the retarded, regardless whether mildly or profoundly retarded...The principle is useful in every society, with all age groups, and adaptable to social changes and individual developments. Consequently, it should serve as a guide for medical, educational, psychological, social, and political work in this field (p. 180).

Wolfensberger is credited for popularizing the concept in North America (Taylor, Racino, & Walker, 1996). He defined normalization as “the utilization of means which are as culturally normative as possible, in order to establish and/or maintain personal behaviors and characteristics which are as culturally normative as possible” (Wolfensberger, 1972, p. 28). He expanded the application of normalization to include all individuals who were perceived to be, or at risk of being viewed as, “devalued” (i.e., individuals with disabilities) by society. In his definition, Wolfensberger emphasized not only the outcome of a “normal life,” but also that the means used to achieve this outcome must be positively viewed by the culture. Using methods that are negatively viewed would serve to increase the stigma attached to individuals who were already devalued. Therefore, services provided to people with

disabilities and other devalued populations must not only promote a normal lifestyle but also must refrain from further stigmatizing them and work towards increasing their positive image and perceived value in society.

Wolfensberger also believed that the primary goal of the normalization principle was to establish, enhance, and defend the “valued social roles” for people who were at risk of social devaluation. This led him to modify the normalization principle and propose use of the term “social role valorization” (Wolfensberger, 1983). According to Wolfensberger, enhancing the socially valued role and living conditions of devalued people can be achieved by enhancing their social image and personal competencies.

Implicit within the normalization principle and social role valorization are the importance of social integration and the provision of socially valued services such as postsecondary education. For example, in his discussion of the implications of normalization for adults with MR, Nirje (1980, p. 35) stated that “special vocational education, vocational guidance, assessment, and placement services are essential rights. Social training and adult education, either in evening study circles or in longer sessions at special courses in regular ‘community colleges,’ provide richer experiences and a more steady background for meeting the demands of life.”

The concepts of normalization and social role valorization have influenced the efforts to provide postsecondary education to individuals with SD since the late 1960’s, when services for individuals with disabilities began to shift away from institutions and began to be provided locally within communities. This influence is reflected in the arguments supporting postsecondary education for adults and students ages 18 to 21, with SD.

*Postsecondary education for adults with MR.* In one of the earliest arguments supporting postsecondary education for adults with MR, Bilovsky and Matson (1974) acknowledged that deinstitutionalization, which returned many such individuals to their communities, posed a new challenge to existing educational institutions to provide programs for serving this population. They maintained that the implementation of normalization required the participation of existing agencies and institutions such as community colleges in the delivery of services to individuals with MR. Jones and Moe (1980) reasoned that because normalization, and other practices (e.g., least restrictive environment, generic services, and mainstreaming) had been widely applied in elementary and secondary education, it was only logical to extend the application to adults with MR and provide education where other adults received it, in college.

More recently, Noble (1990) recommended that community colleges serve individuals with MR within the regular college courses. In addition, he recommended that special classes in independent living, vocational, and leisure skills be made available to those who were unable to participate in the regular college curriculum. Noble emphasized that these special classes must be offered on campus in order to avoid segregation and to promote normalization in cultural and age-appropriate environments.

Arguments for the development of postsecondary education for adults with MR were not limited to the United States. Uditsky and Kappel (1988) supported the development of integrated postsecondary education opportunities for adults with MR in Canada. They asserted that continuing education is a highly valued activity in society, and that this value would transfer to the students with MR. Moreover, postsecondary

education offered normative and challenging expectations that would help them prepare for challenges and to be participating community members.

Williams (1989) provided a rationale for teaching philosophy to students with MR within Canadian community colleges. The author contended that reserving courses such as philosophy only for students who were enrolled in the general curricula was elitist, and that philosophy should be made available to everyone. He also maintained that by learning about the process of thinking and logical reasoning, students with MR could improve their problem-solving and decision making skills, and be helped to acquire a better understanding of themselves as valued members of the community.

Rationales for providing postsecondary education to individuals with disabilities have been offered since the early 1970's. Until recently, these arguments had been primarily made in an effort to address the needs of adults with SD, who had already exited the public school system. In recent years, however, these arguments for postsecondary education have also been employed to support the development of alternative age-appropriate services to students with SD who are 18 to 21 years old.

*Postsecondary education for students with SD ages 18 to 21* For students with SD, the traditional means of service delivery often entailed having these students continue to receive special education services in high schools or in segregated special centers until they reached the age of 21. However, this practice of serving students with disabilities in the high school setting past 18, the age when most students graduate from or leave high school, isolated them from their same-age peers. Over the last several years, parents and educators have increasingly voiced their concerns with the negative effects of this approach to educating older students with SD. Advocates stress that the

principles of normalization, full inclusion, and chronological age-appropriateness only reinforced the inappropriateness of these high school settings (Bishop et al., 1995).

According to Smith and Puccini (1995), although educational programs should promote equal opportunities, individuals responsible for educational programming must be cautious that programs do not lead to unnecessary stigma. The authors warn that continuing to serve students with disabilities in school settings longer than their same-age peers may be detrimental in that this practice may inadvertently stigmatize students with disabilities.

In response to these concerns with stigmatization and access to age-appropriate experiences, parents and educators have advocated for services within alternative settings such as two- and four-year college campuses. According to Bishop et al. (1995) services and programs offered within these age-appropriate settings allowed for opportunities and experiences with other young adults in the community and helped disassociate young adults with disabilities from the notions of perpetual childhood. Furthermore, such programs provided this population with the link to a valued adult life (Fisher & Sax, 1999).

#### *Impact of Legislation on Postsecondary Education*

The basic principles of normalization and social role valorization required that individuals with disabilities be afforded the same opportunities as those without disabilities to participate in socially valued and culturally normative experiences such as postsecondary education. To ensure that these individuals had access to such typical experiences, it was necessary to back these philosophies with legislative actions. Such actions resulted in the passage of several pieces of important legislation that included

the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (PL 102-569), the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 (PL 101-336), the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (EHA) (PL 94-142), the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) of 1990 (PL 101-476), and the IDEA Amendments of 1997(PL 105-17).

*Section 504 and the ADA.* The first major piece of legislation to provide individuals with disabilities access to postsecondary education was the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Section 504 of this law stated:

no otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States ...shall, solely by reason of his or her disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance (29 U.S.C. 794).

This established the legal basis for individuals with disabilities to access and receive accommodations or support services in postsecondary institutions (Neubert, 2000). Furthermore, under the current federal regulations, these individuals who participate in postsecondary education can not be segregated from their non-disabled peers. The Office of Civil Rights of the U.S. Department of Education, the agency responsible for enforcing Section 504, stipulated that these federally funded postsecondary institutions must operate their programs or activities in the most integrated setting appropriate (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights, 2000).

Since this law was enacted, the number of individuals with disabilities who enrolled in college has steadily increased. In 1978 less than 3% of college freshmen reported having a disability. This percentage had more than tripled to 9% by 1998

(Henderson, 1999). This population of students included mainly individuals with LD, ADHD, TBI, and sensory and physical impairments. Section 504 has, however, also been instrumental in promoting educational opportunities for individuals with SD in postsecondary institutions. During the 1970's Section 504 served as an impetus to provide much needed services to individuals with disabilities who had returned to their communities from institutional facilities. Jones and Moe (1980) argued that Section 504 should be extended to include individuals with MR, and concluded that as a minimum

Community colleges, vocational-technical institutes, and four-year institutions which have open admissions policies should be open for mentally retarded persons to pursue degree and certification programs where the intended future occupation is an appropriate goal for the individual. Every non-degree program which has no admissions requirement, whether offered by a university or any other post-secondary institution should be open to mentally retarded persons (p. 60).

Section 504 continues to mandate equal opportunities for all qualified persons with a disability, including those with MR, within postsecondary settings. The impact of this piece of legislation has been especially significant for students with mild MR. Unlike individuals with moderate or severe MR, who are eligible for a variety of adult services (e.g., supported employment, independent living programs), few options are available to those with mild MR when they exit the public school system (Zetlin & Murtaugh, 1990). Vocational programs offered within community colleges and vocational-technical schools are one of the few ways that these individuals can access

the necessary training that will enable them to secure employment. Because of legislation, individuals with MR who may be able to successfully complete a program given minimal supports, such as those provided by a college's disability support services, have the opportunity to participate in these postsecondary vocational programs.

Although most postsecondary institutions offer access to programs, services and accommodations through Section 504, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) has also afforded individuals with disabilities with opportunities to attend college. Title II of this law extends the protections covered under Section 504 to include all programs and services, regardless of whether they receive federal funding (Neubert, 2000). Thus under ADA, all public and private colleges, universities, and technical schools are obligated to comply with Section 504. The ADA has also indirectly influenced access to postsecondary education by requiring that public transportation systems, buildings and services used by the public (e.g., college bookstores, student unions, cafeterias, dormitories), and telecommunications must be accessible to individuals with disabilities.

*EHA and IDEA.* The Education for All Handicapped Children Act was the landmark legislation that in 1975 guaranteed all children with disabilities access to public education. Under EHA these students are entitled to free and appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment, an IEP, nondiscriminatory evaluation, and access to programs and services available to students without disabilities (Neubert, 2000).

Although EHA mandated access to FAPE until students reached the age of 21, early literature and research, pertained primarily to younger students with disabilities (Neubert, 2000). Research that looked at outcomes for former special education students who had exited the public school system revealed that they experienced little success as adults. Numerous follow-up and follow-along studies have reported that these young adults with disabilities were less likely to participate in postsecondary education than their non-disabled peers. Findings from the NLTS suggested that compared to same-age peers in the general population (68%), youth with disabilities who had been out of school for three to five years enrolled in postsecondary education at a significantly lower rate (27%) (SRI, 1997). These youth with disabilities were also more likely to be unemployed or underemployed, earning low wages, arrested, socially isolated, and living at home after exiting high school (Edgar & Levine, 1987; Frank, Sitlington, Cooper, & Cool, 1990; Haring & Lovett, 1990; SRI, 1997; Wehman, Kregel, & Seyfarth, 1985; Peraino, 1992).

In an attempt to improve postsecondary outcomes for students with disabilities, Congress reauthorized and renamed EHA, calling it the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1990. This piece of legislation and the following IDEA Amendments of 1997 reflect a shift in federal policy from strictly providing equal access to educational opportunities, to making certain that these opportunities will prepare students for achieving their future goals of postsecondary education, employment, and independent living (Storms, O'Leary, & Williams, 2000). IDEA states that by the age of 16 or younger if appropriate, a statement of needed transition services must be included in the students' IEP. These transition services are defined as:

A coordinated set of activities for a student, designated within an outcome oriented process, which promotes movement from school to postschool activities, including post-secondary education, vocational training, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation. The coordinated set of activities shall be based upon the student's needs, taking into account the student's preferences and interests and shall include instruction, community experiences, the development of employment and other post-school living objectives, and when appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation (IDEA 1990, Section 300.18).

The definition of transition services remained the same in the IDEA Amendments of 1997. However, the law mandated that transition planning begin earlier than age sixteen. The IEP must now include, "beginning at age 14 (or earlier if determined appropriate by the IEP team) and updated annually, a statement of the transition service needs of the student under applicable components of the student's IEP that focuses on the student's course of study" (300.347(b)(1)). The purpose of the statement of transition services needs is to ensure that the student's educational programming is aligned with his or her identified postsecondary goals. In order to attain these identified goals, members of the IEP team (e.g., special educators, parents, students) must now be aware of curricular and diploma options, prerequisites for vocational programs, and college entrance requirements as early as the middle school years (Neubert, 2000), and demonstrate how the planned course of studies are linked to these goals (DeStefano & Hasazi, 2000).

IDEA enables all students with SD to identify various postschool outcomes, including participation in postsecondary education. Identification of this outcome (through the student's interests, strengths, and needs), however, is only the first step. The law also requires members of the IEP team to develop the necessary plan of action by acquiring information on the various postsecondary options that are offered by the public schools and community (e.g., programs for students ages 18 to 21, courses and services at the local community college), and identifying relevant educational programming--travel training and social skills and functional academic instruction--that would enable the student to access the chosen postsecondary program.

Because transition, by definition, entails "movement from school to postschool activities," IDEA not only authorizes the delivery of transition services, but also underscores, in the law, the involvement of community agencies in planning and providing these services. IDEA requires the statement of needed transition services to also include, "a statement of the interagency responsibilities or any needed linkages" (IDEA 1997, Section 300.347(b)(2)). Additionally, "in implementing the requirements of Section 300.347(b)(2), the public agency also shall invite a representative of any other agency that is likely to be responsible for providing or paying for transition services" (IDEA 1997, Section 300.344(b)(3)).

These mandates give the IEP team the needed flexibility to identify and invite any additional personnel from outside agencies to participate in the transition process. Historically, for individuals with SD, these personnel have included representatives from Vocational Rehabilitation, Developmental Disabilities Administration, and local community rehabilitation programs. If a student's identified outcome is postsecondary

education, then it may be necessary and appropriate to also invite a representative from the local college (e.g., a member of the disability support services, a course instructor) or program for students ages 18 to 21 to attend the IEP meeting.

#### *Impact of Inclusive Movement on Postsecondary Education*

Various pieces of legislation have been passed to guarantee that individuals with disabilities have access to postsecondary programs and services. The movement to include students with disabilities within general education settings has also promoted access to postsecondary education. In recent years there has been a trend to include students with SD ages 18 to 21 within age-appropriate settings such as college campuses.

*Emergence of inclusion movement.* Efforts to include individuals with disabilities within general education classrooms emerged from the institutional reform and disability movements of the 1960's and 1970's. Parent and professional advocates began to question the appropriateness of segregated institutions and special schools, and subsequently demanded the delivery of educational services in more normalized settings (Karagiannis, Stainback & Stainback, 1996). These early advocacy efforts effected changes in both legislation and educational practices. Passage of the Education for all Handicapped Children Act in 1975 entitled all children with disabilities access to free, appropriate, public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE). The most recent amendments to this law are indeed provisions that facilitate including students with disabilities not only in general education settings but also in the general education curriculum. Under the IDEA Amendments of 1997:

- Schools are required to justify non-inclusion rather than inclusion; therefore making the general education curriculum the presumed beginning point for planning an IEP.
- The IEP team must include a general education teacher.
- All special education students, including those with SD, must participate in regular state and local assessments or alternative assessments (IDEA, 1997).

While current legislation requires schools to provide appropriate education in the LRE and clearly give preference to participation in the general education curriculum, the law also maintains a provision for a continuum of services, which permits placement in more restrictive (i.e., segregated) as well as general education settings. There are, however, no specific guidelines within IDEA that delineate appropriate education and LRE. Definitions have been open to interpretation, which has resulted in heated discussion among professionals in the field (Chesley & Calaluce, 1997; Kaufman, 1993; Lipsky & Gartner, 1997; Stainback & Stainback, 1996; Villa & Thousand, 1995; Wizner, 2000). Thus, while there has been a move to include students with disabilities into general education and other less restrictive settings, inclusion remains a topic of controversy in special education.

*Issues regarding community-based instruction.* One of the current debates regarding inclusion focuses on determining the best placement for adolescents and young adults with significant needs (Goessling, 2000). While typical high school students pursue general education courses within the high school campus, many students with SD have participated in community-based instruction (Falvey, Gage, & Eshilian, 1995; Moon & Inge, 2000). This instruction focuses on developing functional,

chronologically age-appropriate skills that prepare individuals with disabilities for a more independent lifestyle (Wehman, 1996). These skills are taught in natural settings such as worksites, community centers, homes, department and grocery stores, and for older students (over age 18), postsecondary institutions. Although the acquisition of functional skills (e.g., social, self-care, mobility, functional academic, domestic, and employment skills) is regarded as necessary for increasing independence within the community, opinions differ on to how, when, and where instruction should be provided to secondary and postsecondary students (Billingsley & Albertson, 1999; Fisher & Sax, 1999; Goessling, 2000).

Advocates of inclusive high schools have called for an end to the practice of separate community-based instruction (Quirk & Bartlinski, 2001; Schuh, Tashie, Lamb, Bang, & Jorgenson, 1998). They view this practice as a reasonable alternative only when students with disabilities have no access to the general education curriculum (Fisher & Sax, 1999). Because students with disabilities now have greater access to general education, these advocates recommend participation in educational programming that allows for typical high school experiences and timetable (Schuh et al., 1998; Tashie et al., 1998). Like their non-disabled peers, students with disabilities should have the opportunity to move through each grade, participate in general education courses and extracurricular activities, and graduate with their peers at the end of their senior year.

The call for inclusive high schools stems from concerns regarding the negative effects of separate community-based instruction. Inclusion advocates claim that students with disabilities who participate in community-based instruction have limited

opportunities to access school-based academic programs and to develop friendships, social skills, social networks, and natural supports (Falvey et al., 1995). Moreover, educating students with disabilities separately from their peers isolates them from the very peer group whose acceptance they need in order to be successful adults (Tashie et al., 1998).

Educators with contrasting views worry that “the emphasis on full inclusion without attention to curricular needs risks jeopardizing the opportunity for individuals with mental retardation to acquire critical functional skills” (Patton, Smith, Clark, Polloway, Edgar, & Lee, 1996, p.81). Community-based instruction is considered an essential component of transition programs for students with disabilities, because skills taught only in the classroom instruction often do not generalize well; thus making such instruction nonfunctional (Wehman, 1996). They also believe that community-based and inclusive education are not necessarily conflicting practices (Agran, Snow, & Swaner, 1999; Goessling, 2000). The current high school structure provides students with disabilities with opportunities to benefit from both community-based and general education classes. According to Downing (1996), the highly individualized schedules used at the secondary level would allow students with significant disabilities to take classes on and off the high school campus without drawing undue attention. Others suggested providing community-based instruction to high school students with disabilities during class periods that do not interfere with general education courses that address educational needs of higher priority (Billingsley & Albertson, 1999). For example, with this approach, students’ schedules may be arranged so that they could remain in school during the morning participating in select academic courses, and spend

the afternoon within the community learning essential functional life and vocational skills.

*Including students in postsecondary settings.* While the discourse on inclusive high schools versus community-based instruction continues, it is evident that a majority of educators believe that students with disabilities who are ages 18 to 21 or 22, should receive their educational services within alternative age-appropriate settings such as postsecondary institutions (Bishop et al. 1995; Moon & Inge, 2000; Patton et al., 1996; Schuh et al., 1998; Tashie et al., 1998; Weir, 2001). For instance, the Division on Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (MRDD) Board of directors officially supported the inclusion of students with significant disabilities in postsecondary settings by issuing a position statement to this effect (Smith & Puccini, 1995). MRDD recommended that students with disabilities, who required educational services beyond their chronological aged peers, should be allowed to graduate with their peers and pursue appropriate programming in community colleges and vocational schools. Furthermore, they supported changes in funding patterns that would allow public school funds to follow students to these age-appropriate settings. Patton and others (1996) reiterated MRDD's recommendations in their call for changes in curricula and policies affecting students with mild MR.

Proponents of inclusive education have echoed support for alternative, age-appropriate placements for students with disabilities over the age of 18 (Bishop et al., 1995; Schuh et al., 1998; Tashie et al., 1998). While these advocates endorse the inclusion of students with disabilities within high schools, they also recognize that the community is the most appropriate placement for students over age 18. Therefore,

some have suggested that community-based instruction be provided to students with disabilities during their “transition” years of 19 to 22, in postsecondary programs located within the community (Fisher & Sax, 1999). They believe it is necessary for schools to continue providing support after the graduation ceremony at the end of senior year to these young adults in various community settings such as jobs, colleges, or technical schools; adult education classes; and community activities (Tashie et al., 1998).

Although there seems to be consensus among professionals in the field to serve students ages 18 to 21 outside of the high school campus, there is as yet no clear indication of how students’ needs within postsecondary settings should be addressed. This has led researchers and practitioners to support these students in various ways. One approach has been to offer programs for students 18 to 21 on college campuses, in adult education and vocational technical centers, or in other community facilities. These programs are often the result of collaborative efforts between the local school system and postsecondary institution, and are developed to serve the needs of students who will earn alternative exit documents such as certificates of completion or IEP diplomas and who would otherwise have continued to receive services within the high school setting until they exit at the age of 21 or 22 (Grigal et al., 2002, 2001; Hall et al., 2000; Moon & Neubert, 1999; Moon et al., 2001; Neubert et al., 2002). Others have suggested an individual supports (IS) approach that would extend the inclusion of students with significant disabilities into postsecondary institutions and community settings (Hart et al., 2001; Neubert et al., 2002; Rammler & Wood, 1999; Tashie et al., 1998; Weir, 2001). With IS, students with SD use existing supports available through

the local school system, a college's disability support services, Vocational Rehabilitation, and CRPs to attend a college or participate in community activities of their choice. Person-centered planning is used to identify necessary services and supports, and develop individual plans that are based on the students' interests and needs.

*Impact of Best Practices in Transition on Postsecondary Education*

The advocacy efforts of families and educators contributed to the significant changes in educational policy and practices related to individuals with disabilities. As a result, these individuals now have greater access to the general education setting and curriculum. However, including students with disabilities in general education settings such as neighborhood high schools and college campuses is only one aspect of their overall educational programming. The quality of the instruction and services that students with disabilities receive within these settings will also affect whether these students achieve the desired outcomes defined in IDEA.

*Development of best practices in transition.* Since the 1980's, there has been a focus in special education to produce better outcomes for students with disabilities. One of the primary purposes of IDEA is to ensure that the special education and related services available to students with disabilities will prepare them for employment and independent living (Storms et al., 2000). The federal government has financially supported the goal of improved outcomes through the allocation of funds for the development and implementation of transition-related personnel training models, model demonstration projects, and research. Over 500 federally supported model programs

that promote the seamless transition from school to adult living have been developed and implemented (Rusch & Millar, 1998).

Abundant information on “best practices ” or “quality indicators” of programs has emerged from this body of transition-related literature (Benz et al., 1997; Heal & Rusch, 1995; Hughes et al., 1997; Kohler, 1996; Kohler & Rusch, 1995; Morningstar et al., 1999; Neubert, 2000; Rusch et al., 1994; Rusch & Millar, 1998; Sale et al., 1991; Thurlow & Elliott, 1998; Wehmeyer, 1998). The following are examples of practices that have been associated with positive postschool outcomes: (a) early transition planning, (b) interagency collaboration, (c) integrated employment, (d) ongoing personnel training, (e) program evaluation, (f) parent and student involvement, (g) social skills training, (h) community-based instruction, (i) follow-up employment services, (j) paid work experiences, (k) academic skills training, (l) employability skills training, (m) vocational training, (n) self-determination, (o) student-centered planning, and (p) vocational assessment.

Kohler (1996) expanded the transition literature by organizing these transition practices into a conceptual framework and socially validating the practices and framework with representatives from state and federal agencies, universities, secondary schools, and vocational rehabilitation. The resultant *Taxonomy for Transition Programming* consists of five categories of practices related to program planning, implementation, and evaluation. These include: Student Development, Student-Focused Planning, Family Involvement, Interagency Collaboration, and Program Structure and Attributes. Numerous transition practices that have been identified in the literature are systematically arranged in clusters under each category. This taxonomy

presents transition practices in a format that can be easily used by service providers and researchers, and represents a comprehensive effort to establish the link between research and practice (Kohler, 1996).

*Concerns with transition best practices.* There have been concerns that many of the recommended practices and quality program indicators are empirically unsubstantiated (Green & Albright, 1995; Johnson & Rusch, 1993; Kohler, DeStefano, Wermuth, Grayson, & McGinty, 1994). For example, Kohler (1993) examined 49 transition-related documents and found that only four of 11 practices considered “best practices” were supported by data. The author noted that much of the transition-related practices were “implied” by researchers, rather than supported by empirical evidence. In their review of literature on longitudinal vocational programs, Banks and Renzaglia (1993) came to the similar conclusion that “the vast majority of what exists is not based on empirical research” (p. 14).

Although extensive empirical support for all transition practices may not be evident, there is at the very least, face validity for identified effective transition practices (Morningstar et al., 1999). Kohler (1993) also maintains that because there is some support for the practices cited most often in the literature, they should be carefully described and incorporated into transition planning programs for students with disabilities.

*Implementing transition best practices in postsecondary settings.* Federal monies have supported the development of numerous program models, many of which are currently being used in secondary schools. These models have incorporated many of the recommended practices identified in the literature associated with successful

transition from school to adult life. For example, community-based instruction, integrated employment, career awareness, social skills training, and self-determination are fundamental components of educational programming for secondary students with SD (Snell & Brown, 2000; Wehman, 1996).

Although students with disabilities are entitled to public education until age 21, many educators, researchers, and parents have agreed that it is no longer age-appropriate to continue to provide such programming within a secondary school setting once the student reaches 18 (Bishop et al., 1995; Moon & Inge, 2000; Smith & Puccini, 1995; Tashie et al., 1998). These same individuals have called for alternatives to this traditional model of service delivery, which often segregated older students with SD from their same-age peers without disabilities. In response to this need, some public school systems have developed transition programs and individual supports within alternative settings such as college campuses (Grigal et al., 2002, 2001; Hall et al., 2000; Moon et al., 2001; Neubert et al. 2002; Page & Chadsey-Rusch, 1995; Tashie et al., 1998).

It appears that these postsecondary programs and supports for students with SD are themselves becoming recommended practice. Despite this increasing trend, there is almost no information on which transition best practices are being implemented within these postsecondary settings, and their effects on student outcomes. Additionally, little is known of how students and parents perceive these transition services. Gaining these consumers perspectives is central to determining whether the transition services and activities are, indeed meeting the interests and needs of students with disabilities.

Grigal et al. (2001) provided one of the few available documentation of the practices implemented within public school-sponsored programs for students with disabilities ages 18 to 21 that are located within postsecondary settings. In their investigation, the authors overviewed programs that served students with SD in postsecondary settings in the state of Maryland. Teachers and personnel from 14 programs in Maryland were interviewed in order to gather descriptive information on program characteristics (e.g., location, students served, start-up issues, funding, staffing patterns, program elements, technical assistance needs, and challenges). Only data related to program practices are discussed in this section. Additional findings from this investigation are detailed in the upcoming section on postsecondary programs.

Data collected from the interviews indicated that all 14 programs incorporated at least several best practices identified in the transition literature. All students who participated in these postsecondary programs received direct instruction in functional academic and life skills, career development, and self-determination, in segregated classroom settings and through community-based instruction. These students also received job training and paid employment experiences in work sites located in the community and on-campus. The program teachers and staff were responsible for developing these work experiences and for providing follow-along services to students. Opportunities for interaction with college students without disabilities occurred when students enrolled in regular college courses (e.g., ceramics, keyboarding, and aerobics) or joined organizations and activities on campus (e.g., Best Buddies, religious organizations).

Parental involvement and interagency collaboration were also found to be important program components. Parents were presented with opportunities to participate in the IEP process, and to attend parent monthly meetings and open-house events. Many program teachers fostered interagency collaboration by arranging visits to local CRPs and by developing shared work enclaves.

### *Summary*

Normalization, legislative actions, the inclusion movement, and research on best practices in transition all have contributed to making postsecondary education more accessible to individuals with disabilities. Constructs that emerged from early efforts to reform institutions, the normalization principle, and social role valorization have provided the philosophical framework for the development of various community-based human services, including postsecondary education, for individuals with disabilities. Several legislative mandates have been passed to ensure that general education settings such as college campuses are accessible to individuals with disabilities. For example, through Section 504 and the ADA, many adults with SD who have already exited the public school system continue to access postsecondary programs and services. IDEA mandated that students with disabilities receive transition services that facilitate the attainment of positive postschool outcomes such as participation in postsecondary education.

In addition to mandating transition services, IDEA included provisions for providing free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. However, educators continue to struggle with how secondary students with SD should be included in general education; receive instruction in functional skills and vocational

training; and engage in community-based experiences. Educators and families have expressed increased interest in including these students in age-appropriate settings such as college campuses after the age of 18. Yet, the question of how these students are to be served in these postsecondary settings remains unanswered.

Public schools have responded by developing various transition and individual supports for students with SD ages 18 to 21, within college campuses. However, aside from the descriptive data provided by Grigal and et al. (2002, 2001), Hall et al. (2000), Moon et al. (2001) and, Neubert et al. (2002) little else is known about the characteristics of programs and services implemented within these postsecondary settings or about students' and parents' perceptions of the transition services. Regardless of this limited information, these public school-sponsored postsecondary programs are increasingly becoming recommended practice.

#### *Serving Individuals with SD in Postsecondary Settings*

Much of the available literature on postsecondary education and students with disabilities pertains to those with "high incidence" disabilities such as LD, and sensory and/or physical impairments (Brinckerhoff, Shaw, & McGuire, 1993; Bursuck & Rose, 1992; Dalke, 1993; Sitlington et al., 2000). Although college opportunities have been available to individuals with SD since the 1970's (Caparosa, 1985; Dailey, 1982; Low, 1975; Wood et al., 1977), there is a scarcity of literature describing programs and services, and experiences of these individuals with SD within postsecondary settings.

An extensive search of databases for the years 1966 through 2003, using the terms "mental retardation," "developmental disabilities," "postsecondary education," "community college," "colleges," and "cognitive disabilities," and a manual search of

professional journals yielded 13 articles related to programs that served **adults** with SD. Efforts to provide educational opportunities to adults with MR and significant disabilities in postsecondary settings have also been documented in Canada (The Roeher Institute, 1996). Because of similarities among Canadian and American educational institutions, two articles on postsecondary programs in Canadian colleges and universities have been included in this review. Even less is known about the college experiences made available to **students** with MR or SD. This search revealed only seven articles on this population. Also included in this section is a summary of the only published review of literature related to educational opportunities for individuals with SD located in postsecondary institutions.

#### *Serving Adults with SD*

The literature on the educational opportunities in college settings for adults with MR consists mainly of surveys that document programs and services in postsecondary institutions, and descriptions of specific programs offered by colleges and universities. Summaries of these program descriptions are organized below according to their settings: community colleges, four-year colleges and universities, and programs located in Canadian postsecondary institutions. Hamill (2003) provided the only example of research that documented the postsecondary experiences of a young adult with MR.

*Surveys documenting opportunities in postsecondary settings.* Findings from one of the earliest surveys (Bilovsky & Matson, 1974), illustrated that community colleges ( $N=40$ ) generally offered two types of programs that addressed the needs of individuals with MR. A majority of the colleges offered programs designed to train paraprofessionals to work with individuals with MR in a variety of settings. These were

two-year programs that led to a certificate or degree or short-term training programs.

The second type of program, which provided direct services to students with MR, emphasized instruction in basic education, personal and social development, general employment skills, specific occupational training, and/or recreation. It was interesting to note that while administrators of instructional departments typically supervised the paraprofessional training programs, administrators who managed community service programs were responsible for the programs that served students with MR.

In a later survey, Michael (1985) examined the roles and responsibilities of college coordinators who provided services to students with various disabilities. Some 150 coordinators, who were employed in two-year colleges, were randomly selected to participate in the study. Of the 67 respondents only 3% reported that they provided services to students with developmental disabilities. The types of services provided by these coordinators included counseling, specialized assistance from people such as interpreters and note-takers, assistance with vocational and academic planning, remedial courses, campus accessibility and orientation, specialized testing, and/or advocacy. Only 32% of the coordinators reported having specific criteria for determining eligibility for services. Lack of funds, staff, and other resources, and difficulty with college instructors were some of the problems experienced by coordinators in trying to provide services to students with disabilities.

McAfee and Sheeler (1987) surveyed 200 community college CEOs to identify services provided to students with MR. Thirty-seven percent of the 136 respondents reported that they served students with MR. Of the students served by this 37%, only .06% to 15% were identified as having MR. Counseling, tutoring, adult basic

education, special non-credit classes were the most common types of services offered to students with MR. The least common were special non-degree credit classes and special consideration in regular classes. Thirty-nine percent of the colleges provided their faculty with some type of training in working with students with disabilities, and majority of the respondents (73%) reported that they believed community colleges had a role in providing services to students with MR. However, 50% also reported having no plans to expand or develop new services for this population. Respondents who felt that community colleges had no role in serving students with MR believed colleges were not responsible for serving students who were incapable of learning at the college level; or other agencies were better trained to provide services; and limited resources prevented the development of services.

The Center on Education and Work (CEW) sponsored a national competition among two-year colleges to identify exemplary programs that served individuals with learning or cognitive disabilities (Gugerty, 1994). A total of 69 programs were nominated by national and state postsecondary leaders, administrators, and representatives of organizations that serve individuals with disabilities. To be considered for the competition, a representative from each program had to complete and return an extensive questionnaire. A national panel of experts then rated their responses and selected seven exemplary programs. It appeared that only three of the seven programs served individuals with significant needs. Characteristics common among exemplary programs included: highly skilled staff; strong administrative support; organizational structure that reflected extensive planning and a focus on “customer service”; flexibility in staffing and the organization; team effort; and staff who

demanded high performance of themselves, their peers, and students. The CEW also identified barriers that continued to limit access to post-secondary education for individuals with disabilities. Attitudinal barriers included services that were add-on/after-thought and instructors who saw individuals as “my student/your student.” Organizational barriers included poorly trained staff, unclear goals for programs or services, outdated curricula, and weak leadership.

*Programs at community colleges.* One of the earliest documented community college-based programs was Single Step at Dundalk Community College (DCC) in Maryland (Low, 1975). It was initiated in 1973 in response to the community’s need to serve adults with disabilities. Through partial funding from a grant from the Maryland State Department of Education (Vocational Education Division), Single Step was developed as a 15-week course for serving adults with disabilities such as MR, physical disabilities, and emotional disabilities. Counselors screened potential participants by asking questions that assessed the students’ motivation and resourcefulness. Applicants who were considered highly motivated but lacked the confidence or training to achieve their vocational or educational goals, were asked to participate in Single Step.

Participants were assigned to work with a paraprofessional and a professional counselor from the DCC staff. Once a week, participants received instruction in reading and math (using self-paced modules), resume writing, and job search techniques. They also participated in group and individual counseling sessions, and recreational activities. During the last seven weeks of the program, students had the option of participating in “Jobs Unlimited,” an additional component designed to prepare students who were interested in seeking employment at the end of the semester.

Although the instruction and group counseling was considered valuable, students and counselors reported that the most significant part of the program was the hourly individual counseling sessions.

Low reported that by January 1975, 77 students had enrolled in Single Step and 64 had completed the program. Of the these 64 students, 17 had paid or volunteer jobs, 11 were in training programs, 13 attended area colleges, and four had combined education and jobs. At the time that this program description was written, 54% of the Single Step students had gone on to enroll in academic or career programs. Low also stated that the goals of the program grew more flexible over the years to assist students in realizing their potential, facilitating goal discovery, and enrolling in academic programs.

Educational Programs for Exceptional Adults (EPEA) at Broward Community College in Florida (Wood et al., 1977) was another program designed to serve adults with disabilities within a community college setting. This program, which was initiated in 1974, offered non-credit continuing education courses to adults with MR or orthopedic disabilities. Over the years, the program had grown from four classes with 50 students to 17 classes with 135 students. EPEA students could enroll in a variety of segregated courses that focused on vocational skills (i.e., vocational adjustment, food service, and cosmetology), independent living skills (i.e., home management, personality insights, and food and nutrition), and recreation and leisure (i.e., physical education, music appreciation, and creative arts). Additional programs such as Basic Survival Skills for Everyday Living (a course for students with severe MR), two-week summer camps, and a special counseling course for parents were later developed and

included in EPEA. Like other community college students, EPEA students were required to go through a formal admissions process. This included requiring them to complete an application, participate in an interview, register for classes, and pay tuition. In order to provide students with the maximum variety of learning experiences, a two-year course plan was developed. After participating in EPEA for two years, those who wished to continue at the community college could, with their teacher-counselor, develop an individual plan that allowed them to enroll in EPEA courses or register for a credit course at the community college.

Wood et al. reported that support from various organizations was critical to the success of EPEA. An advisory committee comprised of parents, community college personnel, public school officials, and local agencies was established to help guide the program. Community Services oversaw administrative tasks such as room scheduling, fee collection, and faculty payroll. Parents played an active role in the EPEA through the advisory committee and the Parent and Professional Auxiliary, an organization that supported the program by providing clerical and classroom assistance and conducting fundraising activities. Additional support was provided by community agencies. For example, students could arrange for financial aid through Florida's Office of Vocational Rehabilitation. Transportation was provided by such agencies as Goodwill Industries and the Association for the Retarded.

Dailey (1982) and Caparosa (1985) provided descriptions of a program that offered non-credit continuing education courses for adults with MR at Allegheny Community College in Pennsylvania. Daily detailed the development of the program and described two specific vocational training programs, "Food Service Training" and

“Janitorial Housekeeping.” The program was initiated in 1975, using grants from the Pennsylvania State Bureau of Vocational Education. An advisory committee composed of representatives from community agencies, the local Association for Retarded Citizens, and the community college guided the development of the program philosophy and curriculum, and assisted college personnel with recruitment and placement of graduates. Participants could receive financial aid through the community college or the Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation. In order to participate in the two vocational training programs (food service training and janitorial housekeeping) applicants had to be adults with MR who were “at least 18 years of age and had physical, emotional, and psychological qualities necessary to complete the curriculum and secure competitive employment” (Dailey, 1982, p. 10). Although the vocational programs operated under the community college’s Community Services Division, students received instruction at local community facilities rather than at the college campus. Participants in the food service program were trained at the Allegheny County Police and Fire Training Academy, while participants in the janitorial and housekeeping program received their training at a local hospital and apartment complex. In addition to the courses, participants also engaged in a four-to-six week employment practicum in the community. Upon completion of the practicum, students who were determined to be “job ready” received assistance with obtaining employment. Dailey reported that 90% of food service and janitorial participants completed the programs and obtained employment.

In a brief program description, Caparosa (1985) added that when needed, staff members trained program graduates at the employment site and provided follow-up

services as necessary. Caparosa (1985) also described a third vocational program offered by the Allegheny County Community College. The Human Service Aide program was designed to provide training that would enable adults with MR to obtain employment as aides in the human service industry (e.g., nurses aide, home attendant). This program was also located in the community and was structured similarly to the other two vocational programs. Caparosa noted that in addition to the vocational programs, the community college offered a series of continuing education programs that stressed the development of motor skills, language skills, independent living, and community readiness. Information on the program staff was limited. Dailey reported only that staff members were recruited from the community and functioned as administrators, teachers, and counselors, and that they were trained in Marc Gold's "Try Another Way" methods.

*Programs at four-year colleges and universities.* Nine programs for adults with MR that were located on four-year postsecondary institutions were documented in the literature. Baxter (1972) described and demonstrated the effectiveness of an experimental clerical training program at Ferris State College. Twenty young women ages 17 to 26 and identified as having mild MR participated in a seven-week training session where they received instruction in typing, filing, and operating a duplicator machine. A staff member from Ferris State College and a special educator provided instruction. The students' performance was compared with that of a control group of 21 women without disabilities who were in the first semester of a clerical training program. Findings suggested that with the exception of filing, students with MR performed as well as the control group. Although Baxter described an early vocational training

program for adults with MR, the author did not provide information on how the program developed, whether the program was repeated after this initial experiment, or the role of the college.

The College for Living provided an example of a program that had been implemented in several postsecondary settings. By 1979, the program had been replicated in 17 postsecondary institutions across the United States (Snider & Roderfeld, 1979). However, the literature documented only descriptions of the original College for Living program at Metropolitan State College in Denver Colorado (Dahms et al., 1977; Kreps & Black, 1978), and a replication at Colorado State University (Snider & Roderfeld, 1979). The College for Living was developed in 1974 as a community service program of Metropolitan State College. It initially operated on a budget of \$600 and included five volunteer college students who tutored 16 adults with MR from the Colorado State Home and Training School once a week, in a classroom donated by the college (Dahms et al., 1977). Dahms et al. reported that the program grew to serve 200 adults with MR each semester, had a waiting list of 200, and used 40 student volunteers from the college. Although none of these volunteer instructors were paid, they received college credit.

A variety of courses were offered, many suggested by the participants themselves. Some courses focused on functional skills in such areas as personal hygiene, human sexuality, money management, and travel training, while other courses such as Japanese cooking addressed student interests. A summer recreational and cultural enrichment program was also offered. Kreps and Black (1978) credit the success of the College of Living to the program's philosophy which stressed respect for

human dignity; the use of nontraditional teaching methods that emphasized experiential learning; and its emphasis on choice and individualization. This emphasis on individual needs was also noted by Dahms et al., who reported that each participant was required to develop a learning contract that focused on his or her needs, and that the program tried to maintain a small (4 or 5: 1) student/teacher ratio that would allow for individualized instruction,

The College for Living was replicated at Colorado State University in 1977 (Snider & Roderfeld, 1979) as part of the University's Center for Continuing Education. An advisory committee guided the development, implementation, and evaluation of the program. Similar to the College of Living at Metropolitan State College, this program used volunteer personnel for teaching and supervisory duties. A curriculum development coordinator, obtained through the Comprehensive Employment Training Act (CETA), was responsible for designing curricula and resources, and addressing concerns regarding student placement.

College for Living courses at Colorado State were developed based on feedback from two formal needs assessments. The program offered 14 different courses that ranged from science and math to occupational skills training in "Production Arts" and "Office Practice Skills." To ensure appropriate student placement and efficient instruction, prerequisites were implemented for some courses, but were sometimes modified or eliminated so that all students had the opportunity to participate in all courses. On average, 64 students attended the College for Living. These students were eligible to receive continuing education units and certificates of participation.

Program evaluation was also incorporated into this replication of the College for Living. Findings from questionnaires administered to 225 students, parents, and volunteers suggested that most were satisfied with the philosophy, methods, and structure of the program. Most also agreed that the program objectives were being accomplished. Respondents were, however, dissatisfied with the lack of encouragement given to College for Living students to participate in courses with typical college students.

The Basic Skills for Independent Living program located at the State University of New York at Brockport, is another example of a program that used volunteers to provide instruction to adults with MR (Corcoran, 1979). In addition to volunteers, program staff included a program director and ten undergraduate students who were hired to provide supervision and instruction at key stations. The primary program focus was to provide adults with MR opportunities to participate in recreation and leisure activities (e.g., judo, basketball, swimming) and to use campus facilities (e.g., student lounge, snack bar). However, opportunities were expanded to include non-credit minicourses in human sexuality, public safety, and ceramics. Instruction was provided in both segregated and integrated settings. Self-concept, attention span, and functional level determined student placement in courses.

Initially, Basic Skills for Independent Living was offered to the students free of charge. Community service groups such as the Kiwanis, Rotary, Lions, and Junior Women's Clubs provided funding to support this program. Eventually, students were charged a registration fee of \$10, for the purposes of normalization. Corcoran reported that in four years the program grew from a dozen to 200 students, and at the time that

the program description was written, used the services of over 100 college student volunteers.

Duran (1986) described a unique postsecondary program designed to serve a specific population. "All Day Autism" was located at the University of Texas at El Paso and served 15 adults with autism and other significant disabilities, who also had limited English speaking skills. The program's purposes were: (a) to instruct participants in independent living, social, leisure, and recreation skills using their native language (Spanish), and (b) to train preservice teachers to work with students who had limited English speaking skills. Although the program was located on a college campus, instruction was provided in a segregated environment.

Parental involvement was also emphasized the program (Duran,1986). Using a checklist, program staff interviewed parents to identify specific skills that needed to be addressed during independent skill training. They conducted individual parent conferences, and trained parents to continue instruction at home.

Goldstein (1988; 1993) described project LINK a program developed to address the needs young adults with disabilities, who were not college-bound, and had left the school system. The program served young adults mild MR, emotional disabilities, neurological and perceptual disabilities, who needed instruction in social skills, functional academics, and work experience, in order to transition into employment and the community. Goldstein (1993) stated that these (22) students were selected based on specific criteria. However, information on specific criteria was not included in the program description. LINK, located on the campus of William Patterson College in

New Jersey, served as a “sheltered community” in which participants could learn and practice new skills and behaviors.

Program staff consisted of a director, transition specialist, secretary, and undergraduate students who acted as mentors. Classes were taught during the day, at different locations on campus. They were non-credit and included classes on “Managing Feelings and Behavior”, “Managing Personal Affairs”, and “Developing Attitudes and Values for Work and Life.” Students also participated in campus activities, and engaged in work experiences on and off campus. LINK was initially funded in part with federal monies from the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS); some of these funds were used to pay students who participated in employment. Collaboration among local school systems and service providers was an important component of the program. LINK facilitated the establishment of systematic linkages among these agencies. Goldstein also noted that 25% of students who participated in LINK reverted to some of their inappropriate behaviors when instructors faded support at the end of the program.

ENHANCE, a program at Trinity College in Vermont that began in 1989 (Doyle, 1997). Approximately 15 students enrolled in the program each semester. ENHANCE was considered unique for several reasons. First, it is the only program for adults with disabilities initiated by a college rather than by members of the community or college students. According to Doyle (1997), “...members of the Trinity College community recognized that people with developmental disabilities were not being given the option to participate in the college experience” (p. 16). Second, it was the only program that included an optional residential component. Although most participants

commuted to the college, those interested in experiencing campus living had the option of staying in one of the college dormitories. The ENHANCE student received assistance with functional skills such as doing laundry, selecting appropriate dress, and managing schedules from a suite mate who was paid a stipend for her services. A final characteristic that made ENHANCE unique is that it did not offer segregated instruction or special courses. ENHANCE students were admitted to regular college classes through an audit option, where they received support in classes from peer partners.

After earning 72 college credits, ENHANCE students participated in graduation exercises and received a certificate. In addition to classes, most participants maintained part-time employment or did volunteer work. Despite the inclusion of ENHANCE students in the college community, Doyle noted that the relationships between students with and without disabilities were helping in nature rather than reciprocal. Typical college students tended to have a sense of pity towards their peers with disabilities, and this acted as a barrier towards students getting to know each other as equals.

*Programs in Canada.* The Community Integration through Cooperative Education Program (CICE) (Panitch, 1988), and the “On-Campus” program (Frank & Uditsky, 1988), are two examples of the Canadian efforts to include students with SD in postsecondary settings. The CICE program was located at Humber College, a two-year community college in Ontario. The program was the direct result of the efforts of a determined parent and a community service coordinator. An advisory committee developed a proposal, which led to the initiation of a small pilot program in 1984, which operated with one staff member who was hired on a 6-month contract. In 1986, CICE received approval for annual funding from the Provincial Ministry of Colleges

and Universities, and according to Panitch (1988) there were ongoing negotiations with the Ministry of Community and Social Services for financial support.

Panitch reported that like other programs at Humber College, CICE was a two-year program. Also, like other college students, CICE students were required to follow certain procedures and were entitled to similar privileges. For example, CICE students were required to participate in an application process and pay tuition. They were also entitled to student privileges such as using campus facilities, having opportunities to evaluate their instructors, receiving transcripts, and participating in graduation ceremonies with their peers.

The program served 18 students each year. While the first year emphasized college experiences, the second year of the program focused on integrated work experiences on and off campus. The three staff members assisted CICE students with selecting courses and activities that matched the students' interests. CICE students also received tutoring in literacy and practical math. Peer tutors who were practicum students from the human services program, provided academic support and helped the CICE students' expand their social networks.

Panitch reported that since CICE began, 32 students had completed the program, and there was no attrition. Seventy-six percent of CICE graduates were in paid employment, and 85% were participating in a combination of paid and unpaid employment. Panitch credits the program's success to the "personal willingness on the part of teachers, support staff and students to become involved, rather than an organized attempt on the part of the institution to legislate acceptance..." (p. 28).

The On-Campus program (Frank & Uditsky, 1988) was an example of a postsecondary program located within a Canadian university. This program, which operated from the campus of the University of Alberta, was also the result of the ongoing efforts of a group of parents and advocates. The program was established through a community association with funding from Alberta Social Services and in affiliation with the University of Alberta Developmental Disabilities Center. The goals of the program were to promote friendships, provide normative and enriching experiences, promote employment, and develop skills that would lead to increased independence. When the program began, 11 students were selected to participate. They were selected not because of their ability but because of their interest in participating in the program. This commitment to serving “a heterogeneous group of students including those who were labeled as having multiple and profound developmental disabilities” (p.35) made On-Campus different from programs such as the vocational training programs of Allegheny County Community College (Daily, 1982, Caparosa, 1985), which used eligibility criteria to exclude those who did not have certain prerequisite skills.

The program was staffed by a half-time coordinator, four instructors, four personal care attendants, and practicum students and volunteers from the college. A person-centered planning approach was used to develop individual plans for each student. All students received both segregated instruction (e.g., finances, conversation skills, personal safety, computers) and integrated instruction (e.g., drama, music, Home Economics). They also participated in recreational activities and employment on and off campus. These work experiences occurred during the summer months and support

was provided by On-Campus staff. Students graduated after spending four to six years in the program. Frank and Uditsky (1988) reported that no models existed for the program to follow so its' future was not predetermined. They also cautioned that it was important to safeguard accomplishments because the program was far from secure at the university.

*Postsecondary experiences of adults with MR.* In the only example of research on the postsecondary experiences of adults with MR, Hamill (2003) used qualitative methods to document the experiences of a 26-year old woman with Down syndrome who was enrolled in a private 4-year university. The opportunity to attend college was made available when a university vice-president who was active in the local Special Olympics, initiated a “community project” program. At the university, the young woman with MR audited two communications courses, participated in nonacademic activities such as the Natural Ties Club, an organization that facilitated social connections between students with and without disabilities, and ate lunch with typical college students that she had met on campus. She received individualized support from the Learning Assistance Office, her college professors, and two “study buddies.” These study buddies were college students who as part of an independent study, were assigned to assist the young woman in class.

Findings suggest that the college experience was beneficial for all participants. For the young woman, attending college was the realization of at lifelong dream. Additionally, she was able to apply the skills that she learned in her communications courses to improve interpersonal relationships, and public speaking skills. The college

professors, study buddies, and college students who participated in the study believed that their lives were enhanced by their experiences with the young woman.

While the young woman with MR benefited from attending college, she also had some negative experiences. For instance, despite the social interactions with college students without disabilities, the young woman reported feelings of loneliness. Because extracurricular activities were often scheduled during the evenings and weekends, there were few opportunities for involvement in nonacademic activities. Additionally, despite the individualized support provided by study buddies and college professors, the young woman struggled with the academic coursework. She also expressed her frustration with not receiving grades for her efforts in class.

#### *Serving Students with SD Ages 18 to 21*

The past decade has seen growing interest in serving students with SD, ages 18 to 21 within postsecondary settings. Such programs and services differ significantly from those that had been made available to adults with SD. Although many of the recent programs for students ages 18 to 21 are located on college campuses, they are often supported by public school funds and are designed to serve students who are 18 to 22 years old, still enrolled in public schools, and working towards earning an alternative exit document such as a certificate of completion or IEP diploma (Grigal et al., 2002, 2001; Moon & Inge, 2000; Neubert et al. 2002; Tashie et al., 1998). In two articles, Grigal et al. (2002) and Neubert et al. (2002) outlined the central elements of postsecondary programs and individual supports. The remaining five articles focused on one specific model. For example, a qualitative study by Page and Chadsey-Rush (1995) and a description of an IS model by Hart et al. (2001) detailed an individual

supports approach. Two articles by Hall et al. (2000), Moon et al. (2001), and a literature review by Neubert et al. (2001) pertained to alternative programs.

*Central elements.* As detailed in the previous section, alternative educational services for older students with SD may be provided in a variety of settings outside of the traditional high school. These may include four-and two-year postsecondary institutions, and community settings such as a local mall, and buildings owned by a local school system or adult service provider. In their article, Grigal et al. (2002) described the benefits and challenges of these different postsecondary settings. For example, a four-year postsecondary institution is one type of setting where older students with SD are often served. In addition to having access to a variety of college courses, in four-year colleges, students with SD are afforded many opportunities for social interaction with same-age peers without disabilities, through participation in nonacademic activities (e.g. recreational clubs, sororities, and fraternities). Also, because many four-year colleges offer student housing, students with SD have additional access to these same-age peers during the evening and weekends, as well as opportunities for independent-living experiences. College students without disabilities may also benefit from partnerships between the college and local school system. Students who major in social sciences, education, speech, occupational, and physical therapies, and need practical experiences, have many opportunities to work with students with SD.

Four-year college settings have many benefits, however, there are also challenges that limit opportunities for students with SD. For instance, four-year postsecondary institutions are not located in every community, thus students with SD

may not have ready access to the college campus and services. Also, because such colleges often have entrance criteria, college faculty and staff may have difficulty understanding the reasons for having students with SD attend college.

Community colleges have many benefits that make it ideal for serving older students with SD. The prevalence and the lower cost of community colleges makes this type of setting an appealing alternative to four-year institutions. Additionally, the open door policies and traditional mission to provide nonacademic continuing education courses facilitates access to nontraditional student populations such as students with SD.

Although community colleges are more readily accessible, there are fewer opportunities for social interaction. Most students who attend community college commute to campus and leave after attending classes. This leaves more limited opportunities for students with and without disabilities to socialize and work with each other.

The final setting in which to serve older students with SD is the local community. Serving these students in local businesses, and community agencies provides opportunities to practice skills in adult environments. Also, it may be easier for school systems to secure space in the community rather than the college campus, where space is often limited.

Along with describing the benefits and limitations of serving students in these three types of environments, Grigal et al. (2002) offered the following recommendations to help school personnel develop these alternative educational services. Among the steps listed were: (a) create a planning committee; (b) conduct a needs assessment; (c) develop an action plan; (d) determine where services will be

provided; (e) address logistical requirements such as staffing, transportation, and scheduling. In addition to outlining these steps the authors noted that school systems need not choose only programs or individual supports. Rather, students may benefit from a combination of both models of service delivery.

Neubert et al. (2002) also overviewed the differentiated educational services available to older students with SD. The authors highlighted the key features, replication, and evaluation issues associated with programs in postsecondary settings and individual supports for students ages 18 to 21. Although the intent of these two service delivery models is to provide older students with SD with age-appropriate experiences, these approaches have differences and similarities. For instance, postsecondary programs may be located in various settings (e.g. four-year universities, community colleges, and local malls) that are accessed by adults without disabilities. These programs typically serve between 8 and 21 students, and are staffed and funded by local school systems. Often, local schools systems partner with colleges, state, and local adult services agencies who donate access to space and facilities, materials, and services (e.g. job coaching, guest speakers) to these programs.

Such postsecondary programs afford students with SD with opportunities to enroll in college courses and participate in nonacademic activities on campus. Many also incorporate classroom-based instruction, and campus or community-based employment. Although students are included in numerous college activities, course prerequisites, placement tests, costs, scheduling conflicts, and attitudinal barriers from college instructors limit participation in college courses.

While programs serve several students and are often based out of a specific site on a college campus or community setting, a key feature of the individual supports approach is that coordinated educational and community services are provided to students with SD one at a time. Person-centered planning is used to identify a student's interests, needs, and goals, and specific supports that would enable a student to achieve his or her goals. Services are provided in a variety of environments such as college campuses, employment, and community settings.

There are also differences in the staffing and funding of individual supports. For example, rather than having designated program staff from the local school system support students across environments, with an individual supports model, a number of individuals (e.g. college personnel, adult service providers, and school personnel) provide the needed supports. Personnel from the local school system assume responsibility for coordinating these services until the student exits public school at age 21. Funding to pay for these individual supports may come from a variety of sources such as local school systems, and local and state agencies.

Although there are differences in the key features of postsecondary programs and individual supports, issues related to replication and evaluation are similar. Implementation of age-appropriate services outside the high school setting will require local school systems, adult service providers, and postsecondary institutions to redefine the roles of their personnel, develop increased collaborative partnerships, and address issues of funding. Additionally, evaluation must be conducted to determine whether these alternative services result in improved postsecondary outcomes for students with SD. According to Neubert et al. there is a need for additional documentation on the

development and implementation of postsecondary programs and individual supports, and the postsecondary outcomes of students who participate in these alternative approaches.

*Individual supports.* Page and Chadsey-Rusch (1995) used qualitative methods to document the community college experiences of two students MR and two same-age students who attended a local community college. Findings suggested that the expectations to attend college differed for the students with and without MR. While the students without disabilities had been expected to attend college, the students with MR had been expected to graduate from high school and immediately enter the workforce. For the latter students, college became a possibility only when the Head of the Special Education Department at the high school, realizing the inappropriateness of having students over age 18 in the same classes as 14-year olds, searched for alternative means to provide services to these older students. Community college finally became a reality for students with MR when the department head received a grant to fund services.

Students without disabilities believed that a college education could expand their employment opportunities, and they enrolled in courses related to future career plans. Students with MR saw no relationship between college coursework and specific career goals and tended to selected courses based on personal interest. Although the IEP's for students with MR included goals for attending community college, there were no objectives related to vocational training (Page & Chadsey-Rusch).

To support themselves at the college, students with and without disabilities used services available to all students at the community college, such as an orientation course and free tutorial services. Students with MR were also encouraged to rely on natural

supports in class. In addition, the department head from the high school consulted with the counseling staff at the college regarding the needs of the students with MR. All four students reported receiving positive benefits from attending the community college. These included increased maturity and self-esteem, and improved social and interpersonal relationships.

In the second article on individual supports, Hart et al. (2001) described a student-centered service delivery model that afforded students with SD access to postsecondary education. A demonstration project funded by OSERS, this model incorporated individual supports, rather than a special program, to serve students with SD in postsecondary settings. As part of the model, project staff from the Institute for Community Integration collaborated with five high schools and local colleges. Each participating high school developed a Student Support Team (SST). Members of each SST varied according to the needs of the students and community, but could include college personnel, teachers, family members, students, guidance counselors, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors, Department of Mental Retardation Service Coordinators, and adult services providers. At the start of the project, the SST developed an initial list of potential participants. Members of the SST, students, and families attended an orientation that provided information about the project. To be considered for participation, students must have been 17 to 22 years old with a significant disability, and they and their families must have expressed an interest in postsecondary education. Twenty-five students with SD from five high schools were selected to participate in the project.

Students and their families participated in person-centered planning to identify each student's postsecondary interests and support needs. Each student and his or her family then selected individualized services and supports from a sample menu of strategies developed by each SST. The types of strategies used to enable students to access postsecondary education included the following:

- Using existing accommodations and supports available through the colleges' Disability Support Office.
- Making available instructional material in multiple formats (e.g., video, digital), and using technology to alter materials to make them more accessible.
- Helping students with SD with problem solving and forming social networks at college.
- Collaborating with college faculty to facilitate access to information and course materials.

Program evaluation was also incorporated into this model. Focus groups, satisfaction surveys, and follow-up of student outcomes were used to assess effectiveness of the process, adequacy of services and supports, and satisfaction with the person-centered approach. Local teams as well as an advisory committee participated in the evaluation activities. Also, individual students and the SST assessed student progress and addressed emerging concerns during each semester.

In addition to describing characteristics of this IS model, Hart et al. (2001) described barriers that made it difficult for participants to access postsecondary education. Initial negative attitudes expressed by parents and educators, inadequate

student preparation, difficulty bridging secondary and postsecondary education systems, and maintaining communication with participants and SST members were among the barriers reported by the authors.

*Programs* Hall et al. (2000) described a program located on the campus of Asbury College that is one of the few public school-sponsored postsecondary programs for students with significant disabilities that is documented in the literature. The idea to develop this program originated during a Personal Futures Planning session, in which special educators, high school students with disabilities, their parents and their friends discussed the possibility of age-appropriate services for 18- to 21-year old students in a postsecondary setting. A group of representatives from the public school system, the college's Chairperson of the Department of Education, college professors, parents, and community leaders developed a contract between the county board of education and Asbury College that outlined the program responsibilities of the public schools and the college. The terms of this contract required the public school system to provide the staff, materials, transportation, and liability insurance. The college provided, free of charge, opportunities for students to audit college courses and to access extracurricular activities. The college also furnished a small office for the local school staff and designated a person to act as a liaison between the college faculty and the school system. It was noted that the program was supported in part with federal funds from OSERS.

The program initially served seven students whose ages ranged from 18 to 21. Staff members included two full-time teachers, three instructional assistants, and part-time vocational trainers. Information from personal futures plans was used to develop

individual programs that matched the students' interests and needs. The college liaison facilitated the students' transition into the college by setting up opportunities to visit various buildings on campus, participate in activities, and meet college students. The participants elected to audit the following courses during the fall and spring semesters:

- Introduction to Social Work
- Family Studies
- Education Technology
- Ecology
- Radio Production
- Various physical education course (e.g., basketball, softball, tennis, soccer)

In addition to auditing courses, students participated in employment and community-based activities. Hall et al. (2000) reported that many of the students' goals and objectives were embedded within the activities. For example, such related services as physical and occupational therapy were incorporated within a college course or job. Also, college students enrolled in an adaptive physical education course were given the opportunity to work with program participants as part of their coursework. Natural supports emerged for participants in many classes and activities. Hall et al. also noted that everyone involved in the program benefited in multiple ways. For example, students with disabilities were able to improve their skills and expand their interests through participation in age-appropriate activities in a natural environment with their same-age peers. College students were provided with opportunities for hands-on learning experiences and the development of friendships with individuals with significant disabilities. School, college, and community personnel were provided with

opportunities to collaborate and increase their resources. Finally, parents were able to develop an understanding of their sons and daughters needs as young adults.

As part of a federal grant, Grigal et al. (2001) and Moon et al. (2001) gathered information on the postsecondary programs that operated in the State of Maryland. In their overview of 14 programs in Maryland, (Grigal et al. 2001) the authors developed and used a questionnaire to interview teachers of programs that served students with significant needs who were ages 18 to 21. Teachers from each program participated in detailed personal interviews. Other personnel (e.g., instructional assistants, school administrators, college liaisons) also participated in some interviews.

Nine of the 14 programs were located in community colleges, and two were located on four-year college campuses. The other three programs were located in a sheriff's office within a mall, an adult service agency, and a building owned by the local school system (LSS). Teachers from these last three programs reported that they were located at those settings because they could not get space on the local college campus. Staff for each of the 14 programs consisted primarily of a special educator and instructional assistants who employed by the LSS. In some cases, additional instruction was provided by college instructors, college students, and personnel from CRPs.

Funding to operate these programs was generally provided by the LSS. Colleges, however, often donated classroom space and gave students and staff access to computers, photocopiers, fax machines, telephones, and campus facilities. Four programs were initially funded through grants from OSERS or the Maryland State Department of Education. When these grants ended, the LSS assumed responsibility for the programs.

These programs served students with a range of disabilities (e.g., mild to moderate MR, learning disabilities, traumatic brain injury, physical and sensory impairments, autism, behavior disorders, and multiple disabilities), who were working towards earning a high school certificate rather than a standard diploma. During the 1998-99 school year, the number of students served in each of the programs ranged from 4 to 22, and they ranged in age from 17 to 21. In addition to meeting age requirements and pursuing a high school certificate, these students were expected to meet additional entrance criteria such as completion of four years of high school, previous work experiences, independent travel skills, and IEP goals related to employment and adult services.

While Grigal et al. (2001) overviewed the 14 programs in Maryland, in a second article, Moon et al. (2001) provided basic information on the characteristics of these postsecondary programs. Similar to other investigations, Moon et al. found that the main goal of these programs is provide students with services and access to environments that are typical for young adults. Among the specific goals reported by students included:

- Maintaining a paid job
- Increasing independence in the community
- Developing friendships with same-age peers
- Improving self-determination skills
- And participating in college courses and activities

According to the authors, most students who participated in such postsecondary programs have in the past, participated in community-based instruction and employment, received functional academics, and had inclusive experiences.

Although most programs were located in four-year or community college settings, some were developed in community settings such as local malls. Regardless of location, these programs were staffed and funded by local school systems. Through collaborative efforts, additional resources and services were provided by colleges or community organizations.

When planning for students, a person-centered approach was often used to develop an appropriate educational program. On campus, many students audited regular college courses, enrolled in non-credit continuing education courses, and participated in nonacademic activities on campus such as best Buddies and Habitat for Humanity. Schedules were developed for individual students, based on their educational and employment needs.

Moon et al. (2001) maintained that development of postsecondary programs required careful planning, and collaboration among key stakeholders. Teachers, administrators, and parents were critical members of planning committees. When developing a program, the authors made the following 10 recommendations that were similar to the steps identified by Grigal et al. (2002):

- Visit an existing program.
- Identify students who would benefit from a program.
- Identify program goals.

- Create an advisory committee that includes representatives from local school systems, local adult service agencies, vocational habilitation, other community leaders, and parents.
- Identify funding needs.
- Look at college course offerings to determine which classes would be appropriate for students with SD.
- Establish a plan to address logistics such as transportation, reduced lunches, attendance, and medication.
- Establish a referral process that enables teachers, families, and students to make informed decisions.
- If a college campus is not available, explore developing programs in alternative settings in the community.
- Develop methods for program evaluation.

#### *Literature Review of Postsecondary Opportunities for Individuals with SD*

In a recent literature review, Neubert et al. (2001) revealed that there was limited information available that pertained to postsecondary programs for individuals with SD. Although the authors identified and summarized 27 articles that were published during the early 1970's to the 1990's, much of this existing literature consisted primarily of program descriptions (15), and position papers (7). It appeared that there has been little research conducted on postsecondary opportunities for individuals with SD. Neubert et al. found only three surveys, one quantitative study and one qualitative study.

Programs described in the literature were reported to be located on 2- or 4-year college campuses, and offered non-credit courses on vocational or occupational training, functional skill development, work adjustment skills, and recreation and leisure activities. Often programs were initiated by parents and advocates rather than the college, and were funded through grants and state or federal monies. Typically, staff included instructors hired specifically for the program, and volunteers. Although located on college campuses, most were specialized, segregated programs developed for individuals with SD. Opportunities for integration with college students without disabilities often occurred only when these college students volunteered in the programs. The authors noted that there was evidence that suggested more programs may have existed than what was reported in the literature.

While this body of literature provided a description of postsecondary opportunities for individuals with SD, according to Neubert et al. (2001), there were significant gaps in the knowledge base, and that there was little that could be used by those interested in developing or expanding postsecondary programs for students ages 18 to 21 with SD. A majority of the articles were published during the 1970's and 1980's, and focused on postsecondary opportunities for adults with SD who had already exited the public school systems. Only four of the 27 articles pertained to public school-sponsored postsecondary opportunities for students ages 18 to 21 with SD. Additionally, there were few published articles that described the individual supports approach. Neubert et al. (2001) also reported that there was little information on how students accessed inclusive activities and secured paid employment, the role of colleges, and program evaluation or student outcomes. The authors recommended that future

research should focus on these aforementioned areas of which little is known, and on gathering additional descriptions of new programs.

### *Summary*

Findings from follow up studies suggest that few individuals with significant disabilities participated in postsecondary education (Guy, 1998; SRI, 1997; Peraino, 1992). Rather, after exiting the public school system, these young adults with often entered into various types of employment or the adult services system. These outcomes are not surprising considering the limited opportunities made available to individuals with SD within postsecondary institutions. Findings from surveys indicated that few colleges and universities offered services and programs to meet the needs of these students. Furthermore, various attitudinal and organizational barriers served to limit the development of these postsecondary opportunities.

There appears to be no single model used to develop and implement these programs on college campuses. For instance, programs were developed on both two- and four-year college campuses. They were funded through a variety of sources such as government grants, community agencies and/or student tuition and fees. Colleges' contributions were usually limited to providing access to courses, campus facilities and materials.

There was also variation in program components. Most program curricula included a combination of various non-credit courses that focused on a vocational training, functional academics, and social and independent living skills. ENHANCE (Doyle, 1997) was the only program to offer a residential component. Some programs were reported to have employed some type of enrollment criteria that served to exclude

some students with more significant needs. Snider and Roderfeld (1979) were the only authors to include a detailed description of program evaluation. Although each program was unique, there were a few common characteristics. Many of the programs were often initiated through the efforts of parents, advocates, and public school personnel rather than by the colleges. Further, these programs tended to be segregated, and were developed specifically for individuals with disabilities. Opportunities for integration with non-disabled peers were available only when college students or practicum students from the campus volunteered in the programs. In many programs, parents, volunteers from the college, and staff from various community agencies played a significant role through actively participating in advisory committees, or by directly providing instruction. There was only one case-study available in the literature that documented the college experiences of an adult with Down's syndrome.

There is little information available on how to support 18 to 21-year-old students who are still enrolled in public schools, within alternative settings such as college campuses. Grigal et al. (2002) and Neubert et al. (2002) offered some information on the key features, and benefits and challenges associated with program and individual supports. Additionally, Grigal et al. (2002) and Moon et al. (2001) offered recommendations to facilitate the development of these alternative educational services for students with SD ages 18 to 21. Page and Chadsey-Rusch, (1995) offered the only description of the experiences of students who received services using the individual supports model rather than through a specialized alternative program. Grigal et al. (2001) and Hall et al. (2000) provided the only descriptions of programs that serve students with SD, ages 18 to 21 in postsecondary settings, while Hart et al. (2001)

offered the only description of an IS model. Finally, in their literature review, Neubert et al. (2001) summarized 27 articles related to postsecondary opportunities for individuals with SD.

#### *Student and Parent Perspectives of Transition*

Public-school sponsored postsecondary programs and supports that serve students with SD ages 18 to 21 are one recent addition to the myriad transition services delivery models available to students with disabilities. Since the 1980's, when the successful transition of these students into employment and adult living became a federal priority, there has been a proliferation of model programs, services, and educational strategies aimed at improving the effectiveness of transition services available to students with disabilities and ultimately, enhancing student outcomes. However, the limited empirical evidence that supports many of the identified best practices in the transition literature has drawn criticism from researchers in the field (Kohler, 1993). Others have expressed concern that although empirically validated transition practices are indeed available, there are few efforts documenting actual implementation (Collet Klingenberg, 1998; Thompson, Fulk & Piercy, 2000).

Examining the perspectives of consumers (i.e., students and parents) is one way that researchers have sought the necessary empirical evidence to support transition practices such as public school sponsored postsecondary options for students with SD ages 18 to 21, and to ascertain how these practices are being employed in the educational settings. Included below is a summary of the literature on student and parent perspectives on transition.

#### *Secondary Students Perspective on Transition*

Although parents, teachers, and others who are familiar with the students may be able to contribute important information regarding the students' future goals, choices, skills, and needed supports, the most important source of this knowledge is ultimately the students themselves. Students who are intimately involved in their education program have a better sense of the daily instructional processes and a direct working knowledge of the demands, successes, and challenges of their jobs and other aspects of life (Malian & Love, 1998). Students with disabilities who have been afforded the opportunity to express their views have been able to offer insight into their visions of the future, their educational experiences, and the supports or factors that influence transition.

*Visions about the future.* Despite the dismal outcomes documented in the literature (Peraino, 1992), students with disabilities were overall, optimistic about their futures (Gallivan-Fenlon, 1994; Lovitt et al., 1999; Malian & Love, 1998; Morningstar et al., 1995; Powers et al., 1999). Morningstar et al. (1995) described these students' visions for the future as the "American Dream." Like most of us, students with disabilities wanted to attend college, have good jobs, live on their own, enjoy satisfying relationships, participate in recreational activities, and be a part of their communities.

*School services and instruction.* Students were also confident that they were prepared for life after high school and would be able to successfully transition into adulthood (Powers et al., 1999). Unfortunately, the literature suggests that the opposite holds true; many students did not receive instruction or engage in activities that would enable them to achieve their American Dream. For instance, interviews with 1,285 young people with various disabilities who had dropped out or completed high school

(Malian & Love, 1998) revealed that a majority felt that they had not received enough instruction in handling money or exploring different jobs. These individuals also reported that they had had little opportunity to select their classes. Instead, schools had determined course selection.

In another study, students cited vocational and occupational preparation courses as being important to their future. However, they expressed more support for core curriculum classes such as mathematics, language arts, social studies, and science (Lovitt et al., 1999). For some, there was a lack of agreement between supports offered by educators and the students' expressed interests (Powers et al., 1999). Morningstar (1997), who conducted focus group discussions with students with disabilities (N=71), reported that although students were able to identify a variety of future careers, they had little knowledge of them. Half of the students participated in school-sponsored vocational training or work programs, and almost all students did participate in some type of employment. However, these students indicated that school programs and their work experiences had little impact on their career aspirations. Other students who participated in community-based vocational training held positive views of their experiences. However, they were bothered with the lack of monetary compensation for their work (Gallivan & Fenlon, 1994).

As previously noted, student involvement in the planning of their educational program is not only mandated by law but is critical to achieving positive postsecondary outcomes. Therefore it was discouraging to find that students with disabilities did not support training in self-determination for themselves or their families (Morningstar et al., 1995). Lehmann et al. (1999) indicated that some students did participate in

transition-related classes. However, it appeared that they did not use the skills or information from the classes to advocate for themselves during their transition-planning meetings.

*Participation in planning.* The research also suggests that students' participation in their educational planning was either nonexistent or very limited. Many students did not perceive themselves to be engaged in formal transition activities (Lehman et al, 1999). According to Morningstar et al. (1995), a majority of students reported that they were not involved in any systematic transition planning because they believed that they were too young to start the process. Some students elected not to participate in their meetings because they perceived them to be irrelevant or had had negative experiences during previous planning meetings (Morningstar et al., 1995; Powers et al., 1999).

Other barriers to student involvement in planning meetings included limited time during IEP meetings for transition planning, difficulty with understanding professional jargon, and feeling unwelcome and that their views were not respected (Powers et al., 1999). Morningstar et al. (1995) and Lehmann et al. (1999) also noted that families sometimes hindered student self-determination. Students in this situation were often not provided with many opportunities or the skills to make independent decisions. Differences in opinions between students and families that resulted in conflicts or disagreements often were a barrier to participation in planning for the future (Morningstar et al., 1995). Lack of knowledge of the IEP planning process may also have contributed to students' limited participation. For example, of 162 students surveyed by Lovitt et al. (1999) only half indicated that they had participated in their

IEP meeting or had a vague idea of what an IEP was. Even fewer students were able to identify an IEP goal. Although students supported their involvement in educational planning, those who participated tended to describe themselves as being passive participants in their IEP or transition planning meetings (Gallivan-Fenlon, 1994; Lehmann et al., 1999; Powers et al., 1999).

*Strategies for facilitating transition.* Although students reported many barriers that limited their involvement in the planning process, students also offered several strategies that promoted their involvement in transition planning. These included making them central agents in their planning, establishing a relationship with a critical “ally,” providing skills and information that promote decision-making, and supporting their participation in meetings (Powers et al., 1999). Morningstar et al. (1995) and Powers et al. found that students sought out and received support from family members. Most students believed that family members should be involved in planning for their futures and that they could participate in the process by ensuring that they remained in high school, planning for and helping pay for college, helping them live on their own and find a job (Morningstar et al., 1995).

*Views on alternative transition programs.* Using focus groups, Benz et al. (2000) elicited the perspectives of students (N=45) who participated in the Youth Transition Program (YTP), a transitional program designed to serve students with disabilities who required support beyond the services typically provided by the local school system. According to the authors, most students chose to participate in the program because they felt that they were not making progress in high school, and the curriculum was not meeting their needs to learn skills that would enable them to achieve

their postsecondary goals. Participants identified several important program and staff characteristics that helped them achieve their education and transition goals. These included the development of individualized services based on student-identified goals, and opportunities to learn specific skills (e.g., career exploration, goal setting, problem solving). The YTP staff played an important role by helping students address educational and personal issues, and providing persistent reminders that enabled them to “stay on track.” Many students also reported an increase in their self-awareness and confidence as a result of participating in the program.

#### *Parents' Perspective on Transition*

Parents of students with disabilities play important roles in the educational process by acting as advocates (Abeson & Davis, 2000), serving as influential role models for their sons and daughters (Morningstar et al., 1995), and sometimes functioning as service providers (Lehmann et al., 1999). For students with SD who require additional supports in order to achieve their desired postsecondary goals, these parent roles become even more critical during transition planning. According to McNair and Rusch (1991), except when there is special funding or special projects, the parent is considered the most important factor contributing to successful transition. In an effort to better understand parental contributions to successful postsecondary outcomes, researchers have solicited parents’ viewpoint of the transition process.

*Visions about future.* It appeared that most parents also visualized their sons and daughters achieving outcomes associated with a fulfilling adult life (i.e., work, postsecondary education or training, independent living, social inclusion, etc.) (Hanley-Maxwell et al., 1995; Malian & Love, 1998). Some parents, however, were less

confident about their adult children's future (Gallivan-Fenlon, 1994; Hanley-Maxwell et al., 1995; Lovitt & Cushing, 1999; Westling, 1996; Whitney-Thomas & Hanley-Maxwell, 1996). Some evidence suggests that parents who expressed concerns about the availability and reliability of post-high-school supports and services also maintained more limited visions for the future (Hanley-Maxwell et al., 1995; Westling, 1996). For some parents, their preference for more restrictive settings were related to their fears regarding safety, or the belief that their young adult would have difficulty succeeding in general education or community settings (Gallivan-Fenlon, 1994; Lovitt & Cushing, 1999).

*Instruction and services.* Parents wanted their children to participate in curriculum or receive services that they perceived as being most important for their children's future. In addition to academics, parents often desired instruction or services that were related to vocational training or work experiences, independent living, and obtaining residential services (Hanley-Maxwell et al., 1995; Lovitt & Cushing, 1999; Malian & Love, 1998; Westling, 1996). Other types of services viewed as important by parents were not direct services for their children but, rather information and services that would facilitate the transition process and to help them cope with the related stress. These supports included residential, guardianship and financial planning information, social support networks, and respite care and recreational activities for their children (Hanley-Maxwell et al., 1995; Westling, 1996). Hanley-Maxwell et al. (1995) indicated that parents tended to identify areas of needs as their children got closer to exiting school. It was also clear from parent comments that no type or amount of service would have been enough to ease their fears. This suggests that for some parents, their

selection of specific classes and services was motivated not only by their visions for their children's futures but also by their discomfort with the uncertainty of post-high-school options.

*Supports provided by parents.* In addition to identifying supports provided by outside agencies, parents also described their own efforts to assist their children with the transition process. For example, a group of eight mothers interviewed by Lehmann et al. (1999) reported that they actively facilitated their children's transition by teaching independent living skills, acting as case manager, promoting friendships, communicating with school, and discussing the future with their child. Other parents facilitated their children's transition by getting them on waiting lists, calling service agencies and employers, ensuring an adequate number of work hours, and participating in IEP meetings (Hanley-Maxwell et al., 1995).

In an investigation of parental perceptions of school programs, Lovitt et al. (1999) described the efforts of parents who had enrolled their children in a private school that offered services for students with developmental disabilities. As part of the program, these parents were obligated to carry out certain responsibilities such as fund raising. Lovitt et al. found that because their children were selected to participate, and the parents paid for services, they had an increased level of commitment to the program.

*Satisfaction with services.* There was variation in parental satisfaction with the educational programs and services available to their children. Generally, many held positive views of the programs and/or services offered to their adolescents and young adults (Gallivan-Fenlon, 1994; Hanley-Maxwell et al., 1995; Lovitt & Cushing, 1999). Parents who expressed the most satisfaction with their own participation in the

transition process believed that their relationships with professionals had developed over time, were characterized by trust and shared responsibility, and were based on frequent communication (Salembier & Furney, 1997). However, some parents who held negative views of the programs and/or services. These parents' experiences were characterized by confusion and frustration over the types of supports provided to their children (Lehmann et al., 1999). Others were concerned that the transition process had started too late (Gallivan-Fenlon, 1994) or that their children had not made progress or achieved goals (Lovitt & Cushing, 1999).

Although some parents were disappointed with programs or services, they still perceived teachers to be committed and caring individuals (Lovitt & Cushing, 1999). Many parents were able to identify an individual teacher who had made a difference in facilitated the transition process (Hanley-Maxwell et al., 1995). Whitney-Thomas and Hanley-Maxwell (1996) found that parents viewed school personnel as partners in the process whose role was to provide information and services; lend support, guidance and assurance; present options for the future; and teach skills.

*Barriers to transition.* The information presented by parents suggested that many students with disabilities were not receiving the necessary services to promote the desired seamless transition into postsecondary life. Malian and Love (1998) found that a majority of parents who participated in their survey, reported that their sons and daughters did not receive transition services. Moreover, although parents expressed their needs and hopes for their children's post-high-school future, the information included in IEPs or transition plans often did not reflect the parents' desires or were perceived by them to be useless (Lovitt & Cushing, 1999; Salembier & Furney, 1997).

Parents reported that they supported student involvement in the transition process but were unsure of how to foster their children's participation (Lehmann et al., 1999). The research suggests that parents also questioned their own role in the transition process. Like the participation of students with disabilities, parents' participation in the educational planning process was limited or passive in nature (Gallivan-Fenlon, 1994; Salembier & Furney, 1997). Westling (1996) reported that parents often did not feel welcome or encouraged by professionals to participate in transition planning.

Parents reported the following outside acted as barriers to the transition process or achievement of postsecondary goals: (a) unfamiliarity with the planning process, policies, and services; (b) poor communication or relationships between parents, school and/or adult service personnel; (c) lack of administrative support; (d) limited collaboration among staff or agencies; (e) lack of agreement on what constituted transition activities; and (f) limited options or availability for services (Hanley-Maxwell et al., 1995; Gallivan-Fenlon, 1994; Lehmann et al., 1999; Lovitt & Cushing, 1999; Salembier & Furney, 1997).

In addition to school-related issues, family-related factors may have also contributed to reducing parent participation or preventing successful transition. Parents also identified student characteristics such as lack of social skills, lack of motivation and initiative, and poor academic skills as factors that prevented their young adults from achieving their postsecondary goals (Lovitt & Cushing, 1999).

Some parents acknowledged feeling burned-out with parenting a child with disabilities. This attitude displayed itself in various ways including passive resignation,

disinterest in the school's special education program, and frustration with how the system worked (Lovitt & Cushing, 1999). Because transition planning occurs during the last few years of a students' educational career, what is perceived to be a parent's lack of interest may instead be an expression of his or her weariness. Related to feelings of weariness, some researchers (Hanley-Maxwell et al., 1995; Thorin et al., 1996) attributed parents' limited or lack of involvement in the transition process to conflicting feelings generated by the normal expectations of assuming a less active parenting role as their children entered adulthood, the reality that their involvement would continue, and the need to balance their involvement in their adult children's lives.

*Parent recommendations.* Parents offered various recommendations for facilitating their sons' and daughters' transition into adult life. Often, these were reflected in their requests for related instruction and services such as residential options, vocational training, and functional academics. The desire for these types of instruction and services for their children was also closely tied to the parents' own personal needs (Hanley-Maxwell et al., 1995). There was a perception that providing services that increased the students' independence would in turn, increase the parents' independence by decreasing their children's dependency on them.

Parents also offered suggestions for increasing their participation in planning. For example, parents who responded to a survey conducted by Salembier and Furney (1997) identified the following factors that enhanced parent participation in the transition planning meetings:

- An established relationship between parents and school personnel, with ongoing opportunities to meet and interact;
- Open and constant communication that centered on shared goals for the student;
- Teachers who were knowledgeable of student interests and needs, and used specific strategies to encourage parent and student participation; and
- Parents who were knowledgeable about the IEP/transition process, their legal rights and responsibilities, and community resources

Another group of parents (Lovitt et al., 1999) shared their recommendations for improving their children's educational programs. Among them were suggestions for improving instructional practices (e.g., ensuring that students understand material, sending home weekly progress reports, offering alternative ways for students to learn) and service delivery (e.g., more individualized programs, smaller classes, emphasis on vocational counseling and classes). Parents from one high school suggested that an off-campus program be established for special education students.

### *Summary*

Postsecondary alternative programs and services for students with SD ages 18 to 21 are a recent trend in transition service delivery options. Eliciting feedback from the consumers--the students and parents--serves to ensure that new models of service delivery such as these postsecondary programs indeed meet the criteria for best practice. Findings from the body of research relevant to students' and parents' views of transition revealed that both students and parents envisioned similar outcomes that were

associated with a typical adult life. Students also felt confident that they would be able to successfully transition into adulthood. Parents, however, were less optimistic. In fact, parents who perceived their children as needing additional supports and services tended to have more restricted visions for the future.

While students and parents envisioned the American Dream, they also reported that students did not always receive the necessary instruction and services that facilitated the achievement of positive outcomes. Students and parents also believed that IEP's and other planning documents did not address their needs. Despite their disappointment with the educational services and instruction, parents still thought of teachers as individuals who were partners in the transition process and a source of support.

The findings also suggested that students and parents did not fully participate in the transition process. Although some parents perceived themselves to be active participants who facilitated the transition process, a majority of parents and students reported that they had limited, passive roles in the transition planning. Various barriers contributed to this lack of or limited participation. Parents and students, however, were also able to suggest a variety of recommendations that could facilitate the process. One notable recommendation came from a group of parents who suggested the development of an off-campus secondary program (Lovitt et al., 1999).

This body of research has highlighted critical student and parent-related issues that may have significant implications for researchers and practitioners who provide transition services. However, this literature may not reflect the transition needs and experiences of students with SD and parents who are served in transition programs

located in postsecondary settings. No studies or descriptions of how students and parents perceived their experiences in school-sponsored postsecondary programs for students with SD ages 18 to 21 were found in the literature.

### *Summary of Literature*

Postsecondary opportunities have been available to individuals with MR since the early 1970's. The development of these programs and services has been influenced by a philosophical and legislative shift away from segregated services such as institutions and special schools, to services that offered more inclusive, normative experiences for individual with disabilities. The motivation for the development of early postsecondary programs was to serve adults with SD who had returned to their communities from institutions. The most recent efforts to provide age-appropriate opportunities within a normalized environment, and to address the postsecondary training needs of individuals with SD, have generated interest in the development of programs and services for students with significant needs during their final two to three years of educational entitlement. In response to this interest, some public schools have started to offer programs and individual services for students with SD ages 18 to 21 within postsecondary settings such as community-colleges, technical schools, and four-year universities. Though public school sponsored postsecondary programs for older students with SD are increasingly becoming accepted as an alternative model for service delivery, presently, we know very little about existing efforts to provide age-appropriate experiences to students with SD in postsecondary setting, and whether such efforts have incorporated practices recommended in the current transition literature. Future research should focus on acquiring qualitative data that describes the characteristics of existing

programs and documents the experiences and outcomes of program participants.

Findings from this qualitative study hopefully served to fill some of these gaps in the body of literature that pertains to public school-sponsored programs that serve students with SD ages 18 to 21 within postsecondary settings, and contribute to the development of a body of literature that can be used as a resource by those interested in providing age-appropriate experiences for older students with SD.

### Chapter 3: Methods

The purpose of this study was to describe the characteristics of a public school-sponsored program for students with significant disabilities ages 18 to 21, and to gain insight into the perspectives of consumers (i.e., students and parents). Included in this chapter is an overview of why qualitative methods, specifically case-study design, were used to conduct this investigation, along with procedures for sample selection, data collection and data analysis. Also, a description of Program A and the LSS were included to set the context of this study.

#### *Qualitative Methodology*

As illustrated in the literature review, little is known about alternative age-appropriate services for students with SD ages 18 to 21, or the views of the consumers. Conducting qualitative research enabled me to gain detailed information on the characteristics of a program and gain insight into the students' and parents perceptions of their experiences in the program. Qualitative methods are often used in exploratory research where one of the primary purposes is to identify unexpected phenomena and generate new grounded theories based on the findings (Maxwell, 1996). Theories grounded in data are more likely to be applicable to the educational environment than theories derived from predetermined hypotheses. As Glasser and Strauss (1967, p.239) explain, for a theory to be applicable in daily situations, it must correspond closely to the data.

Much of qualitative data collected during this study was through observing and interviewing participants within their natural environments, and analyzing related documents and artifacts. No attempt was made to manipulate variables within the

setting. The importance of qualitative research in natural settings is based on the belief that human actions are significantly influenced by the settings in which they occur; therefore one should study behavior in real-life situations (Marshall & Rossman, 1999).

In special education, variables such as official school policies, legislation, the needs of the individuals and the community, and personal characteristics and experiences may influence the interactions that occur between students, parents, families, and other stakeholders, and the educational environment. Stainback and Stainback (1984, p. 405) caution, “complex interaction of variables operate in many educational programs or procedures and can not always be understood when variables are isolated and studied apart.” Thus, in order to understand how Program A, a public school-sponsored postsecondary program operated, it was necessary to investigate the variables within the context of the natural setting. The types of data collected from Program A included field notes, transcripts, pictures, and documents. These “soft data” are rich in description and not easily handled by statistical procedures (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998).

Questions concerning the “meaning” that students, parents, and teachers place on educational experiences have resulted in the increased application of qualitative methods in special education ( Bogdan & Lutfiyya, 1996; Ferguson & Halle, 1995). This seems logical considering one of the primary goals of special education is to provide students with free, “appropriate” public education. If students with disabilities are to receive appropriate education, then it is imperative that we gain insight into the experiences of the participants in the educational process. Unfortunately, in previous

years, not all participants have had the opportunity to express their views. Smith (1999, p.66) noted that

too often, the consumers of special education services (i.e., the children with disabilities themselves and their parents) are never asked their opinions of the programs. If these consumers were never consulted about the services they receive, the educational system would never be able to reach the level of improvement that it could.

#### *Single Case-Study Design*

A specific qualitative approach, the single case-study, was selected as the primary research strategy for this investigation. A qualitative case-study was determined to be appropriate because programs for students ages 18 to 21 in postsecondary settings are a relatively new phenomena in special education, of which little is known. Also, these programs are designed to serve individuals with significant disabilities, a small percentage of the Special Education population, who may receive alternative exit documents such as a certificate of completion or IEP diploma. Concerns related to context and detailed analysis, which are typical characteristics of qualitative case studies, promote the use of small samples (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Like other qualitative methods, case studies are useful for collecting background information when planning major investigations. Yin (1994) recommended the use of case studies when the interest is in examining contemporary events of which the researcher has little control. Yin also noted that unlike other qualitative methods that relied on a single type of data, case studies allow researchers to deal with a variety of evidence such as documents, artifacts, interviews, and observations. Collecting

information from multiple sources and using a variety of methods is a strategy known as triangulation, and can reduce the risk of chance associations and systematic biases (Maxwell, 1996).

When conducting research with individuals with disabilities, multiple method case studies have advantages over single method case studies. As Biklen and Moseley (1988) explain, individuals with disabilities possess unique characteristics that may threaten the validity of studies that rely on a single method of data collection such as individual participant interviews. For example, interviewing individuals with significant disabilities who have difficulty with communication may increase the potential for misunderstandings, thus threatening validity. There is also a concern with participant acquiescence, the inclination for interviewees to provide answers that they think the interviewer wants to hear. By employing a multi-method case study I addressed some of these concerns by allowing for the triangulation of evidence across various methods and sources, thus increasing the validity of data and conclusions regarding the phenomenon.

### *Sensitizing Concepts*

Although one of the primary goals of qualitative case-studies is to develop thick descriptions or develop a better understanding of a phenomenon, it is unrealistic to think that researchers would be able to collect and analyze all the data associated with the phenomenon. According to Patton (1990, p.216) “sensitizing concepts provide a basic framework highlighting the importance of certain kinds of events, activities, and behaviors,” and allow researchers to focus the scope of a study, data collection, and analysis. The sensitizing concepts that provided the framework for this case-study were

based on the research questions and previous body of literature. For example, observations and interview protocols were organized and guided by findings from previous descriptions of public school-sponsored postsecondary programs (e.g. Hall et al., 2000; Grigal et al., 2001; Moon et al., 2001), literature on student and parent perspectives on transition (e.g. Benz et al., 2000; Hanley-Maxwell et al., 1995; Malian & Love, 1998; Morningstar, 1997) and best practices identified in the transition literature (e.g. community-based instruction, interagency collaboration, and inclusive opportunities). Collecting and analyzing data within the context of this framework facilitated data collection and analysis while ensuring that the information addressed the purposes of this case-study.

#### *Selection of Program A*

Purposive sampling can provide important information on settings, persons, or events that are deliberately selected. Furthermore, random sampling can introduce bias when used with small samples (Miles & Huberman, 1994) such as the one in this study. Reputational-case selection (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993), a purposive sampling procedure where cases are selected based on expert recommendation, was used to select the site. For instance, during the 2000-2001 academic year there were 19 programs in postsecondary settings for students with SD ages 18 to 21, located in eight of 24 local school systems (LSS) in the state in which this investigation was conducted. However, only two programs were initially considered for this case-study. These included the two programs that were nationally recognized as exemplary programs.

In an effort to maintain the anonymity of the program and the participants in this case-study the name of the national organization that recognized Program A as an

exemplary program was withheld. However, in 1999 this organization identified 20 promising programs and practices from a total of 48 programs that were nominated by various organizations. Programs and practices were selected as promising if they presented evidence that indicated that their activities improved skill levels, postsecondary experiences, and opportunities to participate in activities that fostered improved postsecondary outcomes. Two of these 20 promising programs and practices were located in the state in which this study was conducted. Both programs were administered by the same LSS and served students with significant disabilities ages 18 to 21. One program operated from the campus of a four-year university, and the second, Program A, was based out of a local community college.

Program A was selected for this study for a number of reasons. First, in addition to providing an example of an exemplary program, Program A was representative of a public school-sponsored program located on a community college campus. Community colleges have advantages over four-year colleges and universities in that they are more available to local communities (Grigal et al., 2002). Not all communities have access to public or private four-year postsecondary institutions, thus making it more likely that programs for students with significant disabilities ages 18 to 21 will be developed in community college settings. Second, shared funding sources and a similar mission to serve local graduates during their first two years after high school, make state supported community colleges excellent partners for programs for students ages 18 to 21(Moon & Inge, 2000). Finally, because Program A had been in operation for almost ten years, it offered an example of an established program. Due to these previously described

characteristics, data from Program A may prove useful to individuals interested in developing similar programs for students with disabilities ages 18 to 21.

*Description of Program A, LSS, and Community College*

To establish context for this case-study, I have included a brief description of Program A. Information on specific program components are described in Chapter 4. Also detailed in this section are descriptions of the LSS that operated Program A, and the community college campus on which the program was located.

*Program A.* Program A was implemented in 1994 and the first of four programs for students with significant disabilities ages 18 to 21 established by the LSS.

Administered by the LSS, Program A was on the campus of a local community college, and served approximately 14 students per year. Staff consisted of one full-time special educator and two full-time instructional assistants (On-Campus Outreach, 1999). The program's hours of operation were 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Instruction and opportunities to participate in activities within segregated classrooms, campus, and community settings were afforded to the students two days a week. The additional three days were designated "work days" during which students went directly from home to their job sites within the community.

Program A followed a combination of the LSS and community college academic calendars. For example, Program A began the same date as other schools in the LSS. However, rather than continuing until June, the program ended in May, approximately at the same time that spring semester ended at the community college. Although the students' academic year ended in May, like other teachers and instructional assistants employed by the LSS, the program staff continued to report to work until June.

In addition to the academic calendar, Program A followed the LSS and community college's scheduled holidays. These included federal and religious holidays, professional workdays, and winter and spring breaks. In previous years, when the LSS and community college's winter and spring breaks did not fall on the same dates, Program A followed the LSS's schedule. The program was, however, permitted by the college to continue to operate on campus although the college was closed for the breaks.

*LSS*. Program A was one of four programs located within postsecondary settings that served students ages 18 to 21, operated by a LSS located in the north central region of the State. Information from the U.S. Census Bureau (U.S. Census Bureau State and County Quick Facts, 2001) indicated that the county in which the LSS is located, is composed of 599 square miles, and may be described as a mix of urban, suburban, and rural areas. The median household income, based on 1997 model-base estimate, was \$44,715. This county also had the third highest population (754, 292) of any county in the state, and included White (74.4%), African-American (20.1%), Asian (3.2%), and Hispanic (1.8%).

According to the U.S. Department of Education (Young, 2000) the LSS was one of the 100 largest school districts in the United States. The LSS had a total of 105,914 students during the 1998-1999 academic year. The ethnic composition of the school system's student population also reflected the county's demographic characteristics. Of the total number of students enrolled in the LSS 65.4% were White, 29 % were African American, 3.6% were Asian American, 1.3% were Hispanic, and 0.4% were American Indian. Twelve percent of the students had IEPs.

*Community college.* The community college that housed Program A was located in the northeastern part of the county. Demographic information from the community college indicated that during Fall 2000, there were 7,694 students enrolled at the college. Their average age was 29 and 23% were minority students. Sixty-five percent of the student population were enrolled part-time and 35% were full-time. Data from the college's Office of Special Services indicated that during Fall 2001, two hundred eighty-nine students were reported as having a documented disability (Hunsinger, 2001). These included students with Learning Disabilities/Attention Deficit Disorder (143), Psychological disabilities (76), Other Health Impairment (26), Orthopedic Impairment (25), Blind/Visual Impairments (10), and Deaf/Hard of Hearing (9). The type of services available to these students with disabilities included testing accommodations, interpreters, note takers, tutors, reading and writing labs, recorded textbooks, and access to adaptive technology (e.g., voice-activated software, talking calculators, print enlargers, assistive listening devices).

#### *Participants in the Case-Study*

Individuals who had knowledge of the program's development, policies, components, and students' experiences were identified and asked to participate in this study. Patton (1990) refers to these individuals as "information-rich cases." For this case-study these individuals included a variety of key informants, student and parent participants.

*Key informants.* The program teacher from Program A was selected as the initial "key informant." Key informants were individuals who, in addition to providing insights into program development, program components, and/or student experiences,

suggest sources for additional information and initiate access to such sources (Yin, 1994). Key informants were recruited by asking the program teacher, students, and others (e.g., public school and college faculty, administrators, instructional assistants, parents, college students, and community organization representatives) to name individuals who may have information on the areas of interest. In turn, these individuals were also asked to identify additional possible informants.

This strategy of identifying additional participants from an initial sample is referred to as “snowball sampling” and is often used in qualitative research to generate potential sample participants (Berg, 1995; Bodgan & Biklen, 1998; Patton, 1990). Individuals identified as potential informants were contacted and asked to participate in the study. Prior to participating in an interview, I asked each informant to complete a participant consent form (See Appendix A for sample consent forms). Interviews were conducted with key informants regarding their knowledge of criteria employed in the development and/or implementation of Program A, the program components, and the students’ experiences in the program. Table 1 includes a list of key informants who participated in the case-study and a brief description of the information provided.

*Student participants.* Prior to collecting data on students, I obtained consent from students and their parents or guardians to participate in the study (including the release of school documents). Samples of these consent forms and cover letters are included in Appendix A. During the fourth week of school (2001-2002), I gave a class presentation describing the investigation and reviewed the student consent form. The purpose of the presentation was to ensure that all students understood their role in the investigation and to give them an opportunity to ask questions and address any

concerns. The student consent form and cover letter explaining the investigation was sent home to each family. I also asked the program teacher to follow-up with a telephone call to confirm that parents received and had an opportunity to review the student consent forms. The program teacher was instructed to provide families with my contact information, and direct study-related questions to me.

At the beginning of the 2001-2002 academic year, there were 18 students enrolled in the program in September. However, two students left the program during the first semester. One student elected to leave the program and drop out of public school. A second student returned to his former high school at the end of the first semester, after the parent and IEP team concluded that this student required additional supports that could not be provided by Program A. This student however, did agree to participate in the study. One student enrolled in the program did not give consent to participate. Therefore of the 18 student initially enrolled in the Program A, data from 15 students were collected over the course of the school year, and data from one student were collected during the first semester.

In addition to age, sex, race, disability, year of graduation, and number of years in the program, information was collected on whether the students received Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits. SSI is a federal benefits program for individuals with disabilities with limited capacity or are unable to work, and have low income. Data on the students' SSI status was considered significant because in recent years, SSI is more frequently being used as indicators of the need for long-term support for employment and independent living, and financial status. Students who qualify for SSI also typically meet eligibility for services from the State's Developmental Disabilities Administration,

Table 1

## Key Informants Interviewed and Information Provided

Key Informant	Information Provided	No. of Interviews
Program Teacher	Rationale for initial development of program  Role of LSS and community college during development and initial implementation of program  Resources provided by LSS and community college  General characteristics of program (LSS responsibilities, program evaluation, program schedule)  Duties and responsibilities as related to program  Information on program components incorporated into Program A and program schedule (past and present)	4
Paraeducators (2)	Duties and responsibilities as related to program  Information on program components, curricula, and schedule (past and present)	1

Key Informant	Information Provided	No. of Interviews
Director of Special Education	Rationale for initial development of Program A	1
	<p>Role of LSS and community college during development and initial implementation of program</p> <p>Resources provided by LSS and community college</p> <p>Selection and referral process for potential students</p> <p>General characteristics of program (LSS responsibilities, program evaluation, program schedule)</p>	

Key Informant	Information Provided	No. of Interviews
Special Education Chair (at high school)	Selection and referral process for potential students Selection and referral, and placement process for potential students Responsibilities of high school as related to Program A	1
Transition Coordinator (for local CRP)	Resources provided by CRP to Program A Role and responsibilities as they related to Program A Information on students work experiences	1
College Instructors (2)	Description of inclusive college courses (Aqua aerobics and Cardio-weight training) Expectations and accommodations provided to students with disabilities Perspectives on having students with disabilities participate in college course Observed interactions among typical college students and students with disabilities	2 (1 each)
College Students (2)	Description of interactions and relationship with students with disabilities Views on having students with disabilities in college course	2 (1 each)
Total = 11		Total I= 14

and vocational rehabilitation, and other benefits such as Medical Assistance, food stamps, and tuition waivers from the community college. Demographic information on the 16 student participants and the interview format used to gather data (i.e., individual, with one other student, focus group) are described in Table 2.

***Alumni.*** In addition to the students currently enrolled in the program, I conducted individual and focus group interviews with alumni (former students) who graduated from Program A. Interviewing these alumni enabled me to gather additional information on student experiences, specifically on outcomes after exiting the program. The focus group interview was conducted during an annual alumni picnic. During this event, the instructional assistants from the program and I asked individual students to participate in a focus group interview. It was held in a secluded area of the student lounge in the Campus Center building. Before starting the focus group, I again described the purposes of the investigation, reviewed the consent form and addressed the participants' questions and concerns. Eight of the 13 former students who attended the picnic participated in the focus group interview. One former student who was unable to attend the alumni picnic and participate in the focus group, was interviewed separately. Descriptive information on the alumni who have exited the program as well as their postschool outcomes are detailed in Table 3.

***Parent participants.*** Along with students and other key informants, parents or guardians of students enrolled in Program A were asked to participate in this case-study. Initially, parents/guardians were invited to participate in focus group interviews. A separate cover letter explaining the purpose of the parent focus groups and consent form requesting their participation in a focus group was sent home three weeks prior to the

Table 2

Demographics and Interview Format for Students in Program A during 2001-2002

STUDENT	AGE	SEX	RACE	DISABILITY	RECIEVES	GRAD	# YRS IN	INTERVIEW	
								SSI	YEAR
1a	19	Male	White	MR/PI	X	2003	4 mo.		Individual
									Interview
2	20	Male	African American	MR		2003	1		Individual
									Interview
3	20	Male	White	MR	X	2003	1		Focus Group 1
4	19	Female	White	MR	X	2003	1		Focus Group 1
5	19	Female	White	MR	X	2003	1		Focus Group 1
6	19	Female	African American	MR	X	2003	1		Focus Group 1
7	19	Male	White	LD	X	2003	2		Focus Group 1
8	20	Female	White	MR	X	2002	2		Interviewed
								w/ 1 other student	

STUDENT	AGE	SEX	RACE	DISABILITY	RECIEVES	GRAD	# YRS IN	INTERVIEW
								SSI YEAR PROG FORMAT
9	20	Female	Asian/ Pacific	MR		2002	2	Interviewed
Islander								
10	21	Female	White	MR	X	2002	2	Focus Group 2
11	21	Male	White	MR	X	2002	1 yr. 3 mo.	Focus Group 2
12	20	Male	African American	MR	X	2002	2	Focus Group 2
13	21	Male	White	ED	X	2002	2	Focus Group 2
14	21	Male	White	LD	X	2002	3	Focus Group 2
15	21	Male	White	MR	X	2002	4	Focus Group 2
16	21	Male	Asian/ Pacific	LD		2002	3	Focus Group 2
Islander								

*Note.* <sup>a</sup>Returned to high school after 1<sup>st</sup> semester; MR= Mental Retardation; LD= Learning Disabilities; ED= Emotional Disturbance; PI= Physical Impairment

Table 3

## Student Alumni from Program A

<i>STUDENT</i>	<i>AGE</i>	<i>SEX</i>	<i>RACE</i>	<i>DISABILITY</i>	<i>GRAD</i>	<i># YRS</i>	<i>INTERVIEW</i>
					<i>YEAR</i>	<i>IN</i>	<i>FORMAT</i>
							<i>PROG</i>
1	22	M	African American	MR	2001	3	Focus Group
2	21	F	White	MR	2001	3	Focus Group
3	23	M	White	MR	2000	2	Focus Group
4	24	M	White	MR	1999	2	Focus Group
5	24	M	White	MR	1999	2	Focus Group
6	24	F	White	MR	1999	2	Focus Group
7	24	F	White	ED	1999	Unsure	Focus Group
8	25	M	White	LD	1998	2	Focus Group
9	25	M	White	LD	1998	2	Individual Interview

scheduled dates for the focus group interviews. A sample parent consent form and cover letter are included in Appendix A. After two weeks, when only two consent forms were returned, I followed up with phone calls to parents. I left messages on the telephone answering machine when I was unable to speak directly with a parent. Three parents responded that they had other obligations, but would attempt to attend the focus group interview. Reasons given by several parents for being unable to attend the focus group interview included conflicts with work schedule, medical appointments, or family and religious obligations. One parent did not return my telephone messages. The parent focus group interview was cancelled when only one parent attended on the date that the focus group interview was supposed to take place. Although participation in the parent focus group interview was low, seven mothers and one social worker did consent to participate in an individual personal or telephone interview. Table 4 includes the demographic characteristics of parents and guardians who participated in individual interviews.

#### *Data Collection*

Following Yin's (1994) suggestions, several methods of data collection were used in this investigation including individual and focus group interviews, participant observation, and document review. The use of multiple sources promote the development of "converging lines of inquiry," a process in which evidence from different sources support the same findings (Yin, 1994), and compensate for the limitations of any single method (Marshall and Rossman, 1999). The validity and reliability of a case study were thus greatly enhanced when the findings or conclusion were confirmed by multiple sources of evidence.

Table 4

## Parents and Guardians Who Participated in Interviews

<i>N</i>	<i>Parent or Guardian</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Race</i>	<i>Years of</i>	
				<i>Education</i>	<i>Student<sup>a</sup></i>
1	Mother	40	White	13	1
2	Mother	50	White	15	5
3	Social Worker	33	African American	16	6
4	Foster Mother	66	African American	11	6
5	Mother	45	White	12	7
6	Mother	40	White	14	11
7	Mother	55	White	12	13
8	Mother	62	White	16	15

*Note:* <sup>a</sup> Corresponds with student number on Table 2

Data collection proceeded after being given formal approval by the LSS to conduct the case study. Data were collected over a period of approximately 9 months. Although information from documents and individual and focus group interviews were collected in a relatively short period of time, it was necessary to space observations over the course of the academic year in order to get a better sampling of the students' experiences in Program A. Furthermore, it allowed for multiple interactions with participants and my long-term presence within the program. This is a recommended strategy in qualitative research to reduce threats to validity associated with participant reactivity (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). Descriptions of data collection methods used in this case study are as follows.

#### *Individual Interviews*

An interview is essentially a purposeful conversation. It usually occurs between two people and is directed by one in order to get information from the other (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). In qualitative research, interviews provide a means to understand the meanings that people hold for their everyday activities (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). Two types of open-ended interviews, an approach using interview guides, and informal conversational interviews were conducted during this case study (Patton, 1990).

*Interview guides.* Five individual interview guides were developed for this case-study. Examples of *Program Development/General Characteristics, Program Components, College Instructor, College Student, and Parent/Guardian* interview guides are included in Appendix B. These guides provided the necessary structure to ensure that essential topics were discussed, yet allowed me enough flexibility to probe

for additional data and explore unanticipated, relevant issues that emerged during the interviews (Patton, 1990).

Questions for the *Program Development/General Characteristics and Specific Program Components* interview guides were developed based on the literature on transition best practices and previous data collected on Program A by On-Campus Outreach (OCO), a federally funded outreach grant awarded to the University of Maryland (OCO, 1999). In fall 1999, members of the OCO staff interviewed the program teacher from Program A for the purpose of collecting information related to program components (e.g., location, funding, curricula, and referral process). A Copy of the completed questionnaire on Program A is included in Appendix C. Program A was included as part of a larger study on postsecondary programs for students with SD ages 18 to 21, and data from 14 different programs were aggregated. Information from Program A was reported only as part of larger findings on program components (Grigal et al., 2001).

In order to address the purposes of this study, it was necessary to expand many of the questions initially addressed by OCO (1999). For example, in the OCO questionnaire, teachers were asked to identify and describe various program characteristics. Similar to OCO, interview questions in the *Program Components* interview guide focused demographic information (i.e., students served, program schedule), and specific program components identified in the transition best practices literature (e.g., functional academics, career awareness, self-determination, family involvement). However, I also included additional questions in order to elicit detailed information on the individual program components.

The first part of the *Program Development/General Characteristics* interview guide pertained to the program's development. These topic areas included: (a) initial interest in the program; (b) program development process; (c) roles of program developers; and (d) long-term sustainability. Questions related to program development were not part of the original OCO instrument, but were included in this case-study. The second part of the interview guide included questions related the program's general characteristics such as the (a) program goals and evaluation; (b) population served, (c) program location, (d) roles and responsibilities, and (e) resources. I developed the *Program Development/ General Characteristics* interview guide so that it could be used with multiple informants (i.e., administrators, program staff, Transition Coordinators) and not limited to the program teacher as originally developed by the OCO project.

Because I expanded the questions from the original OCO (1999) instrument, I opted to use two shortened interview guides rather than a single unabridged guide. Many administrators from the LSS had limited time available to participate in personal interviews. Consequently, as illustrated in Appendix B it was necessary to develop two abbreviated guides that included questions clustered around specific yet fewer topics of which key informants had knowledge.

One of the main purposes of this case-study was to gain a better understanding of the students with SD experiences on the college campus and their interactions with typical college peers. Therefore, in addition to the two interview guides that pertained to program development and components, I developed the *College Student* and *College Instructor* interview guides. Examples of these guides are included in Appendix B.

In an effort to gain insight into parent perspectives, I conducted parent interviews using the *Parent/Guardian* interview guide developed specifically for this case-study. Initially this guide was designed to be used during parent focus group interviews. However, it was augmented and used with individual interviews. Questions on the parent interview guide were clustered around the five topics: (a) the decision to attend, (b) perspective on Program A, (c) visions of the future, and (d) preparation for adult living.

Although I developed five interview guides, depending on an informant's knowledge of the program or students' experiences, only certain interview guides were used with individual informants. For instance, the program teacher who had knowledge of the program's development, general characteristics, as well as specific program components was interviewed four times using two interview guides. However, each parent participated in only a single interview. Other informants (e.g. school administrators, program specialist, college students) with more limited knowledge were also interviewed only once or twice using one of the interview guides. As illustrated in Table 1, I also documented the number of times that each key informant participated in an interview. To ensure that information was comparable across informants and facilitate data analysis, when possible, the same interview guide was used across informants (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Patton, 1990).

While the interview guides developed for this case-study contained numerous questions, my intent was only to use them to guide discussions during the interview rather than as structured survey instruments. During the course of an interview I rephrased or omitted specific questions as necessary. Probe questions were used to

elicit further detail or additional information. In some cases an informant's answers dictated the direction of the discussion. For example, during an interview, the transition coordinator from a local community rehabilitation program (CRP) reported that his organization was responsible for placing most of the students in job sites and for providing transportation to and from work. By allowing the interviewee to elaborate on his answers and asking additional related questions that were not included in the interview guide, I was able to gather additional detailed information on topics that were pertinent to the case study. The opportunity to gain valuable data would have been missed had I not deviated from the interview guide.

I conducted 14 interviews with eleven key informants that ranged in length from 25 to 120 minutes with eleven key informants. Each interview was recorded on audio tape and later transcribed. A total 224 pages of transcripts were produced from the recorded data.

*Informal conversational interview.* In addition to interview guides, informal conversational interviews were conducted as part of ongoing participant observation. With this type of interview, predetermined questions or interview guides were not used; rather questions and probes were generated during the course of the interviews that may occur during observations. The flexibility of this approach allows one to "pursue information on whatever direction appears to be appropriate, depending on what emerges from observing a particular setting, or from talking to one or more individuals in that setting" (Patton, 1990, p.281). In addition to obtaining supplemental data during observations, informal interviews were also beneficial during the beginning of the case

study for establishing rapport with the students, program personnel, and other informants (Berg, 1995).

### *Participant Observation*

Observation was defined as “the systematic noting and recording of events, behaviors, and artifacts in the social setting chosen for study” (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p. 107). When utilized in combination with other data collection methods such as interviewing, participant observation was used to check whether participant reports of activities and beliefs match their observed behavior (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993).

Participant observation was also particularly useful for collecting qualitative data on programs and their participants. Also, directly observing program operations and activities enabled me (the participant observer) to accomplish the following: (a) understand the context within which the program operated, (b) use a discovery oriented, inductive approach, (c) have the opportunity to see things that may routinely escape conscious awareness among participants and staff, (d) learn about things program participants or staff may be unwilling to talk about during an interview, and (e) move beyond the selective perceptions of others (Patton, 1990).

Snowball sampling was used to identify additional informants and events to observe. I observed students participating in events both “planned activities” such as classroom instruction and “unplanned activities” such as lunch in the cafeteria. Informal conversational interviews with the students and other informants who had knowledge of the students’ experiences, were conducted to augment observations.

Interactions that occur between researcher and participants during an observation fall within a participant observation continuum. This can range from

complete observer, where the researcher remains detached from the setting and does not participate in activities; to full participant, where the researcher actively participates and there is little difference between the researcher's and participants' behaviors (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). The extent that I participated in specific events varied and was negotiated prior to the observation. For example, during my observation of students in their "regular" college course, I maintained the role of observer. I purposefully employed this limited role in an effort to avoid disrupting instruction and drawing undue attention to the students from the program. However, in some instances, such as when I observed a student at work, I took on the role of job coach. In these cases having both a job coach and an observer would have proved too intrusive. According to Patton (1990, p.209) "the ideal is to negotiate and adopt that degree of participation that will yield the most meaningful data about the program given the characteristics of the participants, the nature of staff-participant interactions, and the sociopolitical context of the program. "

As with determining the degree of participation versus observation, there was also no formula for calculating the length of observation sessions. Following recommendations made by Berg (1995) and Bodgan and Biklen (1998), during the first few days in a setting, I attempted to limit the length of an observation to about an hour. These authors maintained that time spent observing should depend on a researchers memory and the amount of time available to write comprehensive fieldnotes immediately after the session. Extending observations beyond one's capabilities or available time to write may result in less detailed fieldnotes. They also expressed, however, that in some cases it was reasonable to remain in the setting for an extended

period of time and sacrifice detailed fieldnotes, in order gain access to the setting or develop rapport with informants. These initial observations afforded me access to additional relevant events and informants.

In order to obtain a sampling of the various types of events that students may engage in while participating in the program, observations of different types of events continued until “theoretical saturation” was reached (Glasser & Strauss, 1967). In this investigation, saturation was reached when any further observations only provide descriptions of previously observed events, and no new data was found.

Over the course of nine months, I conducted 56 observations that ranged in length from one to six hours. Any observed interactions, activities, or informal interviews pertinent to the case-study were noted and described in detailed fieldnotes, which were written during or shortly after the observation. Altogether, 222 pages of observation fieldnotes were generated during this case-study.

### *Focus Group Interviews*

In addition to the previously described data collection methods, in this study several focus groups were conducted with alumni and current students from the program. Focus groups enabled me to investigate students’ experiences and their views. Focus groups are group interviews in which a moderator (in this case the researcher) guides the interview while a small group discusses the topics during the interview. The comments made and issues raised during the discussion are the essential data (Morgan, 1998b).

Focus groups were used because they are also ideal for conducting research with students with disabilities. The ongoing interactions that occur among group members

during focus group interviews may encourage respondents to seek clarification to questions. Also, hearing different responses to the questions may lessen a respondent's tendency to provide answers that he or she thinks the moderator wants to hear (Biklen & Moseley, 1988). Additionally, because focus groups do not rely on written language, it enables respondents with limited or no reading skills to fully participate in the investigation (Steward & Shamdasani, 1997). As illustrated in Appendix D highly structured interview guides that include open-ended research focused questions were developed for both student and alumni focus groups. According to Biklen and Mosely (1988) asking separate specific questions rather than broad open-ended ones, helps decrease potential confusion that may occur when interviewing individuals with SD.

Three student focus groups were conducted as part of this case-study. Focus Group 1 was comprised of students who were in their first or second year in the program and not scheduled to graduate. Focus Group 2 consisted of students who were scheduled to graduate in 2002. Finally, Focus Group 3 included "alumni," students who had already exited the program. There was an effort to form focus groups that consisted of six to ten participants. This range generated enough different opinions to stimulate discussion without making each participant compete for time to talk (Morgan, 1998a). However, in the case of Focus Group 1, there were only five students who were in their first or second year in the program. Because the purpose of the focus groups was to acquire insight on the views regarding the students' experiences within the program, focus groups took place during late spring. This was necessary because several of the focus group questions were referred to information from individual interviews and observations. While characteristics of students from Focus Groups 1 and 2 are described

in Table 2, the characteristics of alumni who participated in Focus Group 3 are included in Table 3. Similar to the individual interviews, discussions that occurred during the focus group interviews were recorded on audiotape and transcribed into text. Data from the three focus groups conducted during this investigation produced 95 pages of transcripts.

#### *Document Review*

I identified and requested copies of, or access to pertinent documents and materials related to the Program A. These were used to supplement the information from interviews, and observations. Documents are useful for augmenting and corroborating evidence from other sources (Yin, 1994). Also, unlike observations and interviews, which may disrupt a setting, a document review is an unobtrusive means of collecting information. Information from documents are considered nonreactive, and do not change as a result of the researchers presence (Marshall & Rossman, 1999).

According to Patton (1990) the data produced by documents can help strengthen the validity of a case study, and also provide another source of rich source of information about programs.

Because the intent of this study was to describe a program for students ages 18 to 21, and the students' experiences within it, the type of documents collected consisted primarily of official documents (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998) such as student IEPs, written policies, memos, curriculums, manuals, and teacher-developed materials. Table 5 includes a description of the 18 types of documents collected during this case-study.

Table 5

## List of Documents from Program A

Type of Document	Source	Significance of Documents
1 Program Proposal	LSS Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offers rationale for program development</li> </ul>
	Specialist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outlines resources provided by LSS (e.g. program staff, funds for operation of program) and community college (e.g. access to classrooms and college facilities), and responsibilities of each organization.</li> </ul>
2 Program Manual (developed by program teachers)	Program Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brief description of rationale for program development, selection and referral of potential students, curriculum development, program components included in curriculum (e.g. community-based instruction, functional academic instruction, student work experiences).</li> <li>Includes statement documenting importance of establishing good rapport with the community college and local community, and suggestions for maintaining a good public image (e.g. through newsletters, open house events, and Best Buddies).</li> </ul>

Type of Document	Source	Significance of Documents
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sample of curricula available to students in Program A and other postsecondary programs operated by LSS.</li> </ul>
3	Administrative Memo from Director of Special Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Selection and referral process</li> <li>• Roles of Program staff, high school staff</li> </ul>
4	Program Brochure (developed by program teachers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lists examples of program components</li> <li>• Description of selection process for potential students</li> </ul>
5	Samples of worksheets from published curricula and teacher-made materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examples of worksheets used for functional academic instruction (e.g. social skills training, math, vocational training, functional vocabulary)</li> </ul>
6	Completed student work evaluation (CRP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documentation of students' performance in enclaves and mobile crews operated by local CRP.</li> <li>• Evidence to support CRP's interagency collaboration between local CRP</li> </ul>

Type of Document	Source	Significance of Documents
		and Program A
7 Monthly program newsletters from September 1995 to June 2002	Program Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provided calendar of activities during 2001-2002 school year, and</li> <li>Description of upcoming and previous community-based instructional activities, and</li> </ul>
8 Articles on Program A	Program Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Documentation of past events (e.g. graduation ceremonies), program description</li> <li>Described by program teacher as a means of keeping community informed on Program A</li> </ul>
9 Daily schedule for Spring 2002	Program Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Example of instructional activities made available to students during 2001-2002 school year</li> </ul>
10 Written Policies for Program A (developed by program teacher)	Program Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Description of expectations for student behavior, personal hygiene, and participation in specific campus activities (e.g. music forum, lectures, computer lab)</li> <li>Reviewed at the beginning of the school year with students in Program A</li> </ul>

Type of Document	Source	Significance of Documents
		(e.g. as part of social skills instruction)
11 Student IEPs	Program Staff Parent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Must be reviewed and signed by parents and students, and returned to program teacher</li> </ul>
12 Flyers and parent permission forms with description of upcoming CBI activities	Program Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student demographic information (e.g. birth date, disability code, sending high school)</li> <li>Sample of students IEP goals</li> </ul>
13 Brochures from local CRPs and questions on transition	Transition Fair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Documents community-based and inclusive instructional activities made available to students</li> <li>Distributed to families to obtain permission to participate, inform them of upcoming activities and requirements for participation (e.g. fees, pack lunch, appropriate clothing and equipment)</li> <li>Sample questions for students and parents to ask local CRPs.</li> <li>Information on local CRP's that serve students who exit Program A.</li> </ul>

Type of Document	Source	Significance of Documents
14 Packet containing information on college courses available to students, forms for verifying SSI		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Distributed to families beginning of Spring 2002 semester.</li> <li>Included brief description and cost of two college courses available to student sin Program A (e.g. aqua aerobics and cardio-weight training).</li> <li>Verification forms for SSI were to be signed by parents and returned to program teacher.</li> </ul>
15 End-of the Year Activities Schedule	Program Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Examples of community-based instructional activities made available to students during 2001-2002 school year.</li> <li>Distributed to students and families May 2002 to inform them of upcoming events</li> </ul>
16 Monthly Calendar of Activities	Program Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Documents community-based instructional activities and campus events (e.g. lectures, music forums, and theater productions) made available to students during 2001-2002 school year.</li> <li>Sample of Program calendars distributed to students and families to inform them of upcoming events</li> </ul>

Type of Document	Source	Significance of Documents
17 List of Hourly Wages for Students Employed by CRP	Program Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Documentation of student wages during paid work experiences.</li></ul>
18 1002-2002 Community College Catalog	Student Services at Community college	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Includes community college's mission statement.</li><li>• Evidence of the community college's willingness to meet the needs of the community.</li></ul>

### *Data Analysis*

In qualitative research, data analysis is the process of systematically searching and arranging interview transcripts, fieldnotes, and other materials for the purpose of increasing understanding. It involves working with data organizing them, breaking them into manageable units, summarizing them, searching for patterns, and discovering what is important and what is to be learned (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). In this case study, data analysis was an on-going process that was closely tied with data collection, rather than a separate process that reserved until data collection was completed. On-going or early data analysis helps generating strategies for collecting new data, and improves the overall quality of collected data and final analysis (Miles & Huberman 1994; Patton, 1990).

Data analysis for this case study consisted of the following: (a) analysis in the field, (b) organizing and managing data, (c) coding and interpreting data, and (d) ensuring credibility of findings.

#### *Analysis in the Field*

On the advice of Bogdan and Biklen (1998), analysis began “in the field.” During observations or interviews, I documented any related thoughts or insights, and included them in my fieldnotes. The purpose of these “observer’s comments” was to stimulate critical thinking about the observations in addition to recording data (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). Periodically reviewing the data and observer’s comments, were also useful for planning future observations, selecting additional informants, and for generating code categories.

*Organizing and Managing Data*

Audiotapes containing interviews with key informants, students, and families were converted into typed transcripts. All handwritten or taped fieldnotes were also typed into documents. The purpose of converting raw data into these “write ups” was to produce documents that would allow anyone to read, edit for accuracy, comment on, and analyze the data (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

When data which were in the form of word processing documents had been converted into text files and entered into the computer, the computer software NUD\*IST 4 (1997), was used to assist with organizing and managing the data, and facilitated retrieval during analysis. This software was specifically designed for use with qualitative data. Using computer software to assist with data analysis is desirable when, as it was in this case study, necessary to develop an elaborate coding system that allowed for rigorous analysis of a large amount of data (Patton, 1990).

Other documents (e.g., IEPs, brochures, manuals, samples of teacher-made materials, administrative memos) collected during the investigation could not be converted into text files and entered directly into the computer. Therefore, it was necessary to complete document summary forms for each of the documents to assist with organizing the materials (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Because document summaries were typed using the NUD\*ST4 (1997), they were easily coded and facilitated retrieval during final data analysis. A sample document summary form generated by NUD\*ST4 is included in Appendix E.

A “text unit” was the smallest unit of analysis that could be coded using the computer software (NUD\*ST4, 1997). The size of a text unit ranged from one line to

an entire page and was determined by the researcher. The text unit used to analyze data that were directly entered into the computer (i.e., transcripts and fieldnotes) was a single line of text. This was selected because the unit was small enough to allow for fine coding without retrieving extraneous data. Altogether, these fieldnotes, and transcripts yielded 30,193 lines of text available for coding. Because certain documents such as curricula, IEPs, and calendars could not be entered directly into the computer and assigned numbers for each line of text, the size of text units for these types of documents ranged in length from one paragraph to a single page. The size of the text unit was determined by the type of document. For example, it was suitable to use a paragraph as the text unit for a brochure that contained several short distinct paragraphs, while a monthly calendar was more easily coded by according to individual pages. The size of the text unit was included in the document summaries.

### *Coding and Interpreting Data*

Two methods were used to summarize and interpret data for this case study. A combination of priori and inductive coding techniques were use to generate codes for data analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Content analysis was used to identify additional themes from coded data.

*Generating and interpreting codes.* The process of summarizing data during the initial or first-level coding included generating a provisional list of categories using the research questions and interview guides as guidelines. This helped to ensure a match between data analysis and the research questions. Codes were developed for each category and subcategory, and entered into the computer program. A research assistant and I separately reviewed, sorted, and coded all the data according to these initial

categories. After separately reviewing, sorting, and coding the data, the research assistant and I met to discuss the suitability of the provisional codes, adding or deleting codes as necessary, and refining the definition for each code. Discrepancies were also addressed and consolidated during these discussions. For example, employment opportunities offered by local CRP's are often not part of traditional career awareness curriculums. Therefore, initially, the research assistant did not code tours of local CRPs under the career awareness program component. However, after one such discussion, we agreed to amend the definition of the code to include tours of local CRPs because program staff viewed them as a career awareness activity. Using the final revised list of codes, the research assistant and I again separately coded the data for a second time.

After all data were categorized and coded, a research assistant and I searched the coded data to for emerging patterns or themes. For each identified pattern or theme, we developed a subcategory in the form of a pattern code. Miles and Huberman (1994), describe pattern codes as sort of meta-codes that identify emergent themes, configuration, or explanations. Similar to the process during initial category development and coding, the research assistant and I separately reviewed the data and generated pattern codes. We met to discuss and consolidate discrepancies in the pattern codes developed during the initial analyses and the definition for each code. Using this final set of pattern codes, the research assistant and I separately coded the data for a second time. The list of categories and subcategories of codes generated for this case-study are listed in Appendix F.

To verify that the themes were reliable, after all data were coded, I conducted inter-coder reliability checks. This process involved using the computer software to sort

all data given a specific code, then comparing the text units coded by the research assistant and me. The formula used to calculate inter-coder reliability was the number of agreements, divided by the total number of agreements and disagreements. The average inter-coder reliability for the 74 codes averaged 82% and ranged from 64% to 97%. An analysis of the disagreements indicated that the research assistant who was less familiar with the data tended to code additional text units in order to include the context in which the information was presented. However, the researcher who collected the data and was familiar with the context, tended to code only portions of the passages that pertained to the category and left out additional information. These differences between coders had little effect on the interpretation of the data. An example of coded text containing agreements versus disagreements is illustrated in Appendix G.

*Content analysis.* In addition to interpreting the patterns that emerged from coding, I used content analysis to identify or verify additional patterns or themes (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 1990). For example, content analysis was useful for obtaining additional detail such as identifying the number of different types of student experiences, or the different roles of persons involved in the development of the program. It was useful for verifying or seeking alternative explanations for identified patterns. For example, to verify students' and parents' views regarding their experiences with the program, I analyzed both the number of positive and negative comments.

#### *Ensuring Quality and Credibility of Findings*

All research must be subject to the scrutiny of its methods and findings. Only through this process will we be able to separate what can be considered "good" from

“bad” research, and ensure that the findings and conclusions are indeed credible. Patton (1990) recommended several procedures for enhancing the quality and credibility of qualitative research so that it may hold up to close examination. These include: (a) searching for and testing rival explanations and negative cases, (b) triangulating data, (c) keeping methods and data in context, and (d) addressing researcher effects. A discussion of how these procedures were used to strengthen the credibility of this case study follows.

*Searching for and testing rival explanations and negative cases.* Testing for rival hypotheses, which requires searching for the most plausible, empirically grounded explanation from among several competing explanations, is a recommended practice in qualitative research (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 1990). When rival explanations are taken into consideration and refuted, the resultant findings appear more credible. However, the primary goals of this case study were to explore and describe phenomena, rather than test predetermined hypotheses. The expected outcomes were to generate thick descriptions of a program for students ages 18 to 21, and the experiences of these students. Therefore, in this case study, the emphasis was placed on searching for negative cases, a process closely related to testing for rival explanations. During data analysis, I actively searched for disconfirming evidence in order to test the original patterns or themes (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 1990).

Negative cases are useful in that the lack of contradictory evidence will serve to further support the emergent pattern, thus proving the rule. However, finding negative cases may also be useful in that they may serve to “broaden the ‘rule’, change the ‘rule’, or cast doubt on the ‘rule’ altogether” (Patton, 1990 p.463). The purposeful search for

disconfirming evidence was incorporated during data analysis. During data analysis, after initial patterns or themes were identified, the research assistant and I independently searched for negative cases. Separate codes were developed to represent the negative cases. Inter-coder checks were conducted to verify our findings. Any contradictory evidence found was discussed in the results; because any emerging patterns or themes would be more convincing when negative cases have been purposely sought and taken into account.

*Triangulating data.* Data collected in this case study were triangulated across methods, sources, and analysts (Patton, 1990; Yin; 1994). Triangulation across methods involved comparing information collected using three different types of data collection procedures. Throughout the school year I conducted individual and focus group interviews with select informants and observed students participating in various events. Relevant documents were also obtained to supplement the observation and interview data. In addition to verifying data through the use of different methods, I also triangulated data across sources. This meant comparing information provided by several informants. The sources of data and the findings for each research question are detailed in Tables 6, 7, and 10, which can be found in Chapter 4. The list of multiple sources indicates that the data has been triangulated across informants, and methods (e.g. observations, interviews, and documents).

*Keeping methods and data in context.* It is virtually impossible to interview every individual who may have information about a program or observe every event. It was necessary to make sampling decisions, select certain individuals to participate, and specific times and events to observe. Patton (1990) maintained that these design

decisions may result in sampling errors, and that findings may be due to methodological decisions, rather than a true reflection of the phenomena. Therefore, conclusions from this case-study were reported within the proper context. Interpretation of findings were limited only to situations, time periods, persons, and purposes for which data were applicable.

For this case study, I also carefully documented and described the procedures and research findings in the methodology and results sections. Conditions under which the findings were generalizable were discussed as part of the study's limitations. These were included in the case study to ensure that readers have access to the information necessary to judge the credibility of this investigation.

In addition to supplying the information needed to determine credibility, detailed descriptions were also necessary for establishing external validity. In qualitative research, external validity is not achieved through statistical analysis, but rather through establishing comparability and translatability. LeCompte and Preissle (1993) described comparability as the degree to which components of a study are sufficiently described and defined, so that the results may be used by other researchers as a basis for comparison with similar studies or populations. A related construct, translatability is the degree to which the theoretical frames, definitions, and research techniques are accessible and understood by other researchers in related disciplines.

*Addressing researcher effects.* One of the main concerns with qualitative research is the potential for distorted or inaccurate findings because of the researcher's effect on the setting. Bias in selecting and collecting information may result due to the participant's reactions to the presence of the researcher within the setting, changes that

may occur in the researcher during the course of data collection, and the researcher's preconceptions or personal biases (Patton, 1990).

Several approaches were used to reduce the potential bias. First, I designed the case study so that I spent a period of nine months within the program setting. Spending extended time in the setting permitted the participants to get used to my presence (Patton, 1990). I also spread site visits over the course of the academic year and built in opportunities to spend time away from the site. This strategy was recommended by Miles and Huberman (1994) to avoid co-optation or "going native." When possible, I asked individuals who had been interviewed or observed for feedback to verify the information (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Strategies used to address ethical issues assisted in reducing bias. Throughout the study I made sure that participants were of my research intentions, were not exposed to unnecessary risks, and were comfortable with my procedures. By gaining their trust I also hoped to build rapport. According to Bogdan and Biklen (1998) "after you build rapport the fact that you are a researcher fades from [participants] minds" (p.84).

## Chapter 4: Results

Descriptive information on study participants, Program A, the local school system (LSS), and the community college were detailed in Chapter 3. The findings from this qualitative single case study are presented within the framework of the three research questions. Each research question is stated followed by the results obtained from the data analysis.

### *Criteria Employed During Program Development and Implementation*

Research Question 1: What criteria (i.e., rationale for program development, allocation of resources, staffing decisions, admission into program, factors that facilitate/act as barriers) are employed in the development and implementation of a public school-sponsored program for students ages 18 to 21 with SD within a community-college campus?

In an effort to develop a better understanding of the criteria used during the initial development and implementation of Program A, key informants were interviewed regarding their knowledge of the rationale for the development of a postsecondary program, allocation of resources, staffing decisions, and/or admission into the program. Key informants who were directly involved in program development and initial implementation were also asked to identify factors that facilitated or acted as barriers to program development and long-term sustainability. In addition to these key informants, feedback was solicited from students, alumni, and parents. This information was considered pertinent because of the potential impact that consumers have on the development and long-term implementation of postsecondary programs. Data from documents and observations supplemented information garnered from

interviews. These Tables describing key informants, students, alumni, parents, and documents are located in Chapter 3. The results are organized according to the five areas related to “criteria” in Research Question 1. These findings, along with the sources of data are listed in Table 6.

*Rationale for the Development of a Postsecondary Program*

Information concerning the rationale for the development and sustainability of Program A was obtained primarily from respondents from the LSS including the Director of Special Education, special education supervisor (who at the time was employed as an “area specialist”), and program teacher. Data were also obtained from interviews and focus groups with students, alumni, and parents. An attempt was made to access information from key informants from the community college who were involved in program development. However, these individuals who helped develop Program A were no longer employed by the college at the time of the investigation, and were unavailable for interviews. Document review included a Program Proposal written by the area specialist, a Program Brochure and Program Manual for postsecondary programs developed by the LSS.

*Need for normalized educational settings.* As part of a movement initiated by the LSS to serve students with disabilities in more inclusive settings during the 1993 to 1994 academic year, the LSS began to place students with disabilities in community-based “outreach” programs located in neighborhood elementary, middle, and high schools. According to the Director of Special Education, at that time, the LSS’s efforts to move such students into “regular schools” reduced by half, the number of students enrolled in their segregated special schools.

Table 6

## Sources of Data and Findings on Criteria Employed During Program Development and Implementation

Criteria	Sources of Data	Findings
Rationale for Program Development	<p>1) Interviews with: DS, AS, PT, ST, AL, PA</p> <p>2) Documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program proposal</li> <li>• Program Manual</li> <li>• Program brochure</li> </ul>	<p>The rationale for the development of Program A emerged from the LSS's efforts to serve students with SD in neighborhood schools, and parents concerns with older students with SD's isolation from peers. Practical reasons for selecting the community college include: (a) close proximity to high schools and potential job sites, (b) Area Specialist's familiarity with campus, and (c) potential support from college students.</p> <p>During 2001-2002 it appeared that students,alumi and parents continued to desire age-appropriate experiences and interact with same-age peers. Program A also appealed to these consumers because it encouraged students to remain in school until age 21, and fulfilled the dream of attending college.</p>
Allocation of Resources	<p>1) Observation by researcher</p> <p>2) Interviews with:</p>	<p>The LSS assumed financial responsibility for Program A. In addition to office equipment, computers, and instructional materials, the LSS also provided students with transportation, free and reduced lunch and a small work stipend. Program staff used</p>

Criteria	Sources of Data	Findings
DS, AS, PT, PE, TC	personal cell phones and computers for program-related activities. Students and	<p>3) Documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program proposal</li> <li>• Program Manual</li> </ul> <p>families assumed costs for the tuition and fees associated with the college courses, and CBI activities.</p> <p>The resources contributed by the community college included access to classroom and office space, use of campus facilities and equipment, and permission for students to audit college courses. The community college also contributed computers and a small allotment for the Best Buddies chapter on campus. During the 2001-2002 school year, a local CRP employed students in enclaves and mobile crews, and provided job coaching, transportation to and from work, and uniforms. There was no written formal agreement documenting the collaboration between the LSS, community college, and local CRP.</p>
Staffing Decisions	1) Observation by researcher	The area specialist and Director of Special Education initiated program development, hired program staff, and supervised the program during previous years of operation.
	2) Interviews with:	Once space on campus was secured, the program teacher was responsible for setting up

Criteria	Sources of Data	Findings
AS, DS, PT, PE,	the program, and networking with college personnel.	
SC, TC	During the 2001-2002 academic year, the Coordinator of Special Programs was the administrator assigned to Program A. The paraeducators planned and delivered classroom instruction, assessed student progress, and supported students in inclusive college courses. Along with typical tasks such as developing IEPs, conducting educational assessments, issuing grades, and contacting parents, the program teacher assumed administrative tasks, and the duties of the transition facilitator. Related-services personnel such as school psychologists, and speech and physical therapists continued to serve students in Program A. The Special Education Chair scheduled and held the IEP meetings, and maintained student records.  In previous years, the Academic Division Dean for Business and Social Sciences served as the liaison to Program A. However, during the 2001-2002 no college administrator was assigned to Program A. Having no liaison had little effect on the program's daily operations.	

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		<p>The Transition Coordinator from the local CRP supported Program A by overseeing the work component, participating in the transition planning process, and attending program-related activities.</p>
Admission into Program	<p>1) Interviews with: DS, AS, PT, SC, ST, PA</p> <p>2) Documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Administrative memo</li> <li>• Program brochure</li> </ul>	<p>The referral and admissions process for Program A evolved over the years. Initially, program developers selected students who would not be disruptive at the college. By 2001-2002, the LSS had developed admissions criteria. These criteria were not rigidly followed, and allowed for exceptions. The Special Education Chair and the Coordinator of Special Programs informed families, and selected potential candidates. The process of placing students in Program A was incorporated into the IEP meeting..</p>
Factors that Facilitate Program Development	1) Interviews with: AS, DS, PT	<p>Factors that promoted initial implementation and sustainability included having a supportive LSS, a community college with a mission to serve the community, and program staff who possessed characteristics that enabled them to work effectively on a college campus. Key informants also believed that it was necessary for the LSS to</p>

Criteria	Sources of Data	Findings
and Sustainability		develop positive rapport with the college and community. Finally, a program must meet the needs of students and families, and also benefit the community college.
Barriers to Program Development	1) Interviews with: AS, DS, PT, CI, CS, SC	There were several barriers to Program A's initial development or and were viewed by program developers as detrimental to sustainability. Securing space on-campus, and overcoming logistical and administrative challenges were among the barriers that had to be addressed during program development. The placement of students who were believed to be inappropriate for Program A was an ongoing concern expressed by personnel from the LSS. Community college administrators were initially concerned with possible negative attitudes from college students. However, college students and instructors reported having positive interactions with students from Program A.

Note: PT= Program Teacher; PE= Paraeducators, ST= Students; AL=Alumni, PA= Parents; CI= College Instructors; CS=College Students; TC= Transition Coordinator from local CRP; SC= Special Education Chair; AS= Area Specialist; DS= Director of Special Education

However, while the LSS moved towards serving students with disabilities in more inclusive settings, federal legislation entitled students with disabilities to FAPE until age 21. Also, in the State, students could not access funding for support services under the “The Governor’s Initiative for Transitioning Youth” until they were 21 and had exited the public schools. The state had implemented this initiative in 1989, as a means of coordinating the State’s programs and services for individuals with developmental disabilities who were transitioning out of local school systems at age 21 and would likely require supported employment services in order to maintain employment (Curran et al., 1993). Consequently, concerns grew among parents of students with disabilities and personnel from the LSS with how to provide age-appropriate educational programming for these students who were over 18, but had not yet reached age 21. As the area specialist recalled,

So that first year, we moved the kids out into middle schools and high schools. ...then the parents asked a logical question, ‘Prior to this, my youngster would have stayed in the special school until they’re 21. Now you’re moving them to a regular high school. It’s normal for kids to be in high school for four years then move on. If you’re saying that you’re normalizing this for my child, what’s going to happen after they’ve been in a high school for four years, or even five years? Then you’re really not creating a normalized setting because they’re not going to have peers. For the most part, peers between the ages of 19 and 21 don’t exist in a regular high school.’

In an effort to serve older special education students within “normal” age-appropriate settings, the two program developers, the area specialist and the Director of

Special Education from the LSS, elected to develop a program for students ages 18 to 21, on the campus of the local community college. As evidenced in the following statements, this setting was the only option considered primarily because program developers believed that the community college afforded a natural environment in which students with SD could continue to receive special education services and have opportunities to interact with same-age peers:

*Area specialist:* It just seemed like the natural setting were where the kids would not be, say, working towards an associate of arts degree, but they could have normalized interaction in the library and cafeteria. They could take physical education courses. They could take courses that made sense for where their gifts were...Plus, where are the other 18 to 21 year olds who are not yet ready to work and hold down a full-time job? A lot of them are in a community college setting. So it was looking at where are the other people in this age group. We wanted to do a combination of both work and exposure to other [nondisabled] students.

*Director of Special Education:* I guess there are other places where one could, let's say in the workforce, find 18, 19, and 20-year olds. But in terms of where does one find 19 and 20-year olds who are engaged in the business of education? You find them on college campuses. So it was the connection between the age and also what the typical peers were doing. They were continuing their education.

At the time that this study was conducted, it seemed that providing an age-appropriate setting remained the primary reason for serving students with SD at the

community college. In the descriptive brochure for Program A that was developed and distributed by the LSS it stated:

The intention of the program is to provide an age-appropriate setting for students to participate in the educational process during their transition years...Students are introduced to adult activities and life skills needed to make a transition from public school to work and adult life.

*Practical reasons for selecting a community college.* While the impetus for developing a program for students with SD ages 18 to 21 on a community college campus, was to provide age-appropriate educational experiences, other reasons for selecting this particular setting were more pragmatic. The area specialist, the individual who initiated and had primary responsibility for program development, cited accessibility as one reason for selecting the community college. Because the college campus was located close to two high schools that operated community-based programs, it was accessible to students with SD who were ages 18 to 21. The community college was also adjacent to a hospital, and within close proximity to a shopping center that could serve as potential employment and job training sites for such students.

Potential for additional support from college students was another reason that program developers chose the community college. At the time that Program A was developed, the community college offered courses in special education. Program developers believed that that college students enrolled in these special education courses could provide additional support and to students with disabilities. This view was clearly illustrated in the Program Proposal drafted by the LSS:

This proposed [program] could also serve as a possible training site for non-disabled students who are interested in careers in the special education field.

Interns could work within the [program] as assistants or on work sites as job coaches.

Along with convenient location and potential support from college students, familiarity with the campus also played a role in the selection of the community college campus. The Area Specialist explained, “I had some connection with [the community college] because my son had gone to the preschool [on campus]. And so I felt like I at least had a working knowledge of the campus.”

*Continued demand for Program A.* As described previously by program developers, parents' demand for “normalized” educational services for students with significant disabilities during the early 1990's, prompted the development of Program A. Interviews with parents and program participants revealed that almost a decade later, there was a continued demand for access to age-appropriate settings and “typical” experiences such as working within the community and interacting with other young adults.

Among the students (n=16), alumni (n=9), and parents (n=8) who participated in focus groups and individual interviews, the desire for an age-appropriate setting was the most common reason for participating in Program A. For instance, “I didn't want to be left behind [in high school],” “get out of high school,” “to go someplace more grown up,” and “they treat you as an adult,” were typical responses given by six students and one alumnus for deciding to attend Program A. Other students (n=4) reported that they wanted to be with or make friends at the community college. Nearly 63% of the parents

(n=5) who participated in interviews remarked on the inappropriateness of remaining in high school for longer than four years and/or the need for educational services outside the high school setting. The following statements illustrate the parents' desire for age-appropriate educational services:

**1<sup>st</sup> Parent:** That means he would have been there for eight years, in high school, and that would have been ridiculous. So when you say he's going to college, it makes him seem like he's more grown up.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Parent:** I thought he needed the experiences. He wanted to go to college because it was like being a big boy for him. There he'd get taught what it's like to work and learn how to cope with people and bosses he don't like.

Half of the parents who were interviewed (n=4) considered Program A to be the only option for their sons and daughters to continue receiving educational services from the LSS after age 18. Although these parents were aware of the entitlement to public education until age 21, they alluded that their young adults would have probably exited public schools prior to this age had they not participated in Program A. One such parent reasoned,

We decided that a diploma would have been too difficult of a goal for her. And what was left was either to work or continue on the educational services offered by the [the LSS], and this [Program A] seemed to be about the only one as far as I knew. I guess she could continue on in the high school for a couple more years, but I didn't feel like that was the best decision to learn more literature and learn more math. You know, I think she needed to begin transitioning into something that was more practical.

In addition to encouraging older students with SD to remain in public schools until age 21, Program A appealed to parents (n=5) because it enabled their young adults who were not expected to participate in postsecondary education, to realize the dream of attending college. The Special Education Chair from the sending high school summed up these parents' feelings,

In my opinion, they cling to the community college idea because it's their only opportunity for their children to go to college. And they can say, 'My child goes to college.' And for a parent of an intellectually limited youngster, when they watch them walk across that stage and get their [certificate], and then they can say 'My child's going to college'—I think it means a tremendous amount.

It appeared that these parents recognized and accepted that their young adults would not be participating in the traditional college curriculum. However, as the following statements suggest, these families were satisfied with having their sons and daughters at the community college campus:

**1<sup>st</sup> Parent:** And then they come to the [program,] and they can say, 'I'm in college.' Even though she's not doing college work, just to have the idea, 'I'm going to college. That's where I'm going, on a campus.' She likes that...She's not doing the college work, but the word college means—that she's alive. You know, she has arrived.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Parent:** What can I say? I like it. I was all for it the minute I heard about it. I just like the experience that he could have a college experience without having to be smart enough or whatever to be in college. To have a place to go that you could fit in with your peers and have that experience.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Parent:** Well, I think it doesn't hurt. I think he's enjoyed it because it's college and he—you know, considers it college.

Although access to age-appropriate settings was the main reason for participating in Program A, for one student and alumnus, the program simply offered them “a new experience.” Several students, alumni, and parents however, elected to attend the Program A because they believed that students would participate in experiences that would enable them to become independent. For example, three students and alumni (n=3) maintained that they decided to attend the program because it would offer them “more freedom” than high school. Several alumni (n=3) and parents (n=2) reported that they chose Program A in order to gain additional work experiences. There were also students (n= 4) and parents (n=2) who expected students to learn functional skills necessary for independent living:

**1<sup>st</sup> Parent:** Because it would help her. Some kinda' way it would help her... You know, living on her own and how to deal with people on the outside.

**1<sup>st</sup> Student:** It helped me to learn some skills. Yeah. Learn some math, help you how to count money.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Student:** I wanted to come somewhere I can get like counting money, try to live on my own because I know it' goin' to be hard when I move out of my foster mom's house.

#### *Allocation of Resources*

The resources needed to implement a postsecondary program for students with SD ages 18 to 21 were drawn from various organizations and individuals. The LSS assumed responsibility for providing much of the resources needed to implement

Program A. The community college, a local community rehabilitation program (CRP), and families, however, also contributed some resources.

LSS. From the initial inception, the LSS assumed financial responsibility for Program A. Within the Program Proposal the LSS specified that a teacher, a full-time paraeducator, student transportation, and any related services such as speech/language therapy, vocational rehabilitation, job development, and job coaching would be provided to the program. The LSS also contributed basic equipment such as computers, a fax machine, small copier, and TV/VCR. The program teacher was issued a procurement credit card, which was used to purchase office supplies, and instructional materials. The limit on this credit card was determined by the amount of money allocated to the program for the academic year. Access to additional curriculum and instructional materials were also available through the LSS's curriculum library.

Another source of funding came from "third-party billing." Under third-party billing, the LSS was able to recover federal monies for special education services rendered to students receiving medical assistance. The amount of funds given to Program A was based on the number of students receiving medical assistance who were enrolled in the program. To access these funds, the program teacher was required to submit a proposal outlining how the money was to be used. In addition to being the major funding source, the LSS also provided free and reduced lunch to eligible students and paid a small stipend to students who worked in schools and other LSS facilities. As a component of their educational programming, some students were given opportunities to work for the LSS. For example, during 2001-2002 one student worked as a cafeteria worker at a local high school. A second student worked at the LSS's distribution

center. They were paid a small stipend (of approximately 3 dollars per hour) by the LSS.

*Community college.* Upon recognizing the need to provide students ages 18 to 21 with age-appropriate education within alternative settings such as postsecondary institutions, the area specialist from the LSS developed a written program proposal. Along with the Director of Special Education from the LSS, the area specialist submitted the proposal and participated in several meetings with the Academic Division Dean of the College of Business and Social Sciences, the Department Head for Education, who became the college's liaison to the program, and other representatives from the community college. While these meetings resulted in an agreement to implement the program on campus, a formal written contract or memorandum detailing the responsibilities of the LSS and community college was never developed. According to the area specialist, the initial agreement "has continued year-to-year with nothing in writing."

The Director of Special Education for the LSS described the resources provided by the community college as "in-kind contributions." Funds contributed directly to the program by the college were limited to a small allotment given by the office of Student Life to support the *Best Buddies* chapter at the community college. *Best Buddies* was a non-profit organization whose purpose was to promote friendships between individuals with disabilities and their nondisabled peers (Best Buddies International, 2002). Each year, the program teacher requested funds from the community college's Director of Student Life to cover the cost for *Best Buddies* activities such as pizza parties and bowling.

The community college did not allocate a permanent classroom to house Program A. However, the program was provided with access to a classroom located inside the Human Development and Social Services building and to a computer lab housed in one of the portable classrooms on campus, for several hours during the day. The community college did assign to the program staff a small office that was located down the hall from the classroom. However, because there was no permanent classroom space available, it was also used to store student files, curriculum, office equipment, and other materials used for instruction by the program.

In addition to physical space, the community college furnished Program A with access to copiers and a telephone. The college also donated a computer that enabled the program staff to access campus e-mail and the internet. The program teacher was granted some of the same privileges given to other college faculty and club sponsors. This included the ability to reserve space on campus to hold special events or meetings, and to borrow various pieces of equipment such as audiovisual equipment and vans owned by the college. However, due to concerns with liability, the LSS did not permit the program teacher to use the van to transport students during school hours.

Additional resources contributed by the college included allowing students from Program A the use of campus facilities that were available to all college students such as the swimming pool, gym, library, and career center. Students from the program were also permitted to attend campus events, participate in college clubs and organizations, and to audit select college courses. Additionally, the program staff often used materials readily available on campus such as the college newspaper and informational pamphlets

(e.g. HIV, domestic violence, and sexual harassment) to supplement classroom instruction.

*Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP).* While the LSS and community college provided much of the resources required to implement the program, local CRPs were also an additional source of support. During the initial years of operation (1994-2001) transition facilitators from the LSS who were assigned to serve the four postsecondary programs were responsible for job development and placement for students. However, during the 2001-2002 academic year, one of the local CRPs assumed responsibility for providing paid employment to students enrolled in three of the four postsecondary programs operated by the LSS, including Program A.

Having a CRP assume the responsibility for placing students in paid employment while they were still enrolled in the LSS was atypical. CRP's often did not serve students with disabilities until after the exited the LSS. In the State, after exiting public school at age 21, students with disabilities were eligible to receive support services through a special category of funding under *The Governor's Initiative for Transitioning Youth* (Curran et al., 1993). It was these funds that CRP's usually accessed from state agencies such as the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) and Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS), to serve students with disabilities after they had exited public schools. However, because students were still enrolled in public schools and therefore ineligible for funds under The Governor's Initiative for Transitioning Youth, the CRP covered the cost of wages, job coaching services, transportation to-and-from home and work, and uniforms for all students. To obtain resources for these services, the Transition Coordinator claimed, "I beg borrow

and steal from [the CRP].” This included drawing monies from several sources within the CRP such as donations, profits earned from contracts (such as the landscaping business), and the general fund. Although serving students who were enrolled in the program was a great cost to the CRP, the Transition Coordinator believed that the expense was justified because it provided students with work experiences and enabled him to become familiarized with potential consumers. He maintained,

If they don’t receive services and they don’t get work history and I don’t know anything about the consumer; then come that July 1<sup>st</sup>, if by chance I do get this person, I know nothing about them. So that’s why we start it at the age of 19. It gives me two years basically, of getting to know them.

Although students from the program were required to complete an application for the CRP and participate in an intake process, the CRP did not officially consider them “consumers.” These consumers included individuals with disabilities who were also served by the CRP, but were funded by the state agencies (i.e., DDA, DORS). Similar to the community college, there was no written agreement between Program A and the local CRP. The Transition Coordinator from the CRP described the partnership as “just a verbalized agreement between me and [the program teachers].”

Along with students from the other two postsecondary programs, the CRP employed most of the students from Program A in their landscape mobile crews and in work enclaves at a local uniform company. Additional details regarding these students employment will be included in the following section describing program components. In addition to employment related services such as job placement and coaching, transportation, and uniforms, students from Program A were also eligible to participate

in math and reading classes, and recreation activities that were available to all the CRP's consumers. The CRP also collaborated with other community agencies that provided services such as travel training and the development of plans that enabled students to maintain their SSI benefits. The Transition Coordinator for the CRP noted that while none of the students from program A had yet accessed these additional services, he was in the process of assisting two students whose families had expressed an interest in travel training.

*Students and families, and others.* Although the community college permitted students from the Program A to audit college courses, these students and their families were responsible for tuition and fees. Students who received SSI were eligible for tuition waivers, and could enroll in college courses at a reduced rate. For example, during spring 2002 the cost of tuition and fees for the Aqua Fitness course was \$103.25 dollars. Students who received tuition waivers were only required to pay \$35.25 dollars, the cost of the fees.

Prior to the start of the community college's spring 2002 semester, the program teacher sent home to parents, information that included descriptions of the available courses, cost of tuition and fees, and a form for verifying that the student received SSI. In order to receive the tuition waiver, students who received SSI had to complete and return the forms to the program teacher who had the forms officially verified at the local social security office. When registering for courses, these students submitted the verified forms along with their application and check to the community college.

In addition to college courses, students and their families were also responsible for assuming costs associated with community trips or campus activities. For example,

program staff requested that students bring money to purchase items during holiday shopping trips to the mall, and pay for lunch at local restaurants. Also, in order to participate in the annual camping trip, students from Program A were required to turn in a signed permission slip and pay a fee of fifty dollars. The program teacher often informed parents of upcoming activities and any corresponding fees through flyers, monthly calendars, and newsletters that were sent home. Students learned of these trips and associated costs in class during monthly reviews of the calendar of events.

Much of the funds and equipment for Program A were provided by the LSS, local CRP, community college, and families. However, program staff also supplemented the program by contributing personal resources. For instance, program staff used personal cell phones to communicate with each other, students, families, and employers. The program teacher also reported that although the LSS and community college provided computers, she used her personal laptop computer and digital camera to generate the monthly newsletters, and other program-related documents. Program staff also purchased food for the holiday party, and alumni and annual picnics.

#### *Staffing Decisions*

The following describes the roles of personnel who were assigned to support the program. Although additional staff such as college instructors and representatives from other CRPs may have provided services or directly served students, because they were not specifically assigned to Program A, their roles will be discussed in detail in the section describing interagency collaboration.

LSS. The LSS initiated and directed the development of Program A in January 1994, after the southeast area specialist developed the initial program proposal. Over

the next several months, the area specialist and Director of Special Education from the LSS laid the foundation for Program A by securing space on the community college campus, purchasing basic equipment, hiring program staff, and addressing other logistical issues. Program A was initially implemented in fall 1994, becoming the first of the LSS's four postsecondary programs for students with SD ages 18 to 21.

In addition to initiating program development, the LSS also maintained responsibility for supervising the program teacher and two full-time paraeducators who directly supported the program. The program teacher and one of the two paraeducators were the original personnel hired by the LSS. The second paraeducator who had been with the program for six years, joined the staff when the program was expanded and another paraeducator position was added. Since the program started in 1994, there had been no turnover in staff.

After space on campus was secured and the basic framework for the program was in place, it was the responsibility of the program teacher to set up Program A. Her tasks included purchasing curriculum materials and supplies, networking with college personnel, and developing instructional activities for students. While recalling her experiences, the program teacher stated, "Well we just needed a classroom, and office, and whatever. Then it was up to me to sort of create, almost, the program from scratch."

It appeared that the program teacher functioned more as a coordinator than as an instructor at the time of this case study. During 2001-2002, her duties included developing IEPs, attending meetings, issuing grades, conducting assessments, planning activities, and contacting parents and administrators. However, in addition to these

duties the program teacher's responsibilities included supervising the paraeducators, collaborating with various personnel from the LSS, college, and community, submitting requests for funds, ordering materials, and publishing monthly newsletters.

The planning and delivery of classroom instruction to students in Program A were the primary responsibilities of the two paraeducators. In addition to selecting and taking turns teaching functional academic skills (e.g. functional vocabulary, menu math, keyboarding), social skills, and independent living skills (e.g. personal hygiene), they also assessed students' skills by giving spelling and vocabulary, and basic math tests. Paraeducators also provided direct support to students in regular college courses and within the community, as well as taking care of clerical tasks such as making photocopies, and organizing materials and equipment. During the 2001-2002 school year, in addition to their regular duties, the two paraeducators assumed some of the program teacher's responsibilities such as collaborating with the Transition Coordinator from the CRP, contacting parents, and planning community activities, when the program teacher was out on sick leave for four weeks.

Although it was not part of their official duties, the program staff also supported students in the community, outside the program's normal hours of operation. This included planning and participating in an overnight camping trip, and participating in weekend and evening activities such as informational workshops for parents, the *Best Buddies Friendship Games* and dances sponsored by local community organizations. Program staff claimed that participation in outside activities enabled them to become better acquainted with students and their families. As one paraeducator explained,

As far as like dances and stuff like that, special networks for teens and young adults, that's really not a part of [LSS] but we usually go just so we can see what the kids do outside of school and just how the parents treat them and stuff like that. That's another way we get to know the parents.

Contact with students was extended to those who had already graduated from Program A. The two paraeducators reported that they often gave their personal telephone numbers to students who had exited the program and encouraged them to "keep in touch."

Various personnel from the LSS were also assigned to support the program. Rather than a high school principal, the Coordinator of Special Programs was the administrator responsible for Program A and the other three postsecondary programs operated by the LSS. In addition to directly overseeing the program and supervising the program teacher, the Coordinator also reviewed the files of students referred to the program to determine that they met the admission criteria. The Special Education Chair from the students' high schools scheduled and chaired the IEP meetings. Although the students were enrolled in the postsecondary program, their records and IEP meetings continued to be held at the high school to which they were assigned. Also, in previous years a transition facilitator from the LSS was assigned to serve students who participated in the program. Some of these services included job development and placement, assistance with the completion of applications to state funding agencies and CRPs, and attending IEP meetings to address transition-related issues. However, during the 2001- 2002 school year, the LSS did not assign Program A a transition facilitator. While the program teacher assumed many of the transition facilitator's duties, the

transition facilitator who had been previously assigned to Program A continued to provide services to the students in the program albeit in a more limited capacity. The program teacher reported that because, they had an established relationship, the transition facilitator was willing to consult with the program teacher, and work with families on a case-by case basis.

Related-service personnel such as occupational therapists, physical therapists, and school psychologists also served students from Program A who were mandated to receive services in their IEPs. Related-service personnel who were required to provide services (e.g. psychological evaluations, physical, speech, or occupational therapy) consulted with the program teacher or traveled to the community college to directly serve students from Program A who were assigned to their caseload. For example, a student who required a psychological re-evaluation was assessed in the small office used by program staff.

Although these various personnel from the LSS were assigned to provide services to the students and support to the program, the program teacher and the two paraeducators were the only staff from the LSS available on campus and were responsible for daily operations. Having sole responsibility for the students and program was a concern among the program staff. As evidenced in the following statement from the program teacher:

If you're at a school you have other resources. You have the principal; you have guidance. We have to do all that here and so to me, the responsibility of safety is not shared with the school and you just don't have as much resources.

*Community college.* When Program A was first implemented in 1994, the Department Head for Education was the college representative identified to serve as the liaison between the community college and the program. During program development, the liaison's role included securing a classroom, office space, and access to facilities, and facilitating the development of networks between program staff and additional college personnel. After the program was implemented, the liaison served as the program teacher's primary contact at the college. She was responsible for addressing the program teacher's college-related concerns or requests. For example, according to the program teacher, the liaison assisted her with acquiring a computer from the college, securing a larger office space and "getting all the necessary services we needed."

The Department Head for Education continued to serve as the liaison to the program and LSS even after she was promoted to Academic Division Dean of Business and Social Sciences. When this individual left her position at the community college in the summer of 2001, the person who assumed the position of acting-dean also became the primary contact to the program. However, when additional staff changes were made during 2001-2002, a new liaison was not assigned to Program A. At the time that this case study was conducted, there was no community college representative serving as the liaison to the program and LSS. Yet, not having an assigned liaison appeared to have had little impact on program operations. According to the program teacher, having been on the college campus for eight years allowed her to develop a rapport with various college personnel who were able to meet her needs. She remarked:

We should have a liaison type person or a contact person in case we need this, that or the other. But my contact people now are the secretaries downstairs, of

course they're the secretaries to the person who would be the liaison....I used to have rapport with the print shop people, but we don't do the printing there, but I still have that contact. And the director of student activities I just met because she's new this year.

*Local CRP.* During the 2001-2002 school year, one of the local CRP's employed most of the students (n=13) from Program A in work enclaves and mobile crews. The Transition Coordinator from CRP served as the liaison between Program A and existing enclaves and mobile crews. His duties also included conducting periodic work evaluations, and sharing information with the program teacher. In fact, the Transition Coordinator also had input in assigning the "community work experience" grade that students from Program A received in their report card.

In addition to evaluating students' progress at work, the Transition Coordinator was responsible for addressing work-related concerns. For example, during an observation at the laundry facility where students from Program A worked in enclaves, the Transition Coordinator was summoned by one of the job coaches to talk to a student who had gotten into an argument with another co-worker from the enclave. In addition to reprimanding the student, the Transition Coordinator reported the incident to the program teacher and the student's parent.

Along with overseeing the work component, during 2001-2002, the Transition Coordinator played a part in the transition planning process by participating in the "Transition Forum," an event that was organized by the LSS to provide students with disabilities and their families with an opportunity to meet representatives from all the local CRPS, contacted individual families to provide information on the services offered

by his agency, and attended IEP meetings. As part of the collaborative effort with the Program A, the Transition Coordinator participated in many of the program activities such as the holiday party, trip to the movie theater, softball game, overnight camping trip, alumni picnic, and graduation ceremony.

#### *Admission into Program A*

The bulk of the cost for operating the program and hiring program personnel was assumed by the LSS. Moreover, the LSS oversaw the process in which students were admitted to Program A. The process for referring and admitting students to the program evolved over the years.

*Admission criteria.* The LSS developed a set of criteria for admitting students into their postsecondary programs including Program A. As outlined in both a Program Brochure and administrative memo, in order to be considered for selection, students were required to meet the following:

- Students enter at age 19 (DOB before September) and exit in May of the year that they turn 21 through the Governor's Transition Initiative
- Students are certificate, not diploma bound
- Students are transitioning from a high school life skills program
- Students IEP contains appropriate goals i.e., IMAP for anticipated adult services,
- Students demonstrate a level of independence throughout high school environment and on work sites,
- Students function without the need for 1:1 supervision
- Students demonstrate satisfactory attendance,

- Students exhibit satisfactory school behavior.

Initially, there was an emphasis on selecting students who would not be disruptive to the college environment. There was concern among personnel from the LSS that admitting students who may have behavior problems would have jeopardized the existence of the new program. The area specialist explained “If they’re going to be a disruption in that community college, you’re [the program] not going to last long.” As the LSS developed similar programs at other local colleges, and additional families expressed interest in sending their sons and daughters to the postsecondary programs, the criteria served to limit the number of potential candidates.

Although admission criteria had been established by the LSS, it was not rigidly adhered to and allowed for exceptions. For example, a student who was enrolled in the program during the 2001-2002 school year, and a student scheduled to enter the program during the upcoming school year had previously attended segregated special centers rather than high school life skills programs. In other cases, three students who graduated from Program A in May 2002, at age 21 had entered the program prior to age 19, thus participating in the program for a total of three and four years instead of the typical two years.

*Informing families.* In addition to establishing the admission criteria, personnel from the LSS assumed responsibility for informing parents of Program A. When the program was first initiated, the area specialist and program teacher held meetings with families of potential candidates and provided them with information. However, when they discontinued holding these parent meetings, families learned of the program from the Special Education staff from the high schools. All students, alumni, and parents

who participated in interviews confirmed that they first learned of Program A from the Special Education Department Chair and special education teachers from the high schools. Often, discussions about educational services available to students ages 18 to 21 were held several years in advance and readdressed annually during IEP meetings. Therefore, when students were referred to the program, many families were already aware of the options available to their sons and daughters after age 18. Aside from LSS personnel, families learned of the program from a Program Brochure distributed by the LSS, and through “word of mouth” from other families.

*Referral and admissions process.* When the program was initially implemented the area specialist and program teacher collaborated with the Special Education Department Chairs from the high schools to identify potential candidates. Group and individual meetings were held to encourage parents to send their sons and daughters to the program. The program teacher recalled that the reason for holding these meetings was to “drum up business.”

As interest in Program A grew, LSS personnel no longer had to actively recruit high school students. The Special Education Department Chairs from the high schools assumed responsibility for identifying potential candidates and referring them to the Coordinator of Special Programs. The coordinator reviewed the students’ information and selected potential candidates for program A.

Students and families were not required to complete any additional college or program applications in order to participate in the program. The process of placing students into a postsecondary program was incorporated as part of the annual IEP meeting. Once an individual student was identified as a candidate for Program A, the

Special Education Department Chair informed the parents and invited the program teacher to attend the student's IEP meeting. The final decision to place the student in the program and the completion of the necessary IEP documents took place during the IEP meeting.

To facilitate the transition from high school to the community college, during the spring, incoming students and their families were invited to attend an orientation at the college campus. During the two-hour orientation, incoming students and their parents listened to speeches prepared by students who were currently enrolled in the Program A, viewed a slide presentation that illustrated examples of community and campus activities, and were able to meet and speak with the program staff. The purpose of the orientation was to provide incoming students and their families with an opportunity to visit the college campus, meet the program staff and students, and obtain additional information on the program.

#### *Factors that Facilitate Program Development and Sustainability*

Key personnel who were involved in program development and initial implementation were asked to identify factors that facilitated the development and long-term sustainability of a program located on the local community college. These factors were grouped according to the following themes: (a) a supportive LSS, (b) community college's willingness to serve the community, (c) establishing a reciprocal relationship, (d) establishing good public relations, (e) meeting the needs of students and families, (f) staff characteristics.

*A supportive LSS.* A supportive LSS was reported to have contributed to the program's development and sustainability. Many of the supports described by area

specialist, Director of Special Education, and program teacher were detailed in the initial program proposal and pertained primarily to the LSS providing the program with adequate staff, materials and transportation. However, additional factors identified by respondents included a flexible and supportive LSS. The area specialist expressed the need for an LSS with enough flexibility to permit schedules or program activities that were not typical in high schools. As an example of the LSS's flexibility, the area specialist noted that the length of Program A was shorter than the 180 instructional days that was required by the State.

The program teacher also remarked on the importance of having supportive administrators. The program teacher referred to a superintendent from the LSS who during the 1990's, "did a thorough push for the rights of the disabled and inclusion." While the superintendent was not directly involved in program development, he promoted the move for the LSS to serve students with disabilities in more inclusive settings such as neighborhood schools and postsecondary institutions. The program teacher also described the importance of having administrative support on decisions regarding the placement of appropriate students into the program. Among the program teacher's concerns was receiving pressure from parents or high school personnel to accept students who were inappropriate for the program (e.g. with behavioral issues); which could result in an incident occurring at the college and cause the program to get "kicked out."

*Community college's willingness to serve the community* Along with the LSS, the community college supported the program in various ways including providing classroom and office space and access to facilities on campus. It was however, the

community college's overall willingness to meet the needs of a diverse community that the three respondents viewed as having promoted program development and long-term sustainability. Recalling the community college's response during program development, the Director of Special Education remarked,

truly the message that we got as we dialoged with them was, 'We're here to serve the community; you're part of the community; the kids are part of the community.' I think that the response was remarkably accepting and inclusive.

This philosophy of serving the community was also exemplified in the community college's "Learningfirst" mission. In the 2000-2001 course catalog, this Learningfirst environment was described as:

a learning-centered public college that anticipates and responds to the educational, learning, training, and employment needs of the community by offering a broad array of general education, transfer, and career programs, student support services, and economic and community development activities.

The College serves its diverse community as a center for lifelong learning to improve the quality of life... (p.6)

According to the program teacher, it was this Learningfirst mission that has helped sustain the program on the college campus over time.

*Establishing a reciprocal relationship.* In addition to the college's mission to provide a learning environment that welcomed diverse learners, establishing a reciprocal relationship in which both the community college and the program received benefits may have contributed to the college's willingness to commit to the program. For example, having the LSS operate a program for students ages 18-21 on the college

campus provided the community college with access to a population (i.e., students with SD) who had not been previously served by postsecondary institutions. As the program teacher explained,

The students here also take classes. So that's another benefit to the college.

Some have tuition waived because they're on SSI. But others have paid full price.

Although some students may have paid the full tuition in the past, during the 2001-2002 school year, students from Program A (n=7) who participated in a college course were only responsible for paying the fees associated with the course. These students who were receiving SSI were eligible for the tuition waiver.

Public service provided to the community college by students from the program was another added benefit to having the program on campus. For instance, during spring 2002, a student from the program worked as a volunteer teacher's assistant at the childcare center operated by the community college. The area specialist maintained that while providing the community college with public services, students from the program also benefited by receiving access to a variety campus facilities and events.

*Establishing good public relations.* Positive rapport with the college, LSS, and community was also cited as a factor that facilitated both program development and long-term sustainability. The emphasis placed on using public relations to establish rapport is stated in the Program Manual developed by program teachers:

Public relations play an important role in both the formation and maintenance of a college outreach program. Initially, it is important to meet with college personnel and promote the philosophy and benefits of such a program. Laying

the groundwork involves meeting with college officials, contacting instructors, and other college personnel.... Periodic contact with college instructors/staff is vital to the maintenance and success of college outreach programs. In addition, keeping the public, community, and schools aware of program developments fosters and positive image for future endeavors (p.22).

The program teacher's efforts to establish rapport with parents, former students, and college, community, and LSS personnel included making personal and telephone contact, and disseminating a monthly newsletter. For instance, during 2001-2002, program staff maintained on-going contact with administrative assistants and two instructors from the community college, and the Transition Coordinator from a local LSS. The program teacher also kept families updated on program activities via the monthly newsletters, and periodic phone calls to parents. Despite the these efforts, however, one parent and social worker believed that there was a need for more opportunities to directly communicate with program staff.

The LSS's additional efforts to maintain the public awareness of program developments were illustrated in several articles written about Program A in the community college newspaper and local publications. For example, two articles highlighted the students' participation in the *Best Buddies* program on-campus. In another article, it was reported that the State's Lieutenant Governor was the keynote speaker during the graduation ceremony for Program A and the other postsecondary programs operated by the LSS.

The area specialist credited public relations and the resulting collaboration between Program A and the community college with facilitating the development of the

subsequent programs on other college campuses within the county. The establishment of rapport between Program A and the community college served to give the program credibility and help representatives from other campuses become more willing to develop postsecondary programs.

*Meeting the needs of students and families.* As detailed in the previous section describing the rationale for program development, one of the primary reasons that the LSS developed Program A was to address the needs of older students with SD who were still enrolled in public schools. Over the last several years, Program A's popularity as alternative means of serving students with SD ages 18 to 21 has steadily increased, resulting not only in Program A's continued operation (over the last eight years), but also the development of three similar programs operated by the LSS located on other college campuses. The area specialist and Director of Special Education from the LSS attributed the Program A's success and continued operation to the fact that it continued to meet the needs of students with disabilities and their families.

Comments generated by students, alumni, and parents suggests that although there were a few respondents who expressed their disappointed with Program A, overall, the program indeed met the needs of a majority of the students and families. When students and alumni were asked to describe their feelings about participating in the program, 80% (n=20) of these program participants indicated that they "felt good" about Program A and remarked positively on their experiences. As an additional probe into their satisfaction with Program A, students and alumni were also asked whether they would recommend the program to a high school student who expressed an interest in participating in Program A. A majority of the students and alumni (n=14) reported

that they would indeed recommend Program A to any prospective high school student. When asked how they would describe the program to such a student, these program participants stated that Program A “was fun,” and that they “would learn important skills.”

Similar to students and alumni, a majority of parents ( $n=5$ ) also reported feeling positive about their young adults’ participation in Program A. These parents stated that they “liked” or were “pleased” with the program. One parent mentioned that she wished that her son could have stayed an additional year. There were also parents ( $n=2$ ) who maintained that their young adults benefited from their experiences in the program. As one parent enthusiastically declared,

I think it’s been great for him. I just think it’s been positive pretty much all the way around....I just think it’s a really great program. Its dedicated staff—I have no complaints. They’re just awesome. And overall, I think it’s been a great program for [student] and I think he’s really benefited from it.

While most students, alumni, and parents tended to be satisfied with Program A, there was a small number of respondents ( $n=6$ ) who expressed their dissatisfaction with the program. For example, two students who exited Program A in 2002 appeared indifferent about their participation in Program A. These students reported that they liked attending the Program A “sometimes.” When asked to explain their reasons for their feelings, these students only responded “I don’t know” or “It depends on how I feel.” There was however, one alumnus who was able to articulate his frustration and disappointment with the program. The following illustrates the perspective of this former student:

When I first came to the program, I felt like it was going to better me. You know, it was going to teach me how to be independent, be my own person. Then after awhile, I started feeling like it was just typical school for me; just typical everyday special ed. class.

The student acknowledged that despite his disappointment with Program A, he also had positive experiences. For example, while in Program A he reported making friends with college students and participating in the SGA at the community college. For this student, these positive and negative experiences generated conflicting feelings about Program A:

I felt like I had mixed emotions: I liked it; I didn't like it. I loved it; I didn't love it. I mean it was certain things about it that if I could revert [sic] my life, I think I would have did differently.

Along with this alumnus from Program A, two parents also experienced mixed emotions regarding their young adults' participation in the program. As the following passages indicate, because there were few alternatives available to older students with SD, these parents were pleased that their young adults were enrolled in an age-appropriate program. However, they were unsure of the program's benefits for their sons and daughters:

**1<sup>st</sup> Parent:** On a scale of one to 10, with 10 being the best and one being the worst, I'd say six. There aren't a lot of choices out there for her. I think I would like it if it was beefed up a little bit. And, you know, I'm not being blind to the fact that there isn't a lot out there, so what are we going to do? I think she needs a little bit of, you know, something more.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Parent:** It seems like it's too easy to be here. I mean—it's a great year. I wouldn't mind having a year like that. But it seems like it's sort of a transition year, like you're waiting for something. And I'm glad there was something for him to go to. But it feels like that somehow, something more could be done. And I don't know what it is, just maybe more challenge.

A third parent whose son returned to the high school after participating in the program for only four months, reported that she liked Program A. However, she also noted, "I think it was a great program for the kids that are in it. It's just not for [student]. It wasn't set up for his needs."

While most respondents were satisfied with Program A, when asked the question, "What changes if any, would you make to the program?" a number of students (n=7), alumni (n=3), and parents (n=8) offered various suggestions for improving Program A. Among the changes recommended by parents included:

- Increase communication with parents and case-workers
- Make the program more challenging for students
- Individualize instruction to reflect students' unique strengths and needs
- Provide additional work experiences
- Form a parent support group
- Develop a separate postsecondary program for students with SD who need a greater level of support
- Provide additional government funding to offset families' out of pocket expenses such as the fees for the camping trip.
- Expand the program to other counties in the state.

The changes suggested by students and alumni tended to reflect their negative experiences with Program A, and their personal interests. For example, several students (n=6) who expressed their dislike for specific CBI activities (e.g. tour of power company) and academic instruction (e.g. math, journal writing, homework) reported that they wanted fewer of these types of activities. One former student who expressed his disappointment in the Program A, called for more individualized programming. Additional changes that reflected the individual interests of program participants (n=4) included:

- Showing more movies in class
- Making the program “more fun.”
- Reducing the number of school days from five to two days per week

Although a majority of program participants recommended changes to Program A, there were also a number students (n=5) and alumni (n=3) believed that the program should remain the same. The only suggestion these program participants offered was to “leave it the way it is.”

*Characteristics of program staff.* Program developers believed that the personal characteristics demonstrated by program staff was another factor that facilitated the program’s development and sustainability. Many of the personal characteristics identified by these program developers tended to mirror the needs of Program A. For example, the area specialist and program teacher reported self-starters, detailed, dependable, hard working, and having the ability to follow through as essential characteristics for program staff who served students in alternative settings such as the college campus and community. These personal characteristics were necessary because

such settings tended to isolate program staff from other LSS personnel, thus limiting their access to additional support. Additional characteristics such as having the ability to work with others, and having previous experiences with the community college reflected the importance placed on public relations and the reciprocal relationship needed between the program and community college.

Students and alumni (n=7) offered comments that appeared to support the views of the program developers that the program staff possessed positive qualities that contributed to Program A's long-term sustainability. These program participants described program staff as being helpful, caring, funny, good company, and serious. As illustrated in the following statement, one alumni viewed his interactions with program staff as one of the more positive aspects of his experiences in Program A:

One of the things that I liked—that I didn't like about high school—was the teachers actually talk to you. You actually got to know the teacher personally as a friend...I guess like attitude-wise [program teacher] and them were in a way kind of really helpful because they—it taught me how to deal with things other ways other than just, you know, criticism.

#### *Barriers to Program Development and Sustainability*

In addition to recalling factors that may have facilitated program development and long-term sustainability, program developers, and the program teacher were also asked to identify factors that have acted as barriers to Program A's initial development or may cause the program to be discontinued in the future. Primarily, the barriers reported by respondents were related to initial implementation, inappropriate placement of students, and negative impact on college students.

*Barriers during program development.* Developing a program within an alternative setting such as a community college campus presented challenges to program developers. Program developers reported having to overcome several barriers in order to implement the program. The initial barrier that had to be addressed was the lack of space on the community college campus. Due to the limited availability of space, the community college was unable to provide the program with a permanent classroom. The program was designated the use of a classroom and a computer lab only during specific times of the day. For example, the availability of the computer lab was limited to the mornings, and the classroom only during the afternoon hours. The limited availability of classroom space on campus required adjusting the programs hours of operation from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., which were later than typical high schools.

Due to the program's later hours of operation and location on the college campus, it was necessary for the area specialist to arrange for the school busses to pick up and drop off students at the appropriate time and location. A school bus was also assigned to the program to provide transportation to and from activities within the community. Special arrangements were made for a paraeducator from Program A to stop by a local high school during the mornings, to pick up lunches for students at the college who were eligible for the free lunch program. During the 2001-2002 school year, the paraeducator no longer delivered free lunches to the college. Students in Program A tended to either bring a lunch from home or purchase lunch at the cafeteria at the community college. The program teacher reported that students who were eligible for the lunch program chose not to apply. She program teacher also added

however, that if there was a need in the future, she would make arrangements to obtain the free lunches.

Initially, record keeping was also considered a barrier. Because the community college was not assigned a school ID number, for purposes of recording attendance and enrollment, students who attended Program A were designated under the ID of a local high school. The area specialist explained that the barrier included having to repeatedly explain to personnel at the local high school the reason for having students who did not attend the school, listed on their attendance rosters. Under the current system, however, students from the program were no longer designated under a high school's ID number. The LSS created additional ID numbers specifically for students who participated in alternative programs such as those located in alternative settings such as the community college.

The final two barriers that needed to be addressed during program development were the unavailability of a school nurse on campus, and access to substitute program staff. The first barrier, reported by the area specialist and program staff, was the unavailability of a school nurse at the community college. This presented a dilemma in that school nurses were the only personnel from the LSS who were permitted to dispense medication to students. As a result, program developers were required to institute rules mandating that students in the program be able to self-medicate or be given medication outside of program hours. Such a requirement served to limit the type of students who could participate in the program.

Accessing additional staff who were familiar with Program A to serve as substitutes when program staff were absent, presented a challenge for program

developers. Unlike a high school setting where additional staff were more readily available, there were no additional staff from the LSS at the community college. To address this need, the area specialist developed a small list of “trained staff” who were designated to serve as substitutes in case both the program teacher and paraeducators were absent. This list included the area specialist and several of her own staff members. The area specialist also recognized the need to hire a second paraeducator for Program A to operate the program in case both the program teacher and paraeducator were absent. The only other option which was presented by the program teacher, was to inform parents that classes would have to be cancelled when all program staff were absent. During 2001-2002, the two paraeducators assumed the program teacher’s duties during the four weeks that she was out on sick leave. No additional LSS staff were placed at Program A to serve as a substitute during her absence.

*Inappropriate placement of students.* The Director of Special Education, area specialist and program teacher each reported the “inappropriate placement” of students in the program as being a barrier to Program A’s initial implementation and long-term sustainability. There was a concern that such placements could potentially result in the community college viewing the program as a “liability.” For the area specialist and program teacher, this included the placement of students who demonstrated inappropriate behaviors.

When Program A was first implemented in 1994, there was a concern among the program developers that placing students who exhibited such behaviors would result in the community college refusing to have the program return for a second year. In order to establish a good reputation, the initial group of students (N=8) were carefully

selected by the area specialist and program teacher. The area specialist also noted that some students' families were initially reluctant participate thus posing an additional challenge. Although the current program has operated on the community college campus for several years, students with challenging behaviors were still perceived to be a barrier to the program's long-term sustainability. When asked about factors that could result in the termination of the program, the area specialist replied:

The only other thing I can think is if something would happen to a student or to a staff member because of students that we misplaced...anytime you have really bad press, everybody looks and says well, is this really something we should be doing?

Another category of inappropriate placements included students with disabilities who had completed their requirements for a high school diploma but deferred graduation to participate in the program. According to the Director of Special Education, some of these students' families believed that participation in the program developed for students ages 18 to 21, was the only means for their son or daughter to access postsecondary education. She feared that that placing such students in the program could result in a program that may become too large for the community college.

*Negative impact on college students.* A final barrier to program development was related to the view that community colleges were for students who were unable to attend four-year colleges and universities. Of the four programs for students with SD ages 18 to 21 operated by the LSS, three (including Program A) were located on community college campuses. The Director of Special Education from the LSS

reported that although the community colleges responded positively to the development of these postsecondary programs for students with SD, there was also an expressed concern with the possible negative impact of the programs on the college students.

According to the Director of Special Education, there was a perception among the community colleges that some college students had lower self-esteem because they attended a community college rather than a four-year university. As a result, there was a concern that some of these community college students may express a negative attitude towards students with SD because they represented a “dumbing down of the community college.”

While negative attitudes toward students from Program A may have been an initial concern among college personnel, during 2001-2002, I did not observe any behavior to suggest that typical college students resented having students with SD at the community college. In fact, interviews with college instructors and students suggest the contrary. One college instructor acknowledged that initially he also had concerns with how the other college students would react to students with SD. However, he was pleasantly surprised with how well the students worked together. According to the instructor,

The students who are in the regular program will actually encourage the other students [with disabilities], you know, tell them, ‘Come on, lift some more.’ You know, I think they actually enjoy each other. Yeah. They know each other’s names. You know, they’ve become friends in the class.

Two college students who were enrolled in the cardio weight training course during spring 2002, also reported that they were comfortable with having the three

students from Program A in class, and enjoyed working with them. One college student mentioned that he initially started talking with the students with SD because “I felt sorry for them.” However, he also noted that, “I ended up liking them after I got to know them.” In addition to interacting with students from Program A in their cardio weight training course, these college students were observed interacting with the students on-campus. Primarily, these interactions can be described as “small talk.” Additional descriptions of social interactions and are detailed in Question 2 under Program Components.

### *Program Components Incorporated in Program A*

Research Question 2: Which best practices identified in the literature pertaining to secondary special education and transition, were incorporated in the components of this public school-sponsored program located on a community college campus?

Documented within the literature were numerous “best practices” in special education and transition that were associated with positive postschool outcomes. For the purposes of this study best practices included: (a) community-based instruction, (b) functional academic skills training, (c) social skills training, (d) independent living skills training, (e) inclusive opportunities, (f) paid and nonpaid work experiences, (g) vocational training, (h) self-determination and student involvement, (j) family involvement, (k) interagency collaboration, and (l) program evaluation. Findings for Question 2 are organized according to these broad categories.

Each transition best practice, the sources of data, and significant findings are summarized in Table 7. Much of the data on best practices was gathered during the 2001-2002 academic year, when the study was conducted.

#### *Community-based Instruction*

There was a strong emphasis on community-based instruction (CBI) in Program A. For instance, the importance of CBI in the development of curriculum for Program A and the other three postsecondary programs operated by the LSS, was exemplified in the *College Outreach Programs Manual* (n.d.) which included a statement, “In designing curriculum for the college programs, the primary driving force is, and should

Table 7

## Best Practices, Sources of Data, and Findings

<i>Transition Best</i>			
	<i>Practices</i>	<i>Sources of Data</i>	<i>Findings</i>
Community-based	1) Observation by researcher	Program staff planned CBI activities for entire class, and informed students and families of upcoming activities. Students did not participate in CBI activities on an individual bases.	Program staff planned CBI activities for entire class, and informed students and families of upcoming activities. Students did not participate in CBI activities on an individual bases. Students participated in recreational, service learning, and transition-related activities in a variety of community settings. Students' favorite was the overnight camping trip, and least favorite was volunteering at local environmental learning center.
Instruction	2) Documents:		
	• Program Manual		
	• Monthly calendar		
	• Newsletters		
	3) Interviews with: PS, ST, AL, PA	Participation in CBI activities was not mandatory. Students who opted not to participate in planned CBI activities were expected to remain at home or go to work.	Participation in CBI activities was not mandatory. Students who opted not to participate in planned CBI activities were expected to remain at home or go to work.
Functional Academic Skills	4) Observation by researcher	Paraeducators provided instruction on a variety of functional academic skills, developed individualized math folders, and provided accommodations to meet individual students' needs. Most lessons were developed for the entire class, not	Paraeducators provided instruction on a variety of functional academic skills, developed individualized math folders, and provided accommodations to meet individual students' needs. Most lessons were developed for the entire class, not

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*Transition Best*

<i>Practices</i>	<i>Sources of Data</i>	<i>Findings</i>
Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Published curriculum</li> <li>• Teacher-made materials</li> <li>• Sample daily schedule</li> <li>• Program Manual</li> </ul> <p>6) Interviews with: PS, ST, AL, PA</p>	<p>individual students. Although there was a schedule for teaching functional academics in segregated classroom setting, it was flexible to allow students opportunities to participate in activities on-campus. Students were afforded individualized, “on-the spot” instruction within the local community and college campus.</p> <p>Parents had little knowledge of types of instruction provided to students. Some alumni and parents believed that curriculum was repetitious of instruction provided in high school, not challenging, and that there were low student expectations.</p>
Social Skills Training	<p>1) Observation by researcher</p> <p>2) Documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Published curricula</li> </ul> <p>3) Interviews with: PS</p>	<p>Program staff reviewed expectations for appropriate behavior on-campus and initiated classroom discussions on social skills. Instruction also focused on appropriate behaviors for campus and in work settings. Materials (e.g. pamphlets, newspapers) that were readily available on-campus were used to teach lessons on HIV, domestic violence, and substance abuse. Issues related to student sexuality and relationships were addressed informally, on an individual basis. Program staff agreed there was a</p>

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*Transition Best*

<i>Practices</i>	<i>Sources of Data</i>	<i>Findings</i>
		need to incorporate instruction on student sexuality into curriculum.
Independent Living Skills Training	1) Observation by researcher 2) Interviews with: PS, PA	Personal hygiene instruction was provided through classroom discussion. Students had opportunities to apply these skills. Because of limited access to facilities; program staff was only able to provide classroom instruction on independent living skills (i.e., cooking, housekeeping, etc.). Program teacher expressed interest in developing residential component on-campus to address independent living. Students participated in recreation activities in local community and on-campus.
		Students participated in recreation activities in local community and on-campus, and used public transportation to travel to MTA office. Transportation to and from all other program-related activities were provided by the LSS and local CRP.
		There was no individualized travel training. However, In previous years, program staff have assisted students with getting driver's licenses. Families who expressed interest in having students learn to use public transportation to access community

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*Transition Best*

<i>Practices</i>	<i>Sources of Data</i>	<i>Findings</i>
Inclusive Opportunities	<p>1. Observation by researcher</p> <p>2. Documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flyer with college course information</li> <li>• Sample daily schedule</li> <li>• Program Manual</li> </ul> <p>3. Interviews with: PS, ST, AL, PA, CI, CS</p>	<p>received assistance from a local CRP.</p> <p>There were many opportunities for incidental contact with typical peers at campus-sponsored events, and when they used campus facilities. Extended interactions with typical peers were available through e-mail, and college courses. However, there was a limited selection of college courses. There were few observed interactions between students with SD and typical peers on-campus outside of college course.</p> <p>College instructors and college students, students with SD, and parents expressed satisfaction with inclusive experiences. Typical peers viewed relationships with students with SD as helping rather than reciprocal friendships.</p> <p>Program staff had difficulty reactivating <i>Best Buddies</i> club on-campus. They also noted several barriers to inclusive opportunities. These included: (a) students on-campus only twice a week; (b) many college students commuted and spent little time on-campus outside of classes; (c) difficulty identifying college instructors able to</p>

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*Transition Best*

	<i>Practices</i>	<i>Sources of Data</i>	<i>Findings</i>
Work Experience			work with students with SD; (d) perquisite requirements precluded enrollment in many college courses.
	1) Observation by researcher	During 2001-2002 most students participated in paid-employment three days per week. However, 7 students worked 5 days per week. Their hourly wages ranged from \$3 to \$9 dollars. One student also participated in a non-paid work experience twice a week. Most students worked in enclaves and mobile crews operated by local CRP. Four students were placed at individual work sites in community prior to their attending Program A. Although students enjoyed earning money, many expressed dissatisfaction with jobs in Program A.	
	2) Documents:		
	• Program Manual		
	• List of students		
	wages		
	• Newsletters		
	• Sample daily		
	schedule	Most parents believed that their young adults benefited from the work experiences in Program A. However, there were some who were critical of enclave employment.	
	3) Interviews with:		
	PS, TC, ST, AL, PA		

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*Transition Best*

	<i>Practices</i>	<i>Sources of Data</i>	<i>Findings</i>
Vocational Training	1) Observation by researcher  2) Documents: • Program Manual  3) Interviews with: PS	In previous years, program staff offered direct instruction on career awareness, employment opportunities and resources available within the community, and resume development.	During 2001-2002, No longer administered career interest inventories. Program staff believed the results were unhelpful with career development. Career awareness instruction consisted of activities (i.e., guest speakers, tours of local CRPs) that provided information on employment opportunities and services available through local CRPs. Program staff believed that students will secure future employment through local CRPs.  Program staff used classroom discussion, published curricula, and teacher-made materials to teach work-related social skills.
Self-determination/	1) Observation by researcher	In previous years used published curricula to teach self-determination skills. During 2001-2002, no longer provided direct instruction on self-determination. Instead,	

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*Transition Best*

<i>Practices</i>	<i>Sources of Data</i>	<i>Findings</i>
Student Involvement	2) Interviews with: PS, ST, PA	<p>program staff planned activities that promoted informed students' choice-making (i.e., Transition Fair, and tour of local CRP's.), and held conferences with individual students to review proposed goals, and obtain input on IEP. Students were encouraged to choose work sites, and college course. However, their choices were limited. Program staff encouraged students to eat lunch on their own, and independently walk around campus and use campus facilities.</p> <p>IEP meetings tended to be staff and parent driven, rather than student-centered. Although they were invited, not all students attended IEP meetings. Parents or social worker attended and represented students' interests. Some students participated in IEP meetings. However, parents and guardians continued to be final decision makers.</p> <p>Although students had limited involvement in developing their educational programs, students believed that they had more opportunities in Program A than in high school. There were also two parents who believed that Program A was helping students become more</p>

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*Transition Best*

	<i>Practices</i>	<i>Sources of Data</i>	<i>Findings</i>
Family Involvement	<p>1) Observation by researcher</p> <p>2) Documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informational flyers describing employment, college courses, and upcoming events</li> <li>• Newsletters</li> </ul>		<p>independent. There were however, a few parents and students expressed their dissatisfaction with the level of student involvement and self-determination.</p> <p>Limited student involvement may be due to the difficulty that program staff had with balancing student self-determination and parents' role as decision-makers.</p> <p>Prior to IEP meetings the program teacher sent home drafts of IEP and held telephone conferences with parents to gather input on goals. Most parents attended IEP meetings, and viewed themselves to be active participants in IEP meetings and primary advocates for students.</p> <p>Program staff kept families informed of employment opportunities with a local CRP, and college courses, and upcoming social and transition-related events by sending home flyers. Family participation however, continued to be limited.</p> <p>Several parents expressed a need for additional opportunities to communicate with program staff and other parents. However, program staff preferred that students</p>

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*Transition Best*

	<i>Practices</i>	<i>Sources of Data</i>	<i>Findings</i>
	3) Interviews with:	directly communicate their needs and concerns.  PS, PA, SC	
Interagency	4) Observation by researcher	LSS formed an initial partnership with the community college to establish Program A.	
Collaboration	5) Interviews with:	The program teacher networked with various college personnel to meet program needs on-campus. During 2001-2002, There was also extensive collaboration between the program teacher and the Transition Coordinator from a local CRP. The program teacher also collaborated with representatives from other community and state agencies, and with LSS personnel.	
Program Evaluation	1) Interviews with:  PS, AS, DS	No formal program evaluation was conducted. Administrators from LSS relied on informal feedback from parents, and increasing popularity of Program A as indicators of success. The program teacher conducted informal program evaluations by soliciting input from paraeducators and other program teachers, and collecting outcome information. However, data collection was not systematic, and data was not	

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*Transition Best*

<i>Practices</i>	<i>Sources of Data</i>	<i>Findings</i>
recorded in any official records or documents.		

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*Note:* PS= Program Staff; ST= Students; AL=Alumni, PA= Parents; CI= College Instructors; CS=College Students; TC= Transition Coordinator from local CRP; SC= Special Education Chair; AS= Area Specialist; DS= Director of Special Education

be, the ‘community based approach’ (C.B.I.) (p.9).” The emphasis on CBI was also apparent in the many opportunities for students to engage in recreation/leisure activities, and practice independent living skills within a variety of settings within the local community. Table 8 illustrates these various community-based instructional activities that were observed during 2001-2002.

*CBI activities afforded students in Program A.* During the 2001-2002 school year, students participated in CBI, primarily during the fall and at the end of spring semester when they were not auditing college courses. CBI included numerous activities such as visiting the Maryland Transit Authority (MTA) office to obtain ID cards, participating in a confidence course at an outdoor learning center, shopping at local malls, eating lunch at local restaurants, bowling, watching a movie at a local theater, visiting museums, going on picnics, touring a local power plant, and taking part in a softball game and overnight camping trip with students from other postsecondary programs operated by the LSS.

Students were also provided with opportunities to participate in “service learning” through volunteer work at an environmental learning center and a food bank. Other community-based activities focused on planning for the transition from school to adult life. Along with students, parents were often invited to participate in these transition-related activities. For example, during fall 2001, parents (n= 5) accompanied students on tours of two local CRP’s, a rehabilitation training center, and/or attended the Transition Forum organized by the LSS at a local recreational facility.

Table 8

## Community-based Instructional Activities Observed during 2001-2002

<i>Transition-Related</i>	<i>Recreational</i>	<i>Independent Living</i>	<i>Community Service</i>
Tour of local CRP's.	Confidence course at outdoor learning center	Holiday shopping at local malls	Volunteer at a local food bank
Tour of Workforce Training Center	Trip to art museum	Eat lunch at local restaurants	Maintain trails at local environmental learning center
Attended Transition Fair	Watch movie at local theater	Obtain ID card at MD transit office	
Graduation rehearsal with postsecondary programs	Softball competition with other postsecondary program Picnic at the beach. Camping trip at outdoor learning center Bowling at local bowling alley	Tour local power company.	

Generally, most students participated in these various CBI activities. However, during the 2001-2002 school year, two students who had participated in the daytrip to the local outdoor learning center during previous years, elected not to repeat the trip. When asked about one student's decision not to attend, one paraeducator replied, “[student] decided that he wasn't getting anything out of it. It was good that he was able to make that decision for himself.” While the program staff supported the students' decision not to participate in the daytrip to the outdoor learning center, they did not offer alternative activities. Students who elected not to participate in scheduled CBI activities were expected to remain at home or go to work.

*Students views of their CBI experiences.* A number of students and alumni (n=14) expressed varying opinions on their experiences with CBI. When asked to describe what they liked best about Program A, program participants identified several CBI activities such as holiday shopping at the mall (n=3), bowling (n=1), and volunteering at a local environmental learning center (n=1). Students were most positive about the annual camping trip at the outdoor learning center. Five students and alumni specified the camping trip as their favorite experience in Program A. The popularity of the camping trip may be due to the novel experiences that it afforded the program participants. For instance, one student remarked, “We get to sleep outside with our buddies and we never did that in high school.” Other program participants also reported enjoying the challenging tasks (e.g. rope climb, zip line), and spending time with their friends and teachers.

In addition to describing what they liked best, program participants were also asked to recount their least favorite aspect of Program A. Of the ten students and

alumni who identified a specific CBI activity as their least favorite experience, four students disliked volunteering at a local environmental learning center. The following dialogue suggests that these students disliked the physical labor involved in maintaining the hiking trails:

**Interviewer:** Now, that you've told me your favorite, which one was your least favorite experience?

**1<sup>st</sup> Student:** I think the [environmental learning center]. When we picked up like rocks and stuff and we used the plastic to put the trash in.

**Interviewer:** Okay. So when you were cleaning up the trail?

**1<sup>st</sup> Student:** Yeah, the trail.

**Interviewer:** You didn't like doing that?

**1<sup>st</sup> Student:** No.

**Interview:** Why not?

**1<sup>st</sup> Student:** Hard work.

**Interviewer:** How about you, [2<sup>nd</sup> Student]. What was your least favorite?

**2<sup>nd</sup> Student:** The same thing. Because we had to pick up that heavy, heavy shovel and—and you get thorny hands.

Along with the volunteer experiences at the environmental learning center, several students mentioned that they did not enjoy visiting the visual arts museum (n=2), touring the power plant (n=2), and shopping at the mall (n=2).

*Planning for CBI activities.* Program staff assumed responsibility for planning all CBI activities. Both the program teacher and paraeducators reported planning CBI activities as part of their duties. During the school year, they were observed making the

necessary arrangements for trips into the community. For example, while the two paraeducators instructed students in the classroom, the program teacher often remained in the office and contacted representatives from local community organizations to schedule fieldtrips, tours and volunteer opportunities. The CBI activities planned by program staff were primarily for the entire class or several groups of students. Typically, when students participated in such activities within the community, they were accompanied by program staff and other students from the program. There was no evidence that indicated students in Program A participated in CBI on an individual basis.

In addition to planning, program staff also informed students and families of upcoming and previous community-based instructional activities through class discussion, flyers, monthly calendars and newsletters. During observations, interviews and focus groups, there was no mention or evidence that students and families played a role in planning or making suggestions for upcoming CBI activities.

### *Functional Academic Skills Training*

In Program A, students received functional academic skills training in community settings and a segregated classroom. Much of the functional academic skills instruction provided to students within the community and college campus could be described as individualized, spontaneous, and informal. However, the instruction provided by program staff within the segregated classroom setting was more typical of a traditional structured lesson in a high school. During the 2001-2002 school year, two days were designated for functional academic and community-based instruction. The three additional days were set aside for students to work within the community.

According to program staff, this schedule differed from previous years when students worked two days, and received functional academic and community-based instruction three days per week.

*Instruction in the community setting.* It was specified within the Program Manual that “the academic portion of the community college program must evolve from actual, hands-on experiences (*College Outreach Programs Manual, n.d.l.*)” This practice was represented in Program A through what the program teacher referred to as “situational or on-the-spot” teaching. An illustration of how students’ experiences within the community and college campus influenced the functional academic instruction was described in the program manual (*College Outreach Programs Manual, n.d.*):

A good example of this occurred with a student coming late to computer class.

When asked about the lateness, the student replied that he simply could not tell time. Not only did this experience result in several lessons on telling time, the student was asked to wear ‘two’ watches (one digital & one regular) and to ‘compare’ the way time was presented in order to learn how to tell time (p.14).

In addition to the description in the Program Manual, examples of on-the spot teaching were also found in the observational data. For instance, during a trip to the local mall, a student who wanted to purchase a gift for her parent indicated that she was unsure of what to buy, and the correct amount of money to give the cashier when it was time to pay. The program teacher who accompanied the student used questions and verbal prompts to assist with selecting an appropriate gift, and to pay for the item at the register. It appeared that in Program A, program staff did not preplan formal lessons on

specific functional skills and deliver instruction in the community or college campus. Rather, program staff often delivered individualized instruction to students within the context of specific community-based instructional activities, when the “situation” arose.

*Instruction in segregated classrooms.* When students were not participating in activities on-campus and within the community, paraeducators often taught lessons on functional academics (e.g. vocabulary, menu math) during the afternoons when Program A had access to a classroom in the Social Sciences/Human Development building. Program staff also reported teaching computer skills (e.g. e-mailing, using the internet, keyboarding, etc.) during the morning hours when the program had access to a computer lab. Appendix H provides a sample daily schedule for students in Program A during Spring 2002, and includes the types of functional academic skills instruction offered to students during the two days that they were on campus.

Although program staff developed a schedule at the beginning of the spring semester, for teaching functional academics in class, this schedule was flexible to allow students opportunities to participate in activities at the community college. As explained by a paraeducator from Program A,

We try to have a set day where we do this on Monday and this on Wednesday; but it just doesn't always work out. It's like we wanted to have a vocabulary test on Wednesday –or vocabulary review Wednesday; but we can't because of a play [on campus] to go to.

The primary method used to deliver academic instruction in the segregated classroom setting was whole class or large group instruction. The two paraeducators reported that except for basic math, they did not develop individualized lessons for

students in the program. Instead, they selected lessons “that everybody can get something out of.”

While the lessons provided to students in the segregated classroom were not individualized, they afforded instruction in a variety of functional skills. The two paraeducators from Program A, who were primarily responsible for classroom instruction, used teacher-made materials and published curricula to teach functional academics. A list of published materials used in Program A were listed in the Program Manual developed by the LSS. Typical lessons included:

- Vocabulary (e.g. computer words, home words, family words)
- Job skills (e.g. job applications, getting along on the job)
- Computer skills (e.g. keyboarding, e-mail, internet)
- Checkbook math
- Menu math
- Social skills
- Phonics
- Reading
- Following directions
- Journal writing

In addition to functional academics, students received remedial instruction in math. Before the start of the each semester, the two paraeducators developed for each student a “basic math” folder containing worksheets with simple math facts (e.g. addition, subtraction, and division). Each math folder was individualized according to the students’ abilities. During class, students were given the assignment to complete

their selected worksheets. In order to continue on to the next worksheet students were required to have program staff check their completed work, and correct the math problems that were incorrect.

Observations and reports from program staff indicated that aside from the basic math folders, in the classroom, program staff primarily used large group instruction to teach functional academics. However, program staff did accommodate the needs of individual students. One paraeducator explained that, “If they [students] need help, [the other paraeducator] or I will walk around and help them with some things if it’s new.” For example, while one paraeducator taught a lesson, the second paraeducator was often observed assisting individual students who were having difficulty with the work. For some assignments, program staff paired higher functioning students with those with more significant needs. One student in particular, enjoyed assisting classmates in school. When describing his one regret about his experiences in Program A, this student stated,

I wish I could have—like help my friends, because they’re not that really good in math but I am. No offense, guys. Since I’m kind of the smartest in the—smart in math and everything, I wish I could have helped them. But I would have to help one at a time.

Program staff also adjusted their expectations according to the individual student’s ability. For instance, in Program A students were required to keep a personal journal describing their weekend activities. Each week, students were given an assignment to write a journal entry describing their weekend. While most students were

assigned to write a one-page journal entry, a few students with more significant needs were only required to write three simple sentences.

In addition to delivering functional academic instruction, program staff also conducted informal assessments to evaluate students' basic math skills and progress. When planning basic math, at the beginning of the school year program staff assessed students' computational skills using a teacher-made instrument that contained a set of math problems that progressively grew more difficult. Program staff used the assessment information to develop the individual folders that contained basic math problems (e.g. addition, subtraction, and division). Additional assessments used by the program staff included anecdotal information from community-based instruction, work evaluations, and spelling and vocabulary tests that were administered to students at the end of each vocabulary unit. These assessments were used to evaluate student progress and assign grades for report cards. They were graded in the following areas:

- Functional Communication
- Functional Life Skills
- Personal Math
- Personal Finance
- Transition to Work
- Community Work Experience
- Attendance
- Total Attendance

Grades were recorded on a report card template developed on the computer by one of the paraeducators. Similar to the high schools, Program A sent home report cards four times during the school year.

*Students and parents views of instruction.* Several students (n=3), alumni (n=3), commented on the classroom instruction provided to students in Program A. These students, it seemed, held differing opinions about academics. For instance one student reported that he enjoyed journal writing. Yet, two other students identified journal writing and math as their least favorite experiences. The comments offered by the alumni tended to be negative. The main criticisms against the functional academic curriculum were that it was too easy and repetitious of the instruction that was provided in high school. Recalling her experiences with the Program A, one of the alumni commented,

I can remember one thing about this program. The stuff is the same thing as like in high school. Everything—like the skills, the math, right down to the whole thing. It's like repeating high school all over again.

Compared to the number of parents who expressed their views on other program components, few parents (n=2) commented on the academic instruction made available to students in Program A. There may be many reasons for the few parent remarks on functional academic skills instruction. One reason may be due to their limited knowledge of Program A's academic curriculum. While findings from interviews with parents suggested that they had some knowledge of the curriculum. However, they knew little of the specific types of instruction that their sons and daughters received. For example, typical parents' remarks were:

**1<sup>st</sup> Parent:** Yeah, math. Spelling and I think a little reading—but she can't read well. They just do the normal things that you do at school for a child that's mildly retarded.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Parent:** I really don't remember from last year. Primarily, he's just been working this year. I think some of the guys went to a weight lifting kind of program with [paraeducator] and they—if I remember correctly, I think they did vocational things. It was real important to call in when you were going to be sick and just really encourage more independence.

**3rdParent:** That's one aspect that I'm really in the dark about. And I don't think that is good and I have to say that I haven't really pressed the issue myself.

I know that she's worked with money. She's worked with spelling. She's worked with like some functional vocabulary words...But really, to tell you the truth I really am not sure of what goes on in the classroom...Now she does get her report card, but the report card is vague. I think—about what she's learning—because we never see, you know, much in the way of testing that comes home and stuff like that, except for those vocabulary and spelling tests.

Those parents who remarked on functional academic instruction were critical of the curriculum offered to students in Program A. Similar to the criticisms offered by alumni, these parents also maintained that academic assignments were too simple and expectations for students were low. In describing their least favorite experiences in Program A these parents stated:

**1<sup>st</sup> Parent:** I think that he needs to be challenged a little more. But I know that it's hard with him because you know, if it's not something that he really wants to

do, it's kind of hard to push him. So I would say that I guess maybe I thought he would get more academics maybe.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Parent:** There's another sore spot. [The student] was writing in her journal, 'Woke up.' 'Ate lunch.' 'Went to bed.' Three lines; many days. As I look back on the journal, I felt that she had done that many days and I thought, 'Is anybody looking at this?' Because you know [the student] can write incessantly. I just felt like she's such a prolific writer. There's no reason that she should have been allowed to write that little.

### *Social Skills Training*

In Program A social skills were taught through various means including classroom discussions, published materials, and informational pamphlets. Much of the social skills instruction focused on teaching behaviors that were appropriate for the college and work settings. Issues related to student sexuality and relationships were addressed informally, on a case-by-case basis.

*Classroom discussion on social skills.* Program staff often used classroom discussion to inform students of their expectations for appropriate behavior and teach specific social skills. For example, as part of the orientation at the beginning of the school year, program staff reviewed with the students their expectations for behavior while participating in Program A. Program staff also initiated class discussions on specific social skills (e.g. interacting with college students, table manners) as situations arose. For example, after observing students from Program A "monopolizing the class discussion" in the cardio-weight training course, a paraeducator initiated a class discussion on appropriate ways to answer questions in the college courses. During the

discussion, the paraeducator offered examples of appropriate behavior, and emphasized the importance of taking turns in order to gain acceptance by peers. He explained to the students, "People like you there [in cardio-weight training]. But they won't like you if you keep monopolizing the time."

The program teacher maintained that an important aspect of the social skills instruction in Program A were the lessons that emerged as a result of students' experiences on campus and within the community. The rationale behind these class discussions was explained by one paraeducator,

If somebody has an individual problem, we usually tell everybody, 'we're going to bring it up to everybody [in class] because that's the only way that we can learn, by bringing it out'... You know, any type of situation at one place can happen at another, so you might as well kill two birds with one stone and just get it out in the open and go over it.

*Additional means of teaching social skills* These class discussions were often combined with modeling and role-playing of appropriate social skills. While program staff used published curricula such as *Learning Basic Social Skills* (J. Weston Walch, 1989) and *Social Skills on the Job* (American Guidance Service, 1989), these materials were supplementary to the classroom discussions.

In addition to published curricula, program staff also reported using materials that were readily available on campus such as informational pamphlets, and college newspapers and newsletters, to address what the program teacher referred to as "pertinent topics." These included topics such as substance abuse, HIV, sexual harassment, and domestic violence. These may have been included as a component of

social skills instruction because they enabled program staff to present social skills within a specific context. For example, a paraeducator reported that a discussion on sexual harassment included identifying appropriate behaviors, as well as inappropriate behaviors that may be construed as sexual harassment.

*Addressing student sexuality and relationships.* Program staff addressed issues related to sexuality and relationships informally, through conferences with individual students, on a case-by case basis. During the school year, there were several occasions when incidents of inappropriate contact between students resulted in the program teacher holding meetings with individual students and parents. Program staff also reviewed with students the written program policies which required students to demonstrate “appropriate displays of affection.”

Formal instruction related to sexuality and relationships was not included in Program A as part of social skills instruction. It was apparent however, that students could have benefited from such instruction since many students in the program expressed an interest in dating and having relationships with others. In fact, during 2001-2002, several students were involved in romantic relationships with each other in Program A (three couples). As illustrated in the following dialogue, there were also several students ( $n=4$ ) who aspired to someday get married and have families.

**1<sup>st</sup> Student:** Me and my girlfriend we get ready to—

**2<sup>nd</sup> Student:** He's embarrassed to say it.

**1<sup>st</sup> Student:** We going to get married.

**Interviewer:** You're going to get married someday?

**1<sup>st</sup> Student:** Yeah.

When program staff were asked about student sexuality and relationships, they agreed that there was a need to provide students with sex education. One paraeducator remarked, “Yeah, we’ve had kids get pregnant, not in the program, but after they leave. We just should deal with that.” The program teacher reported that she was interested in incorporating sex education into the program curriculum. She also noted that in previous years she reviewed published materials on relationships but did not find it age-appropriate.

### *Independent Living Skills Training*

Independent living skills training (i.e., cooking, housekeeping, personal hygiene, public transportation, recreation /leisure) was offered through a number of ways. Students were afforded the opportunity to participate in recreational and leisure activities and practice personal hygiene skills. Hands-on direct instruction on housekeeping, cooking, and travel training were limited.

*Instruction on personal hygiene.* Program staff reported that there was a greater emphasis on personal hygiene instruction during previous years when there was a need among the students. As one paraeducator recalled, “We’ve had in the past, where students had to go and take showers. I mean, [the program teacher] just sent them down to the showers [on campus].” One parent, who believed that it was through Program A that her son learned to maintain good personal hygiene, recounted her positive past experiences with the program:

He came home one day and he says, ‘Look what they gave us.’ Well, it was a paper and you had to check whether you took a shower that day, whether you shampooed that day, whether you put deodorant on that day, whether you

shaved that day, whether you brushed your teeth that day, whether you had clean clothes on...They made it an issue, you know, or a learning skill—what you should do. And then [student] would say, ‘Well, I do that.’ I said, ‘Yeah, but I have to push you into taking a shower...So when they made it an issue, it was great. I felt like, ‘Thank you very much,’ you know. I loved it. And I really think that's how [student] got into taking a shower ever day, taking a shampoo.

During 2001-2002, there was less emphasis on personal hygiene because program staff did not perceive it to be a problem among the students. Therefore, lessons in personal hygiene were primarily provided through classroom instruction. During one such lesson the paraeducators and students generated a list of necessary personal hygiene activities. Among those identified by students were:

- Wash your face
- Wash and shampoo your hair
- Shave your face, or legs and under arms
- Wear deodorant or powder
- Brush teeth your teeth twice day
- Wear clean clothes
- Clean your fingernails
- "No pickin or diggin", (a term used by students and program staff for adjusting underwear.)

Paraeducators used the students' answers to initiate a discussion on impact of hygiene on first impressions at work and in school. They also reviewed the personal hygiene expectations when students participated in their inclusive college course.

Although direct instruction was not provided, students who were enrolled in the college courses had opportunities to practice their personal hygiene skills on campus. For instance, students who were enrolled in the aqua fitness course during spring 2002 showered and changed clothes in the locker rooms after class.

*Participation in recreation and leisure activities.* Students in Program A were also provided with the opportunity to participate in recreation/leisure activities on-campus and within the community. Typically, recreation/leisure activities, such as taking walks on the track and around the campus and holiday parties in the classroom, involved the entire groups of students. Additional recreation/leisure activities were incorporated as part of community-based instruction (e.g. bowling, movies) and inclusive opportunities (e.g. college productions and lectures).

*Instruction in cooking and maintaining a household.* Students had little opportunity to participate in direct “hands-on” instruction in cooking, laundry, and housekeeping since their access at the community college was limited to a segregated classroom, computer lab, gymnasium, and public spaces such as locker rooms, cafeteria, library, bookstore, student lounge, and theater. Training in these skill areas was limited to classroom instruction and informal discussions.

The program teacher recognized the limitations of classroom instruction and expressed an interest in incorporating a residential component into Program A to provide students with “real life” experiences with independent living. The program teacher reported that during the first few years that the program was in operation, she had inquired about having the community college and LSS renovate an abandoned house on campus. The purpose was to use the house as a facility that could provide

students with an opportunity to live independently, and receive instruction in independent living skills such as cooking, housekeeping, laundry, and personal hygiene. Although the idea was discussed with college and LSS personnel, a decision was never made. During the time that this case study was conducted, the house on campus had yet to be renovated. The program teacher commented that she wanted to again approach college and LSS administrators to propose her idea for the residential facility.

*Travel training in the community.* Travel training on public transportation was another independent living skill that was addressed on a limited basis. At the beginning of each school year, with program staff, students from the program traveled to the MTA office to obtain an ID card. The MTA ID card entitled individuals with disabilities to pay a reduced fare on public transportation. However, at the time that this investigation was conducted Program A did not provide students with individualized training on public transportation. In previous years, there were students from Program A who were able to independently access public transportation. According to the paraeducators, these students “learned on their own.”

One reason for the limited travel training may have been that there was no need for students to travel independently in the community. Transportation for program-related activities was often provided by the LSS or prearranged by the program staff. For instance, during the 2001-2002 school year, transportation to and from the college campus, individual job sites, and other community settings was provided by a school bus assigned to the program or students’ families. The local CRP that employed students in their enclaves and mobile crews also transported these students to and from their job sites using vans owned by the CRP. Students used public transportation only

once –which was to travel to the MTA office. The program teacher explained that in past years, public transportation was used for community activities. However, due to the limited time available during the school day, it was difficult to use public transportation to get to and from the college campus and local community settings. The two paraeducators cited several additional reasons for not providing individualized travel training. These included:

- parents' discomfort with travel training
- students' disinterest in traveling on public transportation
- and students' living in neighborhoods that were inaccessible to public transportation.

Although it was not provided by the LSS, during the 2001-2002 school year, it appeared that students in Program A were eligible to receive travel training from a local CRP. The local CRP that employed and provided transportation to students in Program A was also willing to provide individualized training on public transportation. The Transition Coordinator from the CRP, reported that he was currently assisting two students from the program whose families had expressed interest in having them learn to independently use public transportation to access the community.

In previous years, program staff reported that they have assisted several students obtain a driver's license. A paraeducator reported that they helped individual students study for the driver's exam. At the time that this case study was conducted, two students from Program A possessed their driver's licenses. One student reported that he obtained his driver's license prior to entering Program A. The other student earned his license the previous year, while in the program.

### *Inclusive Opportunities*

Inclusive experiences were available to students in Program A. Students had opportunities to interact with same-age peers without disabilities during campus events that were open to all college students and the general public, and when they used campus facilities. Extended interactions with typical college students were also available through participation in college clubs, and organizations and select college courses. Participation in college courses was perceived to be a positive experience by many students with SD, parents, and typical college students. Although students with SD were afforded inclusive experiences, the interactions with same-age peers did not appear to result in long term friendships.

*Incidental contact with college students and personnel.* Using campus facilities such as the cafeteria, student lounge, locker rooms, and bookstore afforded students with opportunities for incidental contact with same-age peers and college personnel. Program staff promoted additional inclusive opportunities by incorporating into the schedule, time for students from the program to attend college-sponsored activities. During the 2001-2002 school year, these included lectures, music forums, plays, dance recitals, and campus picnics. Participation in such activities were a requirement for students in Program A. For example, it was stated in the written program policies developed by the program staff that “attendance and appropriate behavior are mandatory.”

Although students used campus facilities and attended college-sponsored events, there were few observed interactions with same-age peers without disabilities. Primarily, students from Program A interacted with each other. For instance, when

attending a college production or eating lunch in the cafeteria, students typically sat together in small groups, with other students from the program. There were a few occasions when students with SD were observed interacting with same-age peers without disabilities on-campus. These interactions were often with college students that they had met in their college course. One such college student described the type of interaction that she and her friends had with students with SD outside of class,

Sometimes we'll see them in the locker room before class, and we'll see them after class in the locker room. And I do tend to see [student] a lot more than any of them on campus, and I say 'hi' to her and we talk in the lunch line and stuff like that.

*Participation in college clubs and student organizations.* Another means that the program staff promoted contact with college students without disabilities was through e-mail. During 2001-2002, Program A became involved in *E-Buddies*, a program affiliated with *Best Buddies International*, whose purpose is to facilitate e-mail friendships between people with and without developmental disabilities (E-Buddies, 2002). Seven students from the program were matched with an "E-buddy," with whom they exchanged e-mail. Opportunities to correspond with their E-Buddies were provided during computer lab.

Extended personal interactions with peers were also available through participation in college-sponsored clubs and organizations. Program staff reported that, in previous years, students participated in college sponsored-organizations such as a religious group, Student Government Association (SGA), and *Best Buddies*. Although the *Best Buddies* chapter at the community college was the primary organization on

campus for promoting friendships among students with and without disabilities, the program teacher noted it was difficult to maintain an active membership of college students. She felt the community college was composed primarily of commuter students who were often on campus only to attend classes, and recruiting college students to become involved in college-sponsored organizations such as *Best Buddies* was a challenge. Program staff were unsuccessful with reactivating *Best Buddies* club on campus during the 2001-2002 school year. Although program staff met with the president (college student) of the local chapter on-campus, they were unable to schedule activities with typical peer buddies. Program staff did plan a *Best Buddies* bowling activity at a local bowling alley during spring 2002, however, only students from Program A attended.

The program staff acknowledged that students from Program A could indeed benefit from additional inclusive experiences, and expressed an interest in increasing the interaction between students with and without disabilities. However, during the 2001-2002 school year, students from Program A were on campus only twice a week. This left limited time for participation in student organizations and other college-sponsored activities.

*Participation in typical college courses.* Aside from joining various clubs and organizations on-campus, students also had opportunities for extended interactions with same-age peers without disabilities through regular college courses. Students from Program A were permitted to audit select courses at the community college. Typical college courses available to students from Program A were physical education and art classes such as aqua fitness, swimming, cardio-weight training, yoga, self-defense for

women, drawing, and stagecraft. In spring 2002, program staff offered students an opportunity to audit the aqua fitness or cardio-weight training course. The sample daily schedule included in Appendix G illustrates that students from Program A participated these courses twice a week, for approximately 60 to 90 minutes each day.

Program staff identified several barriers that served to limit the selection of college courses to students in Program A. Often, students did not meet necessary academic prerequisites for courses. Students could only select from courses that were offered during the two days that they were on campus, and that were taught by instructors who were able to work well with students from the program. Program staff selected these instructors by first consulting with department heads from the community college, and by observing the instructors in class.

In addition to choosing the college courses, program staff often supported students by attending classes with the students. During spring 2002, the groups of students who audited aqua fitness and cardio-weight training were accompanied by paraeducators. None of the students from the program attended a college course independently. However, several students from Program A have in previous years, attended college courses using natural supports. For example, several years ago, a student from the program enrolled in a remedial math course. Program staff reported that they supported these students by consulting and periodically meeting with the college instructors. In addition to receiving support from program staff, the student also received services from the community college's services for students with disabilities.

*Students' and parents' views of inclusive experiences.* Several students and alumni (n=7) reported that the inclusive experiences at the community college campus

were what they liked best about Program A. Students (n=2) and alumni (n=4) particularly enjoyed taking college courses. Favorite courses identified by program participants included music class, swimming, and weight lifting. Unlike their other experiences in Program A (i.e., CBI, vocational training) students offered no negative statements regarding their inclusive experiences at the community college. This lack of negative comments may suggest that students and alumni who participated in Program A were satisfied with their inclusion at the college campus.

Similar to students, over half (63%) of the parents also held favorable views of the inclusive opportunities in Program A. For example, one parent pointed out her son's positive experience with *E-Buddies*,

**1<sup>st</sup> Parent:** And then the buddy thing on the computer, I think that's pretty neat.

**Interviewer:** The E -Buddies?

**1<sup>st</sup> Parent:** Yeah, because he does come home and talk about him. Well, he hasn't lately, but he used to tell me, you know, who his E-Buddy was. I think it's a girl who's in college somewhere.

Although they did not specifically refer to inclusive experiences, two parents believed that their participation in Program A taught their sons "how to deal with people." As one parent remarked, "It's getting him out of house. Giving him some place to go—something to do, and he's learning to interact with other people."

While students in Program A were afforded inclusive experiences, one parent believed that it was the interactions with other students in the program that offered her daughter the possibility of true friendships. This perspective was especially interesting because it came from a parent whose daughter participated in inclusive education at the

high school. When asked to describe what she liked most about her daughter's experiences with Program A, this parent responded,

I think socializing with children that have disabilities. She has been in the mainstream type of setting. And I think also feeling like she could have a boy-girl relationship with some of these students...She would talk about guys in public school, but she was speaking of the class president and, you know, other people that I know would probably never want to have any type of relationship with her...So to find an exposure with students at [the program] that—that could possibly happen with. I think that's probably been the best thing.

There were a few parents ( $n=3$ ) who also expressed some disappointment. For example, two parents were disappointed that the social interactions that occurred at the community college did not develop into friendships that extended outside of the program. A third parent believed students from Program A were not encouraged to interact with individuals at the community college. This parent recounted an incident when the program teacher reacted negatively to a family friend who unexpectedly met her son on campus, and engaged him in a conversation. She contended that program staff were too concerned with "how the others would react to students from the program or how students would react to them."

*College students views of inclusive experiences.* In some cases, relationships developed between students from Program A and same-age peers in class. One college student who was enrolled in a course with students from Program A during spring 2002, acknowledged that initially, he started talking to the students with SD because he "felt

bad for them." However, this college student also noted that, "I ended up liking them after I got to know them (the students)."

Although a few college students developed relationships with students from Program A, they tended to view these relationships as helping rather than reciprocal friendships. This perspective was exemplified in a statement made by one of the same-age peers who was enrolled in a college course with students from Program A:

They're just fun to work with. I really enjoy working with them and I think it definitely does take certain –either a certain type of person or someone with enough background, to know how to really work with them. It's like a character trait. Like, you know, wanting to help other people out. I don't know what a word for that is. I've always had that in me. I've always had like a motherly kind of –mother hen type trait about me.

*Friendships with students with and without disabilities.* While students from Program A had opportunities for social interactions at the college campus, unfortunately, these relationships often did not develop into deeper friendships that extended beyond the community college. There was only one reported example of a romantic relationship between a student from Program A and a typical college student. This alumnus mentioned that he also made friends with typical college peers. At the time, program staff did not approve of these friends, and discouraged these relationships. Program staff believed that this group of college students negatively influenced the student from Program A.

Although friendships between college students and students from Program A seldom occurred, there was evidence to suggest that friendships developed among

students from Program A. Several students (n=7) indicated that they had made friends with other students in the program. Also, during the school year, these students were often observed socializing amongst themselves on campus, rather than with other college students.

There were also a few parents who commented on the friendships that developed among students in Program A. One parent expressed her satisfaction with the friendships that her daughter had made with another student from Program A. However, two other parents were disappointed that their sons had not made more friends while in the program. As one parent remarked,

Something that I thought that [student] would get out of the program more than he did, and that was finding a friend or friends in the program... But he never - even now in [Program A] he never had a close friend, I feel. Because has never said, oh, can they come over or, can I go over there. Like this one boy [student], he went over to his house a couple times, but not the way I thought—like I thought that that he would have found some closer friends because he went to school with them.

#### *Paid and Non-paid Work Experiences*

Work experience comprised a significant portion of Program A. Opportunities for students to participate in both paid and unpaid work experiences were incorporated into the students' schedule. A supported employment model (Wehman, Moon, Everson, Wood, & Barcus, 1988) was employed by program staff to provide students with work experiences. All students participated in paid employment during the 2001-2002 school year. However, most of these work experiences were enclave rather than

individual placements. The types of student work experiences, number work hours and days, and hourly wage during the 2001-2002 school year are detailed in Table 9.

*Student work schedules.* The number of days designated for work and the type of employment for students changed over the years. For example, in previous years, two days per week were designated for employment. However, during 2001-2002, the number of workdays was increased from two to three days per week. On their scheduled workdays, students did not attend the program on the college campus. Instead, they traveled directly from home to their job sites. The main reason for this change was to provide students with additional work experience. The program teacher hoped that an additional day at work would lead to improved future employment outcomes for students in the program. She explained,

Now, I don't know how we're going to assess all that in –for one year, but we're going to try to see if it makes a difference. If they're used to working that extra day and they leave school, are they going to really fall into that work schedule and be successful and continue to work, or whether they just kind of fall by the wayside like some have.

There were however, exceptions to the three day work schedule. For instance there were several ( $n=7$ ) students who worked five days per week, and spent little time on-campus. Also, initially, students in Program A participated in functional academic and community-based instructional activities on-campus and within the community five days a week. This schedule continued for several weeks, until a majority of students were placed at job sites. Additionally, one student who remained unemployed when

Table 9

## Work Experiences During 2001-2002

<i>STUDENT</i>	<i>EMPLOYER</i>	<i>HOURLY WAGE</i>	<i>ENCLAVE</i>	<i>INDEPENDENT WORK SITE</i>	<i>WORK HOURS</i>	<i>WORK DAYS</i>
1	Local CRP	\$2.27	Landscape mobile crew		7	3
2	LSS <sup>a</sup>	\$9.15		Building service	8	5
			worker at middle			
			school			
3	Local CRP	\$3.32	Laundry worker		4	3
4	LSS	\$3.00 <sup>b</sup>		Worker at LSS	6	3
			distribution			
			center			
5	LSS	\$3.00 <sup>b</sup>		Cafeteria worker	4	3
			at a local high			
			school			

<i>STUDENT</i>	<i>EMPLOYER</i>	<i>HOURLY WAGE</i>	<i>ENCLAVE</i>	<i>INDEPENDENT WORK SITE</i>	<i>WORK</i>	<i>WORK</i>
					<i>HOURS</i>	<i>DAYS</i>
6	Local CRP	\$3.63	Landscape mobile crew		7	3
7	Local CRP	\$3.25	Laundry worker		4	3
8	Local CRP	\$3.32	Laundry worker		4	3
9	Local CRP	\$3.32	Laundry worker		4	3
10	Local CRP	\$4.65	Laundry worker		4	3
11	Local CRP	\$3.85	Laundry worker		4	5
12	Local CRP	\$3.05	Laundry worker		4	5
13	Local CRP	\$3.39	Laundry worker		4	5
13	Childcare Center on- campus	Non-paid		Teacher's assistant	3	2
14	Local CRP	\$3.63	Landscape mobile crew		7	5
15	Local CRP	\$4.85	Landscape mobile crew		7	5
16 <sup>c</sup>	Local CRP	\$3.87	Landscape mobile crew		7	3

<i>STUDENT</i>	<i>EMPLOYER</i>	<i>HOURLY WAGE</i>	<i>ENCLAVE</i>	<i>INDEPENDENT</i>	<i>WORK</i>	<i>WORK</i>
				<i>WORK SITE</i>	<i>HOURS</i>	<i>DAYS</i>
16	Local grocery store <sup>a</sup>	at least minimum wage, but unable to remember  exact wage		Courtesy clerk	5	2

*Note:* Assigned numbers for students coincide with numbers assigned to students in Table 2; <sup>a</sup>Competitive employment;

<sup>b</sup>Received from LSS; <sup>c</sup>Student worked both independent and enclave employment

other students were placed in jobsites, stayed home during the three days allocated for work, until she was placed in an enclave operated by the local CRP.

*Individual work experiences.* Typically, the transition facilitator and/or program teacher from the LSS placed individual students from Program A in paid and non-paid job sites both on campus and within the community. In previous years, these included the childcare center and grounds keeping department at the community college, the Maryland School for the Blind, neighborhood schools, nursing homes, grocery stores, and restaurants.

At the time that this case study was conducted, there were four students participating in individual employment. Transition facilitators from the LSS placed these four students in individual job sites located within the community prior to their attending Program A. These included a high school cafeteria, a middle school, LSS warehouse, and grocery store. Transportation to and from these work settings was provided by the students families. In one case, because one student's job site was on a school bus route, the program teacher arranged for the school bus to provide transportation to work.

For students who participated in independent employment, there was great variability in the work schedule, and hourly wage. For example, the two students who were employed in the high school cafeteria and LSS warehouse typically worked four to six hours, during the three designated workdays. Because these were not competitive placements, the students received a stipend of approximately three dollars per hour from the LSS.

There was one student employed full-time as a building service worker at a local middle school. This student worked eight hours during the evenings (3p.m. to 11 p.m.) and received approximately nine dollars per hour. Although this student was in his first year in Program A, his work schedule permitted him little time to participate in program-related activities. Therefore, he was on-campus only occasionally. A second student participated in both individual and enclave employment. This student was employed two days per week as a courtesy clerk at a local grocery store. He worked five hours per day and earned at least minimum wage. In addition to this part-time job, this student assisted his parents on Saturdays in the family-operated restaurant, and was employed three days per week in a local CRP's landscape mobile crew.

*Enclave work experiences.* During the 2001-2002 school year, most students in Program A (n=13) participated in enclave employment. According to the program teacher, they opted to place students in the local CRP's landscape mobile crews or work enclaves at a local uniform cleaning company mainly because, work is more of the goal than academics or college classes. Ideally we want them hooked up with the service providers. And we thought this is a good opportunity this year, since it posed itself, to try the service providers ahead of time, way ahead of time, with a number of students so that they can be familiar with that service provider. If they choose that [service provider], fine; if not, then they'll know.

The number of hours that students worked in these enclaves and mobile crews ranged from five to seven hours during the day. Specific workdays were determined by the program teacher and communicated to the CRP's transition coordinator. A majority

of these students ( $n=7$ ) worked only during the three work days designated by the program teacher. However, several students ( $n=6$ ) who were in their last year with the program, worked five days per week. Five of these students were employed five days a week in the CRP's mobile crews and enclaves.

The students who were employed by the CRP were paid hourly wages that ranged from \$3.30 to \$5.15. Because the U.S. Department of Labor considered the CRP a training facility for individuals with disabilities, they were required to pay no less than the calculated prevailing rate. An individual student's rate of pay was determined by the calculated prevailing rate for a specific job contract and the results of time studies conducted by the CRP. The highest hourly rate that the CRP was permitted to pay the students was minimum wage. In addition to employing students in the landscape mobile crews, local CRP also provided transportation to and from home and work.

*Non-paid work experiences.* Only one student participated in a non-paid work experience during the 2001-2002 school year. The program teacher placed this student at a child care center located on the community college campus, as an alternative to participating in an inclusive college course. Twice a week, instead of auditing a college course, this student volunteered for two hours at the childcare center, as a classroom assistant.

*Supports provided to students at work.* Staff from Program A and a local CRP provided follow-up on students who participated in work experiences. The same local CRP that placed students in their enclaves and landscape mobile crews also provided on-going job coaching. Because the enclaves and mobile crews were operated by the

CRP, job coaches employed by the CRP supervised students at the work sites, completed periodic work evaluations, and reported to the Transition Coordinator from CRP on student progress and behavioral incidents. Staff from Program A occasionally visited the work sites operated by the CRP to observe students placed in the enclaves and mobile crews. Visits to these work sites were scheduled through the Transition Coordinator. Students who were employed in individual work sites such as a high school cafeteria, middle school, LSS warehouse, and local grocery store received drop-in support from program staff. Every few weeks, the program teacher or paraeducators traveled to these settings to observe students, complete work evaluations, and communicate with employers.

*Students, alumni, and parents views on work experiences.* Twelve students and alumni, and five parents offered both positive and negative comments on the work experiences in the program. For many students, their favorite part of their work experiences was earning money. For example, nine students who participated in the program during 2001-2002 reported that they liked working because they were paid for their efforts:

1<sup>st</sup> Student: I like [the local CRP] because they train you for jobs and while you get trained, you get paid for it.

Interviewer: Oh, so your favorite thing is getting paid to work?

1<sup>st</sup> Student: Yes.

2<sup>nd</sup> Student: Everybody loves getting paid.

Although program participants enjoyed the monetary benefits of working, students and alumni (n=5) also expressed their dissatisfaction with the types of jobs that

they held. For instance, two of the alumni who graduated from Program A described how much they disliked their placement in custodial work while in the program. Three students who were employed in the landscape mobile crews operated by a local CRP during 2001-2002 made negative comments about their work schedule and job coaches.

Only two students offered positive remarks about their job placements. Of the 13 students who worked in enclaves and mobile crews during the 2001-2002 school year, only one student who worked in an enclave at a local laundry facility considered her job as "fun." A second student who was placed in a non-paid position at the childcare center on the college campus also appeared to enjoy her job. While returning from volunteering at the childcare center, this student commented to the interviewer, "I love those kids! I wish I could change jobs and work there all the time."

Like the program participants, parents also shared mixed views on the students' work experiences. Sixty-three percent of parents ( $n=5$ ) described how their sons and daughters benefited from the work opportunities that were available in Program A. These parents reported that placement in various work sites served to prepare these students for the world of work, provided paid employment, taught students to handle income, and offered opportunities to meet new people and remain physically active. Another parent expressed her satisfaction with the variety of jobs offered to students in Program A. One parent maintained that the work experiences in Program A were even better than the opportunities available at the high school. According to this parent, I think it's really prepared him for working more so than what just the high school would prepare him for. I mean, by the time they're 21, if they can't add

and subtract, they're probably not going to get it. And the focus on the vocational skills is really the area where he needs to go.

Although half of the parents were satisfied with the students' work experiences, there was a small minority (n=2) who were critical of the enclaves and mobile crews operated by the local CRP (i.e., landscaping and laundry facility). These parents described these jobs as "beneath him," and "not good enough." According to these parents the tasks in the enclaves were too easy and the job coaches provided too much supervision. One parent was concerned that, "It's not like it's going to be when they're out on their own."

These two parents also reported additional drawbacks of the work experiences in Program A. For example, the same parent who remarked on the excessive supervision at the work sites also noted that the program staff's practice of placing students in the same job for an entire school year tended to limited work opportunities. She added that she would have preferred a different job placement for her son every six months. A second parent expressed her disappointed with her son's limited involvement in job development:

I mean, basically all he's done now is jobs that people—they've gotten for him. But I'd like for him to have an active—not a decision, but an active choice with what he would like to do with his job or what type of job.

### *Vocational Training*

Although vocational training was provided primarily through participation in community-based work experiences, students also received direct instruction in various work-related skills within the classroom and campus settings. As indicated within the

*College Outreach Programs Manual* (n.d.), these included “career exploration, job research skills, application/resume processing skills, interview techniques, social skills on the job, and money management skills” (p. 23). As detail previously, career exploration was provided primarily through enclave employment with a local CRP.

*Career awareness.* The program teacher reported that during previous years, materials such as videotapes were used to provide students with information on skills required for specific careers. Direct instruction was often supplemented with classroom discussions on careers and employment opportunities available within the local community, and resources that were available at the community college. For instance, in the past, the program teacher scheduled for a speaker from the community college to give presentations on resources that were available for students at the career center such as the job bank, and computer software for developing resumes.

During the 2001-2002 school year, however, it appeared that career awareness instruction centered on employment opportunities that were available through local CRPs. Career awareness consisted mainly of having students take tours of the rehabilitation center and local CRPs, listening to guest speakers from local CRP's, and participating in the Transition Fair organized by the LSS, to be a component of career awareness. The following passage from observation notes offers a description of one such presentation from a local CRP, during which students from Program A were provided with information on rehabilitation services and vocational services that were available through local CRPs. Students were also afforded the opportunity to voice their interests in future jobs.

[The representative from a local CRP] stood at the front of the room, and placed a tri-fold bulletin board containing information on her agency, on one of the empty tables. Then she proceeded to talk about her agency...[the representative] explained that although they had a few group sites, they primarily placed their clients in individual placements. Next, she initiated a discussion on the students' preferences for work after graduating from the program. During the discussion [a student] stated, "I'd like to work with old people." [the representative] followed up with probe questions to get additional information. For example, she asked, "Doing what? Cleaning, talking with them, serving food?" [the student] responded, "Just talking with them." Another student mentioned that he would like to work in a grocery store or do office work...After having the students talk about their preferences, [The representative] explained the process of getting services...She placed an emphasis on finding a job in an area of interest."

No additional instruction on career awareness or vocational interests was observed during the school year. The two paraeducators also reported that they no longer gave students career interest inventories because they found the results to be unhelpful. As the paraeducators explained,

**1<sup>st</sup> Paraeducator:** Yeah. We used to give – they used to have those evaluations—the big evaluation where the kids just circle anything that they see.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Paraeducator:** What kind of job they like best. Yeah, we didn't get much out of that. And by this point, I mean, they have an idea of what they want to

do. Do they like janitorial; do they not. Do they like, you know, clerical; do they not.

**1<sup>st</sup> Paraeducator:** So for the most part they've already had some type of [work] situation in high school before they come.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Paraeducator:** Yeah, they don't really do much for aspiration.

**1<sup>st</sup> Paraeducator:** We put them on a job, pretty much.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Paraeducator:** We do more of, like, how to be appropriate on the job; how to relate to your boss. How to relate to your co-workers. We don't really do career exploration, except for the service providers.

When asked how the students' participation in these were connected with career awareness, one paraeducator explained, "You know, most of our kids are going to go through service providers, so that way they can find out what kinds of jobs they offer." It seemed that program staff believed that most students from Program A were going to secure future employment primarily through the local CRPs.

*Work-related social skills.* Aside from the career awareness activities, during 2001-2002, the focus of vocational instruction in the classroom was on work-related social skills. Program staff used curricula such as *Social Skills on the Job* (American Guidance Service, 1989) and classroom discussions to provide direct instruction on work-related social skills. The emphasis on social skills may have been influenced by the program staff's view that inappropriate behavior was the main reason that students were terminated from employment. According to one paraeducator, "Most of our students have gotten fired. It was because of inappropriate behavior or saying something that was inappropriate. It was never because of their work ethic."

*Student Involvement and Self-determination*

Student involvement and self-determination were incorporated into Program A, albeit on a limited basis. Although the program teacher planned activities that promoted student-self determination and choice-making, she employed more traditional teacher and parent-centered models to develop IEPs. When asked about the opportunities for self-determination and choice-making, students and parents expressed mixed feelings.

*Self determination skills instruction.* In previous years, direct instruction in self-determination skills was provided to students. Program staff reported using components from published curricula such as *Whose Future is it Anyway?* (Wehmeyer & Kelchner, 1995) to teach students self-determination skills. Similar to the functional academic and social skills training, self-determination instruction was also delivered to students in a segregated classroom setting at the community college.

In addition to direct instruction on self-determination, program staff planned activities that would enable students to make informed decisions regarding their future. For example, according to the program teacher, in past years, speakers from an organization called *Making Choices for Independent Living* were invited to give presentations on topics such as how to secure an apartment and obtain a driver's license.

Direct instruction on self-determination skills was not incorporated in Program A during the 2001-2002 school year. Program staff however, continued to provide activities that promoted students' informed choice-making on adult services (i.e., Transition Fair, tour of local CRPs, and state rehabilitation center.)

*Opportunities for student involvement in their educational program.* Students were given some opportunities to participate in the planning of their educational

program. However, rather than using a specific person-centered planning approach (e.g. McGill Action Planning System, Choice Maker Self-determination Curriculum, Next Step: Student Transition and Educational Planning), the program teacher reported using more traditional staff and parent-directed methods to involve students in educational and transition planning. Prior to the IEP meeting, the program teacher met with individual students to review drafts of the IEPs that she had developed. The purpose of these meetings was to allow students an opportunity to give their input on the proposed IEP goals. According to the program teacher, during these meetings, “I explain the goals, I ask them if there’s anything they want me to add or delete. Then, I compile them, and send them home.”

In addition to conferencing with students prior to IEP meetings, the program teacher reported that in past years, she held “mid-year conferences” with students from the program. The program teacher used these conferences to gain student perspectives on progress, and reaffirm with the students goals that they wanted to accomplish by the end of the school year. At the time of this investigation, however, the program teacher met with individual students prior to IEP meetings, but no longer conducted mid-year conferences.

Even though students were afforded the opportunity to express their opinions on proposed IEP goals prior to the meeting, their involvement in the IEP meeting continued to be limited. During the 2001-2002 school year, IEP meetings were held for eight of the sixteen students in Program A. The program teacher reported that due to scheduling conflicts at one of the sending high schools, IEP meetings for the other students were delayed until the summer, after the school year ended. Of the eight IEP

meetings held during the school year, only three students attended their meetings.

During these meetings, students typically listened to the reports on their progress, and answered questions from other members of the IEP team. While students were asked to express their opinions or interests, it was often the parent who made the final decision regarding their educational programming.

In addition to having a limited role in the development of their IEPs, during the 2001-2002 school year, students were also offered few choices on their college courses and employment. Program staff provided students with information on college courses, and encouraged students to independently select a college course and job. However, students' choices were restricted to only two college courses (aqua fitness, and cardio-weight training), and two types of enclave employment (landscaping mobile crew and laundry worker). Students who were placed in independent work sites prior to their participation in Program A, or who worked five days per week, were given the option to maintain their current job and work schedule. As previously reported by program staff, factors such as program schedule, availability of support from program staff, prerequisite skills, and limited employment options available through the local CRP may have served to limit the students' choices.

While students' opportunities to make choices about their educational program, and employment may have been restricted, they were afforded opportunities to demonstrate autonomy on campus. For example, students were free to have lunch on their own (e.g. in the cafeteria, in the courtyard), independently walk around the campus grounds, travel to and from their college course, and use campus facilities (e.g. bookstore, student lounge). Also, although students often asked to sit with program

staff at lunch, the program teacher and paraeducators encouraged them to eat with friends.

*Students views of their involvement in Program A.* Despite limited participation in the IEP process and opportunities to choose college courses and employment, students and alumni seemed to view Program A as a less restrictive setting than the high school. For example, several students and alumni (n=3) offered the response “more freedom” as their reason for deciding to attend the program, suggesting that more freedom was something they expected at the community college.

Four students also used “freedom” to describe their favorite experiences in Program A. One such student reported enjoying having the freedom to make choices about his educational program:

**1<sup>st</sup> Student:** I liked the freedom to do whatever I wanted to do. I didn’t have to come to school everyday like in high school. I could choose days that I wanted to come. I worked full-time before I got to the program so freedom was important because I could work and go to school.

For three other students the definition of freedom was having access to a larger setting and greater autonomy:

**2<sup>nd</sup> Student:** Get more freedom. I guess you can move on your own. You know high schools, they got teachers around you.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Student:** I think more freedom was when a campus is bigger than a high school building ever is. Instead of having like, one whole building, a few different buildings.

**4<sup>th</sup> Student:** Freedom around here is that you can trust some people to around to go from here to the weight training by yourself without baby—somebody babysitting you 24 hours a day.

There were also several alumni (n=3) who alluded to having more freedom at the community college. Although they did not use the actual phrase, the following exchange suggested that these alumni believed that they were able to make more choices during their last year in Program A:

**Interviewer:** How did you feel about the program?

**1<sup>st</sup> Alumnus:** It was just boring for a while when you go out and do things.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Alumnus:** It gets better and better.

**1<sup>st</sup> Alumnus:** Yeah. It gets better.

**Interviewer:** How does it get better?

**2<sup>nd</sup> Alumnus:** On your senior year, you can do everything else.

**1<sup>st</sup> Alumnus:** Senior year, you can do anything you want.

While most students believed that Program A offered more opportunities for autonomy and choice-making. There were two students who expressed their dissatisfaction with the limited opportunities.

**1<sup>st</sup> Student:** They would always say why don't you try this da, da, da. And when I would say to them, 'Well, this is what I want to do.' I felt like they didn't really want to hear it. They wanted me to do what they wanted me to do.

**1<sup>st</sup> Parent:** When he first came to [Program A], as he put it, 'They are treating us like babies.' He wasn't the kind you know, go do this or go do that, or we're

going to lunch, and you could just go to lunch, but you had to stay together. A teacher had to be with you and it did not sit well with him.

*Parents views of student involvement in Program A.* Similar to their views on students' vocational experiences, parents expressed varied comments regarding the students' involvement in their educational program, and self-determination. Two of the eight parents interviewed remarked positively on Program A's efforts to promote student independence. For instance, one parent reported that the program reinforced the skills that she was teaching at home. A second parent attributed her daughter's increase in self-determination to her participation in Program A:

I think if she hadn't gone to this program, we would probably still be walking her across the street and waiting for her at the bus and that kind of thing; or having a neighbor wait for her and stuff like that. She's also verbally expressed to us her independence. You know, 'I can do this myself' and that type of thing. So that's encouraging and she's made it loud and clear that she wants to have her own apartment and things that we didn't hear before. So she seems to have matured in aspects of personal growth, you know, independence mainly.

There was however, one parent who believed that the level of independence that was expected of students was not appropriate for her son. This parent explained, "For the kids that they had in the program, it was alright for them, but just not for [student] himself. He just—he needs more structure. He can't go around the campus so much by himself. He needs a little more one-on-one."

Three of the parents interviewed were critical of the limited individualization in the students' educational program. The following statements, exemplify these parents'

frustration and disappointment when the individual students' preferences, interests, and needs were not taken into account:

**1<sup>st</sup> Parent:** You have to fit in more with the group. You know what I mean?

But that would be my biggest thing, I guess, that it could be more individual.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Parent:** I was a little dismayed when I went over the IEP goals with [the program teacher] before we had our IEP meeting and—you know, for some of them, she said, 'Well, we can't really work on that because this is a group setting.' So in other words, you can't individualize the individual's IEP.

You have to kind of go along with the group, which, you know, I felt like what's the IEP for?

**3<sup>rd</sup> Parent:** They could only take college classes in the spring time. They couldn't take it in the fall. And that bothered me to death because I wanted him to take like a wrestling class and weight lifting class. And now I don't think there's going to be time for both because he's going to be working full-time, I think. So I think that's—they lost out on that.

**Interviewer:** So you would have liked for him to participate in a college class during the fall?

**3<sup>rd</sup> Parent:** In the fall, right. But apparently that's just—it doesn't work out for them. And I'm sure it's a good reason, you know, but that was disappointing.

*Balancing student self-determination and parental involvement.* It appeared that one of the challenges faced by program staff was establishing a balance between student self-determination and parent involvement. As indicated by the following remarks,

program staff believed that excessive parental involvement should be discouraged because it did not promote student-self determination.

**1st Paraeducator:** Even when we take trips and stuff, we've had people when we go camping—‘Oh, can my mom come?’ And we’re like—‘No.’ We try to quash some of that parent involvement.

**Interviewer:** What do you mean? Parent involvement is negative?

**2<sup>nd</sup> Paraeducator:** I mean it can be, yeah.

**1<sup>st</sup> Paraeducator:** For the most part a majority of it. It holds the students back. Additionally, program staff’s efforts to provide students with opportunities to make independent choices were not well received by parents. The program teacher reported that at one time, she had attempted to help students open individual bank accounts in order to provide them with an opportunity to manage their personal finances. However, she abandoned the activity after receiving complaints from parents who did not want their sons or daughters to access money without their consent. In another example, a paraeducator recounted,

You know, we had students register to vote and some of the parents said, ‘I don’t want my kid voting; I don’t want my kid putting their name on it; they don’t know what they’re doing.’ So you’re caught between a rock and a hard place. On one hand [the student] is 18 and should have rights; but on the other hand, you’re in school and you kind of have to abide by the parents’ wishes as well. So I don’t know where that fine line is. We walk a fine line between the two.

*Family Involvement*

Opportunities for involving families were evident in Program A. Parents were invited to participate in the development of IEPs, and students' schedules, and transition-related activities. Although the program teacher employed various methods to encourage parental involvement, each resulted in varying levels of success. Program staff also planned several social activities during the spring, specifically for students and their families. While parents were encouraged to participate in Program A in many ways, a few parents reported that there was still a need to increase communication.

*Family involvement in the development of the IEP.* Parents and guardians were included in IEP meetings in a variety of ways. The seven parents and social worker who participated in this case study all confirmed that they played key roles in the final decision to place students in Program A.

Parents were also invited to attend the annual IEP meetings. The program teacher reported that she solicited parental input prior to the meeting by sending home drafts of the IEP goals for parents to preview, and scheduling telephone conferences to discuss any questions or changes to the suggested IEP goals. However, only two parents described their participation in such parent-teacher conferences prior to IEP meetings. Of these two, one parent believed these pre-IEP conferences to be unhelpful. This parent recalled that although she identified additional IEP goals for her daughter, the teacher responded, "Well, we really only have two days [on campus] and we don't have time to work on that." When asked whether anyone helped prepare them for the IEP meetings, most parents ( $n=4$ ) gave varying responses indicating that they received no additional preparation, prepared themselves, or relied on family and friends.

The level of parental involvement in the IEP process varied greatly. For example, observational data from eight IEP meetings revealed that most parents (n=6) did attend their meetings. One IEP meeting was held without the parent and student. At the meeting, the program teacher explained that the mother had given permission for the IEP team to proceed without her. Because the student was exiting and already linked with a CRP, the parent may have believed that it was no longer necessary to participate. During another IEP meeting, instead of the foster parent, the student's social worker was present at the meeting. During an interview, this foster parent acknowledged that she did not attend IEP meetings. This parent explained that she was too busy taking care of other children to attend such meetings. Therefore, she often asked the social worker to "handle it."

Parents (n=6) who were involved in the IEP meetings perceived themselves as having an active role in the IEP meetings. In addition to more passive roles such as listening to student progress and answering questions from other members of the IEP team (i.e., teachers, administrators, and service providers), these parents reported that they also asked questions, brought up concerns, and expressed their opinions regarding specific goals. These parents viewed themselves as advocates whose responsibility was to ensure that the LSS delivered the necessary services to students with significant disabilities. As one parent remarked, "If I don't stand up and speak up for the child, then the child won't get things that he needs."

While most (n=5) parents believed that they were relevant members of the IEP team, there was one parent who believed that she was just the "the signature," in a

bureaucratic process. In describing her limited role in the IEP meeting this parent stated,

By law, they have to have me sign this piece of paper. So I feel like I'm there for the signature. I feel like the instrument is there. It's a wonderful idea. It's set up. It doesn't get used. So I feel like I'm basically there for people to follow the steps of the system, get me to sign it and forget it.

*Family involvement in the transition process.* Program staff held additional activities to promote family involvement in the transition process, such as invitations participate in tours of local CRPs, and to attend the Transition Forum. Yet despite such efforts, there was limited parental participation in transition-related activities. For instance, during fall 2001, only two parents attended a tour of a local CRP although the program teacher sent home information through monthly newsletters and flyers. In previous years, the program teacher held evening workshops where speakers from various community organizations were invited to give presentations on topics such as wills and trusts, guardianship, adult services, and SSI. However, these events were discontinued due to low participation.

*Family involvement in the students' schedule.* Besides the IEP and transition process, the program teacher sought parental input on the placement of students on job sites, and selection of college courses (aqua fitness and cardio-weight training). During fall 2001, the program teacher sent families a list of the two types of employment available through the local CRP (i.e., landscaping and laundry). After the student and parent initially selected a job, the Transition Coordinator from the CRP followed up by sending home a packet of information containing an application and detailed description

of the job. Before the start of the spring semester, program staff also sent home information on the two college courses available to students along with the cost to audit the course. Parents could then decide with the students whether to enroll in a college course.

*Family involvement in social activities.* Families were also invited to attend social events that were sponsored by Program A. For instance, each spring, the program staff held an open house for incoming students and their families. This event provided families with an opportunity to tour the college campus, obtain additional information about Program A, and meet program staff and students. Former students and families were invited to attend the alumni picnic, an annual event held at the college campus that provided former students and their families an opportunity to reconnect with friends and program staff. Also, at the end of May, a separate graduation ceremony for students exiting the four postsecondary programs operated by the LSS, was held on the campus of a local University. Families of current and graduating students were also invited to attend this annual event. In May 2002, along with graduating students and their family members, several current students ( $n=4$ ) and parents ( $n=2$ ) attended the graduation ceremony.

*Efforts to promote parental communication.* While program staff were able to identify specific activities that encouraged communication with families, some of the parents felt there was a need to improve communication. For example, two of the parents maintained that direct contact was limited and often not encouraged by program staff. According to one parent, compared to her experiences with the high school, ‘the communication between mothers and teachers in the program was much less.’ In

addition to these parents, one social worker reported that there was a need for additional contact from program staff to ensure that the linkages with the appropriate agencies were being made.

There may have been some credence to these parents' concerns. When asked about their views on the level of parental involvement, the program teacher and paraeducators expressed mixed feelings. While program staff encouraged families to be involved with the students' programming in various ways, they discouraged other types of involvement such as writing notes or telephoning the program to inform staff about upcoming absences or individual student concerns. Program staff viewed these tasks as the students' responsibility. One of the paraeducators remarked, "If you want to tell us something, have your daughter do it. She's an adult." Although program staff expected students to assume the much of the responsibility for communication, with the exception of calling in when absent, there were no statements included in the written program policy to clarify such expectations.

While two parents and the social worker expressed their dissatisfaction with communication, a third parent held an opposing view. In fact, this parent considered the program teacher and paraeducators to be a dedicated staff who often contacted parents outside of program hours. Recalling her initial experiences with the program teacher, she stated,

And I remember when I was first going through the process. I think [the program teacher] had been out a long time. She was at home with pneumonia, and she was calling me on her own time, and as sick as she was, just to get in

touch with me and kind of prepare [student] for coming [into the program]. I was really impressed with that from day one.

Although this parent reported having adequate opportunities to communicate with program staff, she reported that she would have liked more opportunities to network with other parents. This parent suggested, "Really the only thing that I would like to see more of is perhaps maybe a parent support group or a parent group meeting where some of the parents [from the program] could meet."

### *Interagency Collaboration*

There were varying degrees of collaboration between Program A and organizations. As described in previous sections, the most extensive partnerships were formed with the community college and one local CRP. Interagency collaboration served to provide Program A with access to additional facilities, equipment, personnel and resources. Yet, regardless of the resources provided or extent of the partnerships, there were no written documents between the LSS and community college or the CRP. An examination of documents and interviews revealed that interagency collaboration was informal and based on verbal agreements between personnel from the LSS and representatives from the community college, local CRP's, and other organizations (e.g. local environmental learning center and food bank).

*Partnership with community college.* According to program planners, during program development, administrators and personnel from the LSS and community college established the role of each organization and allocation of resources for Program A. The Academic Division Dean of Business and Social Sciences, the individual who served as liaison to Program A, was responsible for addressing the program's needs on

campus. For example, the program teacher recalled that this individual helped procure a computer and larger office space from the community college. The program teacher however, also established a rapport with various college personnel including secretaries from the Department of Education, the director of student activities, bookstore manager, and director of the childcare center. This rapport enabled the program teacher to access equipment and reserve space on campus to hold special events without having to constantly go through the liaison. Although program staff accompanied students from the program in college courses, their role was limited to supporting students in class and providing the college instructors with information on the students. The two college instructors who had students from the program enrolled in their courses during the spring 2002, believed it to be a positive experience, and maintained that they would be willing to have students from Program A in future classes. As indicated by the following statement, one college instructor in was particularly impressed with the paraeducators who accompanied the students to class:

But they just seem like they've got so much energy. They seem like they enjoy – I'm sure they get frustrated too at times, but they just seem like they're loving what they're doing...I think it just rubs off on the kids, too.

*Partnership with a local CRP.* In addition to community college personnel, the program teacher worked closely with the Transition Coordinator from one local CRP. They met periodically at the community college to address work-related concerns, and review students' progress on the job. The Transition Coordinator also participated in IEP meetings and program activities (e.g. holiday party, movies, softball game, camping trip, alumni picnic, and graduation ceremony). According to the current Transition

Coordinator, a previous Transition Coordinator had established a collaborative relationship with the program teacher from Program A. The CRP's involvement with Program A increased when the position of Transition Coordinator was increased to a full-time position, and when the CRP placed thirteen students from the program into their existing enclaves and mobile crews during 2001-2002.

*Additional collaborative efforts.* While informal extensive partnerships were limited to the community college and one local CRP, there was some collaboration with other community organizations. These included scheduling guest speakers from local agencies (e.g. DDA, DORS, Social Security, local CRPs) to give presentations to students and families, arranging tours of CRPs and a State vocational rehabilitation training center, and organizing service learning opportunities for students in the program. Many of these activities evolved into annual events. For example, for the last several years, during the first two months of school, students from Program A volunteered once a week at an environmental learning center to maintain trails, mulch the grounds, and perform other landscaping duties.

*Collaboration within the LSS.* Collaboration was not limited to organizations outside of the LSS. As previously described, the program teacher collaborated with special education department chairs from two high schools to schedule IEP meetings and share student records. In previous years the program teacher also worked closely with an LSS transition facilitator who was assigned to serve the program. At the time of this investigation, a transition facilitator continued to participate in IEP meetings and assisted the program teacher with placing a student at a job site. However, the transition facilitator was no longer assigned to serve Program A. The program teacher

explained that in addition to her duties to the program, she was also to assume the responsibilities of the transition facilitator. Program teachers from the four postsecondary programs, including Program A, also met every few months at one of college campuses. During these meetings the program teachers discussed program-related concerns, shared information, and planned activities such as the graduation ceremony and camping trip.

#### *Program Evaluation*

The LSS did not conduct formal evaluations of Program A, or the other three postsecondary programs operated by the LSS. Primarily, the LSS relied on informal feedback from parents as a means of determining the program success. The program teacher informally evaluated the program by collecting outcome information on students, and soliciting feedback from her staff, and program teachers from other postsecondary programs operated by the LSS.

*Limited negative feedback.* Program developers did not incorporate program evaluation as part of program development. As evidenced in the following statements, for the Director of Special Education for the LSS and the area specialist, the program's success was determined by the lack of negative feedback and program's popularity among parents:

**Director of Special Education:** My view of life is in many ways, shaped by who's complaining about what. You know, who's filing for due process. Who's filing complaints with the Maryland State Department of Education. Who's filing complaints with the Office of Civil Rights. Who's writing letters to the superintendent and the county executive. And those things don't happen

with regard to this program. Except when I have parents who want their children to go to the program and we've determined it's not appropriate.

***Area specialist:*** Now a really brutal program evaluation would be if parents weren't interested in having their kids in these programs anymore. That would be a real brutal program evaluation because you would know that something was wrong somewhere, okay? So I think most of the time the programs run pretty full. And if anything, they're usually turning kids away. I think that if a program isn't running like that, then I would question whether it was a good program.

***Collecting outcome information.*** There was no written documentation of the students' outcomes in Program A. Program staff did obtain information on outcomes from alumni who received monthly newsletters, attended alumni activities, and through paraeducators. The program's monthly newsletters provided an avenue for collecting outcome information, by serving to encourage alumni to maintain contact with program staff. According to the program teacher, receiving the newsletters often prompted former students to call and "tell us how they're doing." Former students also often returned to Program A to participate in various activities. In addition to promoting contact, the newsletters provided former students with information on upcoming events such as the alumni picnic, graduation, overnight camping trip, and Best Buddies activities.

The paraeducators also shared with the program teacher additional information on the employment, living situation, and social life status of individual alumni. For example, one paraeducator who also worked for a local CRP as a support specialist

often obtained information on outcomes from former students who were being served by the CRP. Program staff also often reconnected with former students when they attended dances and other activities for individuals with disabilities that were sponsored by community organizations, and when former students periodically called to “keep in touch.”

*Soliciting feedback from others.* Along with collecting outcome information, the program teacher informally evaluated the program by soliciting feedback from her staff and the other program teachers. The program teacher and her paraeducators often held informal discussions on instructional activities and issues related to students participating in the program. The program teacher also met periodically during the school year, with teachers from the other three postsecondary programs. The program teachers used these meetings to share information, discuss current issues and concerns that were related to individual programs as well as the LSS. Some adjustments to program activities or changes to program components were made based on informal feedback from these sources.

Research Question 3: What are students' and parents' views on the role of this public school-sponsored postsecondary program for students with SD ages 18 to 21 in preparing students for the future?

Students who were enrolled in Program A during 2001-2002, their parents, and alumni who exited the program from 1998 to 2001 were asked questions regarding the students' future after exiting Program A. The purpose of these questions was to gain a better understanding of how students and parents envisioned the students' life after school, the supports that students would need, and their views on how Program A might have helped students' work toward or achieve their goals and dreams for the future.

Results regarding these issues are organized by the following: (a) visions of the students' life after exiting the program, (b) supports needed to attain the adult life envisioned for students, (c) program's role in helping students prepare for adult life, and (d) postschool outcomes regarding employment, independent living, and community participation. Included in Table 10 are the students, alumni, and parents views regarding Program A.

#### *Visions of Students' Life After Exiting The Program*

Most students and parents ( $n=24$ ) tended to have a positive outlook regarding the students' future. When asked what life was going to be like after graduating from Program A, the respondents answers focused primarily on the students' employment and residential outcomes. All students ( $n=16$ ) expected to participate in paid employment. According to one student, "After I graduate, I would like to find me a job and get paid." Only four students however, identified specific careers. One student reported that after graduating from Program A she expected to get a job at a local

Table 10

## Students, Alumi, and Parents Views of Program A

VIEWS	STUDENTS AND ALUMNI	PARENTS
Visions of Students' Life After Exiting The Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All students expected paid employment as an outcome. However, few students were able to identify a specific career or make the connection between vocational training and employment.</li> <li>Several (n=4) students placed in mobile crews and enclaves operated by a local CRP, expressed a desire for independent placements within the community.</li> <li>Most students expressed a desire to live and travel independently in the community. Several students expected to get married and raise families</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All parents held expectations for paid full or part-time employment. However, none of the parents identified employment in any specific.</li> <li>Most parents also expected their young adults to eventually live outside the family home. Several also viewed friendships as desired outcomes.</li> <li>Parents tended to envision more restrictive future employment and living environments than students.</li> <li>A single parent reported community participation as an outcome.</li> <li>One parent believed that her daughter's choices would have a negative effect on her future.</li> </ul>

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- Few students expressed a desire to participate in continuing education.
- Supports Students
- Most the students believed that they would need supports to achieve their future goals. These included supports that would facilitate independent living (e.g. cooking, housekeeping, finding a home, and banking).
- Need to Attain Goals for Adult Life
- Two students mentioned that they would need assistance with parenting, none of the parents identified marriage and parenthood as an outcome.
  - Most parents agreed that students would require additional supports to achieve their future goals. These included supports that would facilitate independent living (e.g. cooking, housekeeping, finding a home, and banking).
- Program's Role in Preparing Students for Adult Life.
- Several parents believed that their young adult needed assistance with traveling independently within the community. However, none of the students identified travel training as a need.
  - Many parents believed that Program A help prepare students for the future by providing work experiences. Similar to students, parents also identified work experience.
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work experiences and employment, and participation in their IEPs.

- Several students reported that program staff helped them achieve their future goals by teaching them to use public transportation and them become “more mature.”
- Four alumni also reported that Program A helped establish linkages with their CRPs.

• A few parents believed that the program staffs’ high expectations helped their young adults’ become more mature and independent.

• One parent who believed that Program A did little to help prepare her son for the future.

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nursing home. Another student reported that he wanted to work in landscaping. Of these four, only two demonstrated an awareness of the connection between vocational training and employment. For example, one student claimed,

I will go to the Workforce Technical Center [sic] in the next two years to train to be a janitor. I want to get the training to be a custodial worker at a school or restaurant.

A second student had aspirations to be a doctor or work with computers. This student recognized however, that these careers required some type of college degree, and that his limitations in reading and writing could present a barrier against achieving these goals.

Four (31%) of the 13 students who were placed in the mobile crews and enclaves operated by a local CRP during 2001-2002, expressed a desire for more independent jobs within the community. As one student emphatically remarked:

Because after I graduate, I sure hope that [local CRP's transition coordinator] finds me another job because when he kicks me out of [mobile crew] I'll be happy...When [local CRP's transition coordinator] makes me work at Sam's Club, Wal-Mart, or Superfresh, I'll be glad and I'll be happy.

Besides working, most students (n=12; 75%) also envisioned themselves living independently. These students generally remarked that they wanted to "be independent" or "live on my own." There were several students who also described a specific lifestyle after exiting from public schools. Four students mentioned that after they graduated, they would like to marry and have children. One young man dreamed of moving to Hollywood. In terms of residential options, five students reported that

they wanted to move into a house or apartment. Only one student expected to live in a group home after exiting from the program.

Being able to travel in the community was also an expectation for several students. Three such students hoped to someday learn to drive and own a car. Two students reported that they would rather use public transportation. As evidenced in the following response, for one student, learning to use the bus was perceived to be a skill necessary for independence:

And to learn to catch the MTA bus on our own. Because some of us going to have to do it sooner or later...I don't know about anybody's mother, but I know my parent not going to be there with me 24 hours a day, babysitting me.

When asked about continuing education, only two students expressed interest in taking additional community college or adult education courses after exiting Program A. The same student who desired a career in medicine or computers, viewed enrolling in remedial reading and math classes courses as a means to improve his skills and pursue his ultimate goal of attending a regular college. For the second student, taking course at the community college would allow him to pursue a personal interest in weight-training.

All parents (n=8) held expectations that their young adult would participate in full or part-time employment. None of the parents however, identified employment in any specific career as an outcome for their young adult. Two parents who perceived their sons as needing supervision at work, identified more restrictive vocational settings such as sheltered or enclave employment.

A majority of parents (n=6) also expected their young adults to eventually live outside the family home. The types of residential settings described by these parents were primarily supported living environments such as group homes or supervised apartments that offered drop-in supervision.

In addition to work and independent living, 38% of the parents (n=3) also viewed friendships as important outcomes. During the interviews, these parents described their desired for their sons and daughters to socialize or live with friends. Only one parent commented on community participation. This parent remarked on the importance of volunteering within the community if her daughter were unable to secure full-time employment. According to this parent:

I like for her to feel that even though she has a disability she's aware of it--that she can still give back to the community. So even if she volunteers at something, I don't think that's a bad thing.

For the most part, parents and students envisioned a bright future for students after exiting Program A. There was however, one parent who did not share this positive outlook. This parent feared that her daughter's poor choices were going to be detrimental to her future. When asked how she viewed her daughter's life in five years, this parent remarked:

If she don't get these implants, she'll have a hundred babies. And some boy get hold of her and I don't know what will happen. But once she knows and she's 21 and she's grown and she can do what she wants to do. No tellin' what she might do...I don't know. I don't know if she'll even be living by then. The way the world is going now and the things—and the bad decisions she makes as far as keeping

company with certain people, you know, she'll do what she wants to do when she's 21.

#### *Supports Needed to Attain Goals for Adult Life*

When asked whether students would need assistance in order to attain the adult life that they had envisioned, 94% of the students (n=15) and 88% of the parents (n=7) agreed that they would indeed require additional supports. Among the types of supports identified by these respondents included those that would facilitate independent living such as assistance with cooking, housekeeping, shopping, budgeting, paying bills, and counting money and making change. Four students and two parents also reported that students would need assistance with finding their own home. In general, there was agreement among students and parents regarding the types of supports that they viewed as necessary for independent living. There were however, some differences among respondents. For instance, none of the students mentioned the need for travel training. However, 50% of the parents (n=4) believed that their young adult would need help with learning to travel independently within the community. While two students who expected to someday have children mentioned that they would need assistance with parenting, none of the parents who were interviewed identified marriage and parenthood as an outcome for their young adults.

Several respondents also indicated that students would need assistance with employment after they graduated from Program A. Most of these students (n=5) and parents (n=2) reported that students would need help with securing employment. The same two parents who envisioned their young adults in sheltered and enclave

employment also believed that their sons would require higher levels of support at work such as on-going direct supervision from a job coach.

#### *Program's Role in Preparing Students for Adult Life*

A majority of the respondents (n=20) made comments indicating that Program A was helping to prepare students for the life that they had envisioned. When asked which of the program components, if any, were helping them, the students and parents gave varied responses. The program component identified most by students (n=4) and parents (n=3) was work experience. These respondents believed that the students' participation in employment while in Program A was helping to prepare them for the future. The second most frequently identified program component was student involvement in their IEP. Three students believed that their involvement in the development of IEP goals and participation in the IEP meetings was helping them achieve the life that they envisioned. Describing her role in the IEP meeting one student explained,

I tell my mom to tell them that I want to have a job and to have a family, and to live on my own, and get married.

Additional program components identified by respondents included activities such as attending the health fairs and transition fairs, shopping in the community, the over night camping trip, and functional skills instruction in personal hygiene, counting change, and reading maps.

A number of students and parents believed that program staff played a role in helping students prepare for the future. For instance, two parents attributed their young adults' increased maturity and independence to the program staffs' expectation that

students would assume more responsibility for themselves and their own choices. As illustrated in this statement by one parent:

The push to be more independent and to have the apron strings cut a little bit with the parents. I think that's certainly a big help. And the—walking around the campus independent of adults, that's a good experience.

Several students (n=4) reported that the program staff were helping them achieve their future goals. When asked how they were being helped, one student recounted how the program staff taught him how to use public transportation and a second student stated that the program staff helped him become “more mature.”

While most respondents described at least one program component that played a role in helping students prepare for the future, there was one parent who believed that Program A did little to help prepare her son for the future. According to this parent:

I'm not sure that this has been the best idea, to tell you the truth. Because I really feel like this is more of a—and it's nothing against [the program staff], and maybe he's getting more than I think. But it feels to me like it's just a place to go until he's 21. I don't feel like he's—and maybe he has, but I don't feel like he's really learned.

Along with students and parents, alumni who exited Program A during 1998-2001 were also asked to identify program experiences that helped them prepare for adult life. Although they were unable to describe any one specific experience, a majority of these alumni (n=5) credited Program A with helping them secure employment. Also, four alumni reported it was through the program that they were linked with their CRPs. One such student maintained that he did receive vocational

training to be a floor technician at the state rehabilitation center. According to this student, it was the program teacher who initiated the linkage with DORS, the agency that funded the training.

#### *Outcomes for Program Graduates*

In addition to collecting information on the future life envisioned for students, data were also gathered on selected postsecondary outcomes for students who exited Program A. Students who completed Program A in 2002 (2002 Graduates) and alumni who graduated between the years 1998 to 2001 provided this information during a focus groups and individual interviews. Additional outcome data were also attained from key informants including the parents of graduating students ( $n=3$ ), program teacher, and Transition Coordinator from a local CRP, and from observations. One student who did not complete Program A and his parent were interviewed separately. Information on the linkage to adult services, employment and residential status, personal relationships, and community participation are listed in Table 11.

*2002 Graduates.* For the students who graduated from Program A during 2002, there appeared to be a smooth transition from public schools to the adult services system. Upon exiting public schools, all nine graduates received employment services from a local CRP. This indicates that these students were also eligible for long-term funding from the State's Developmental Disabilities Administration. Typically, funding from DDA is used by local CRPs to pay for such services.

Rather than selecting another local CRP, the families of all nine graduates chose to remain with the local CRP that employed students from Program A during the school year. As a result, there was no break in vocational services for the graduating students.

Table 11

## Outcomes for Students Who Exited from Program A During 1998 - 2002

<i>Student</i>	<i>GRAD</i>	<i>Receives</i>	<i>Employment</i>	<i>Residential Status</i>	<i>Personal</i>	<i>Community</i>
	<i>YEAR</i>	<i>Services</i>			<i>Relationships</i>	<i>Participation</i>
1	2002	Local CRP	Enclave	Lives at home	Has friends; would like to get married in future	Takes dance lessons
2	2002	Local CRP	Enclave	Lives at home	Dating another student in Program A; would like to get married in future	Goes out to eat w/family, girlfriend, attends community dances
3	2002	Local CRP	Enclave	Lives at home	Dating another student in Program A	Goes out w/boyfriend, attends community dances
4	2002	Local CRP	Enclave	Lives at home	Has friends; dating	Occasionally goes to

<i>Student</i>	<i>GRAD</i>	<i>Receives</i>	<i>Employment</i>	<i>Residential Status</i>	<i>Personal</i>	<i>Community</i>
	<i>YEAR</i>	<i>Services</i>			<i>Relationships</i>	<i>Participation</i>
5	2002	Local CRP	Enclave	Lives at home	Has friends another student in Program A	Go to mall to bars w/brother purchase videos
6	2002	Local CRP	Enclave	Lives at home	Has friends, dated another student in Program A	
7	2002	Local CRP	Enclave	Lives at home	Has friends	
8	2002	Local CRP	Enclave	Lives at home	Has friends	
9	2002	Local CRP	Enclave	Lives at home	Has friends	Works in family restaurant on weekends
11	2001	Local CRP	Individual Placement	Lives at home	Have friends	Go to the mall,

<i>Student</i>	<i>GRAD</i>	<i>Receives</i>	<i>Employment</i>	<i>Residential Status</i>	<i>Personal</i>	<i>Community</i>
	<i>YEAR</i>	<i>Services</i>			<i>Relationships</i>	<i>Participation</i>
movies						
12	2001	Local CRP	Enclave	Lives at home	Has girlfriend	
10	2000	Local CRP	Enclave	Lives at home	Has friends	Would like to take a computer class
13	1999	Local CRP	Enclave	Lives at home	Has friends	
14	1999	Local CRP	Enclave	Lives at home	Not dating but has friends	Go to the movies
15	1999	Local CRP	Enclave	Lives at home	Has boyfriend	Go to the mall, movies
17	1999	No Services	Stay at home mom	Lives at home	Has boyfriend	
16	1998	Local CRP	Enclave	Lives at home	Has friends	
18	1998	DORS	Individual placement	Lives independently in apartment	Had serious girlfriend	Take courses to be professional wrestler

They were able to continue working in the landscape mobile crews and work enclaves operated by the CRP. For a few students (n=3) the transition from Program A to adult services included expanding their work schedule from three to five days per week. A majority of the graduates (n=6), however, worked five days per week while still enrolled in Program A. Thus, these students experienced no change in their schedules after exiting the program in May. During the school year, two graduating students expressed a desire to leave enclave employment and work independently in the community. When they exited Program A, the Transition Coordinator from the local CRP was actively working with these students to assist them with finding competitive employment. Until such employment could be secured, however, these students were expected to continue working in their current enclaves and mobile crews.

In addition to continuing their current employment, all nine students expected to remain at home with their families after graduation. Although both students and their parents expressed interest in having the students live outside the family home (e.g. independently or in group homes), it was reported to be a future goal rather than a present outcome. None of the graduating students or their parents reported having immediate plans to have students move out soon after graduation.

There were no differences in outcomes for the eight students who received SSI and the one student who did not receive SSI. However, these outcomes reflect a point in time when a student's SSI status had limited impact on eligibility for funding from DDA and vocational rehabilitation. There may be greater differences in outcomes among students who exited public schools after 2003. At this time, state agencies such as DDA and vocational rehabilitation started placing greater emphasis on SSI status as

indicators of significance of disability when determining eligibility for funding and services.

*Alumni.* Students who completed Program A during 1998 to 2001 achieved similar outcomes to the most recent graduates who exited the program in 2002. A majority (n=8) of alumni reported that they were currently engaged in paid employment. Of the eight who were employed, five worked in enclaves or mobile crews, and three were in independent placements within the community. These eight program alumni also stated that they received support from local CRP's. One former student however, was reported to be unemployed and not receiving any services from local CRP's. This individual described her self as being a "stay-at-home mom." She maintained that she wanted to work but wished to wait until her child was old enough to attend school.

While alumni were secured paid employment and received support from local CRP's, living independently was one outcome that had yet to be achieved. All alumni who participated in the case study reported that they would like to live on their own. However, of the nine program alumni interviewed, only one former student reported having moved into his own apartment. While his parent assisted him with the process of signing the lease, this alumnus maintained that he assumed responsibility for paying the rent and taking care of his daily needs. The other eight alumni indicated that they still lived at home with parents or guardians. One explained that she remained at home because she had to help care for her father. Another individual claimed that a friend's parent was currently assisting her and a friend with finding an apartment.

Although a majority of alumni continued to live at home after graduation, findings suggest that for the most part, they were living typical adult lives. In addition to working, they participated in relationships with others and were actively involved in the community. When asked about personal relationships, all nine alumni reported having friends and/or a significant other. One such former student mentioned having and raising a child. These alumni also enjoyed participating in activities within the community and pursuing personal interests. This included socializing with friends, watching movies, and going to the mall. One former student reported that he was actively pursuing his dream of becoming a professional wrestler by enrolling in courses operated by a local wrestling organization.

*Non-completers.* While most students who participated in Program A were able to graduate and exit the LSS at age 21, there were some students who started but did not complete the program. During 2001-2002, two students left Program A before the end of the school year. One student had been in Program A for only two months when he decided to withdraw from public school. According to the program teacher, the student claimed that he was not getting anything from the program. However, because this student opted not to participate in this case study, no additional data was collected. A second student, a nineteen year-old male, returned to his former high school after four months in Program A. Interviews with the student, his parent, and program teacher provided insight into the experiences that precipitated the student's departure from the program.

It appeared that the main reason for having the student return to the high school was due to his need for direct supervision. According to the parent,

I see [the student] as always needing to be supervised. He's overly friendly and overly helpful. He's too willing to go with anyone. We can't break him of this, even at home.

The parent also expressed her concerns with the staffing ratio to the high school administrator during the referral process. She recalled that at the high school, a paraeducator was assigned to provide the students with individualized supervision. The parent stated that she agreed to have her young adult attend Program A because the administrator convinced her to "try it out." After several months in Program A, the parent and program teacher decided that the level of supervision required by the student could not be provided in Program A. Because of the large size of the community college campus, amount of time that students spent in the community, and level of independence expected of the students, there was a concern that this student was at risk of being victimized. For example, while in Program A the student tended to wander away from program staff and other students from the program who were assigned to be his "buddy." He was also observed on several occasions initiating interactions with individuals at the community college and within the community that he did not know.

As a result, an IEP meeting was held to change the student's educational placement. Although the parent and student's younger brother attended the meeting, the student was not present. The student learned that he would not be returning to the college campus only shortly before he started attending high school. The parent explained, "I didn't want to ruin his Christmas vacation, so I told him like two days before he was going to go back." Additionally, the student was unaware of the reason for his return to high school. He believed it was a punishment for his inappropriate

behavior towards a particular student. For example, when asked to explain the reason he was sent back. The student recalled an incident when he attempted to tickle another student and accidentally touched her breast.

This student appeared to enjoy participating in Program A and expressed some disappointment with having to leave the program. For example, the student reported that he missed his friends at the college and wished that he could have said good-bye before he left. However, when asked to share his perspectives on being back at his high school the student stated, "Feels great to be here [at the high school]. I get to meet some of my old classmates." Such statements suggest that access to friends rather than type of school setting influenced the student's satisfaction with his educational program.

*Summary of Findings for Chapter 4*

This final section includes summaries of the findings from the research questions. These summaries are organized according to the following: (a) Summary of Criteria Employed in Program Development and Implementation, (b) Summary of Best Practices Incorporated in Program A, and (c) Summary of Students', Parents', and Alumni's Perspectives

*Summary of Criteria Employed in Program Development and Implementation*

The findings suggest that both philosophical and pragmatic reasons prompted an area specialist and Director of Special Education from the LSS to initiate the development of Program A during the early 90's. It appeared that during 2001-2002, there was a continued need for age-appropriate experiences and access to same-age peers, among students, alumni, and parents. Program A also appealed to these consumers because it encouraged older students with SD to remain in public schools until age 21, and enabled them to realize the dream of attending college.

Besides initiating program development, the LSS supplied much of the resources needed to implement Program A. During the initial years of operation, the Director of Special Education and area specialist hired program staff and supervised the program. During the 2001-2002 academic year, however, the Coordinator of Special Programs was the administrator assigned to Program A. Additionally, the paraeducators assumed responsibility for classroom instruction, and supporting students in inclusive college courses. The program teacher functioned as a program coordinator and assumed the duties of the transition facilitator. Related-services personnel

continued to serve students in Program A, while the Special Education Chair from the sending high schools scheduled and held the IEP meetings.

The resources provided by the community college consisted primarily of access to classroom and office space, campus facilities, and equipment. The community college however, also contributed computers, allowed students to audit select college courses, and provided a small allotment given to support the Best Buddies chapter on campus.

Although the Academic Division Dean for Business and Social Sciences served as the liaison for the program during previous years, during the 2001-2002 academic year no college administrator was assigned to Program A. Having no liaison seemed to have little impact on program operations.

During the 2001-2002 school year, for the first time, a local CRP supported Program A by employing a majority of students in enclaves and mobile crews, and providing transportation to and from work. The Transition Coordinator from the local CRP supervised the work component, and participated in the transition planning and program-related social activities. Despite the existing collaboration between the LSS, community college and local CRP, there was no written documenting these partnerships. Students and parents and program staff also supplemented the resources provided by the LSS, community college, and local CRP.

The process in which students were referred and admitted to the program also evolved over the years. Initially, there was an emphasis on selecting students who would not be disruptive to the college environment. At the time that this case-study was conducted, the LSS had developed a set of admissions criteria. These criteria however,

allowed for exceptions. Final placement decisions were incorporated as part of the IEP meeting. The responsibility for informing families, and selecting potential candidates no longer belonged to the program developers. These duties were assumed by the Special Education Chair from the sending high schools, and the Coordinator of Special Programs.

Program developers identified several factors that promoted initial implementation and sustainability. These included having a supportive LSS, a community college with a mission to serve the community, and program staff who can work effectively on a college campus. Key informants also believed that it was essential to establish positive rapport with the college and local community, and develop a program that met the needs of students, families, and community college.

There were also barriers to Program A's program development or sustainability. Securing space on-campus, and overcoming logistical and administrative challenges were among the challenges reported by program developers during initial implementation. The placement of students who were inappropriate for Program A was an ongoing concern expressed by personnel from the LSS. Although community college administrators were initially concerned with possible negative attitudes from college students, findings indicate that their attitudes toward students with SD were generally positive.

#### *Summary of Best Practices Incorporated in Program A*

Findings related to the second research question were organized according to these best practices. With the exception of program evaluation, all best practices were incorporated in Program A to some degree.

*Community-based instruction.* Community-based instruction (CBI) was one of the core components of Program A. Program staff selected, planned, and informed students and families of all upcoming CBI activities. Of the many CBI activities offered during the 2001-2002 school year, the annual overnight camping trip and volunteering at a local environmental learning center were the favorite, and least favorite activities among students. Typically, students participated in CBI as part of large groups or as an entire class, rather than on an individual basis. Individual students who elected not to participate in certain field trips were expected to remain at home or went to work.

*Functional Academic Skills Training.* During the 2001-2002 school year, functional academic skills training was made available to students two days per week in community and segregated classroom settings. Typically, large group instruction was provided in the segregated classroom, while individualized “on-the spot” instruction was provided within the local community and college campus. Paraeducators, used published curriculum and teacher-made materials to teach functional academic skills, and assess student progress. Although paraeducators did not provide individualized classroom instruction, they did however, offer accommodations to meet the students needs. Few students and parents commented on the functional academic skills curriculum in Program A. However, those who did offer their views, maintained that it was often unchallenging, and repetitious of the instruction provided in high school.

*Social Skills Training.* In Program A, social skills instruction focused on teaching appropriate behaviors for the college and work settings. Although program staff used mainly classroom discussions, modeling, and role-play to teach these social skills, they also used published materials, college newspapers, newsletters, and

informational pamphlets to supplement the lessons and to address related topics such as sexual harassment, HIV, substance abuse, and domestic violence. Issues related to student sexuality and relationships were addressed on a case by case basis. Program staff agreed however, that there was a need for such instruction.

*Independent Living skills Training.* Independent living skills training (i.e., cooking, housekeeping, personal hygiene, public transportation, recreation /leisure) was available to students through a number of ways. Students were afforded the opportunity to participate in a variety of recreational and leisure activities, and practice personal hygiene skills at the community college. However, because program staff had limited access to necessary facilities, instruction on housekeeping and cooking was limited. The program teacher however, expressed an interest in developing a residential component to the program in order to address these skills.

During the 2001-2002 school year students used public transportation (as a group) on one occasion. Individualized travel training was not provided to students. In previous years program staff assisted students with obtaining their driver's licenses. Program staff reported that parents' discomfort with travel training, lack of interest on the part of students, and inaccessibility to public transportation served as barriers to travel training. A local CRP assisted students and families who expressed an interest in travel training, with accessing public transportation.

*Inclusive Opportunities.* Students who participated in Program A had numerous opportunities to have incidental contact with same-age peers without disabilities at the community college. During previous years students were also afforded opportunities for extended interactions through participation in college-

sponsored clubs and organizations, and college courses. However, during 2001-2002, aside from *E-Buddies* students were not involved in any college-sponsored organizations, and were only able to choose from two college courses selected by program staff. Program staff expressed an interest in increasing inclusive opportunities. However, they believed that limited time on-campus, course prerequisites, the unavailability of college instructors who were able to work well with students with students with disabilities served as barriers. Students, parents, and college students and course instructors held positive views of their inclusive experiences. These experiences, however, did not lead to long-term friendships with same-age peers without disabilities.

*Paid and Non-Paid Employment Experiences.* Opportunities for students to participate in both paid and unpaid work experiences were incorporated into the students' schedule. All students from Program A participated in paid employment during the 2001-2002 school year. However, most of these work experiences were enclave rather than individual placements. Although most students worked during the three days that were designated for work, there were several who worked five days per week. There was one student, who in addition to working in an enclave, participated in a non-paid work experience at a childcare center located on the college campus. Students who worked in these independent work sites received drop-in support from program staff. However, transportation was provided by the students' families.

Students in the program enjoyed getting paid. However, several current students and alumni expressed their dissatisfaction with the types of jobs that they held while in the program. Only two students offered positive comments about their jobs.

There were also parents who offered positive feedback on work experiences. Two parents however, felt that the enclaves and mobile crews operated by the local CRP offered few challenges, and not enough independence.

*Vocational Training.* In addition to work experiences, students also received direct instruction in career awareness and work-related skills. During previous years, the program teacher used career interest assessments, videos, classroom discussion, and resources available at the community college to provide students with career information, and job development skills. During the 2001-2002 school year, career awareness focused on employment opportunities that were available through local CRPs. Program staff believed that it was necessary for students to become informed on these employment opportunities because it was through local CRPs that students were going to secure future employment. Along with receiving information on employment opportunities available through local CRPs, students also received direct instruction on work-related social skills. Program staff used class discussions as well as published curricula to teach lessons on social skills that were appropriate for work settings.

*Student involvement and self-determination.* Although the program staff did not offer direct instruction on self-determination skills, during the 2001-2002 school year, program staff planned activities (e.g. tours of local CRPs, guest speakers from local CRPs, and attending the Transition Fair and IEP meetings) that promoted informed student choice-making on transition-related services. In addition, the program teacher met with individual students prior to their IEP meetings to review proposed IEP goals. Students were also encouraged to walk independently around the college campus, and use campus facilities.

Aside from these activities, students had few opportunities to make decisions regarding their educational programming. Although students were encouraged to select college courses and enclave employment work sites, their options were limited by program staff. Additionally, program staff planned community-based instructional activities, and recreational activities for the entire class, rather than individual students.

Despite their limited choices and participation in the development of their IEP's, students and alumni believed that Program A was a less restrictive setting than the high school. Parents' views on student involvement and opportunities for choice-making were mixed. A few parents expressed their dissatisfaction with the lack of individualization in the IEP's. However, there were also several parents who felt that that their young adults were more self-determined and independent as a result of their participation in Program A..

*Parental Involvement.* Efforts to involve families consisted of inviting parents to participate in the development of the students' IEPs and schedules, transition-related activities (e.g. Transition Forum, and tours of local CRPs), and social functions. While a majority of parents attended IEP meetings, they continued to have limited involvement in these transition-related activities. Most parents who participated in IEP meetings, perceived themselves as the students main advocates who had active roles in the development of the IEP. Although the program teacher reported setting up parent conferences in order to gather parent feedback on goals prior to IEP meetings, several parents reported these conferences to be unhelpful, or that they had received no additional preparation for the IEP meetings. Several parents believed that there was a

need to increase communication with program staff and other parents. However, program staff believed that students should initiate communication.

*Interagency collaboration.* Interagency collaboration existed between Program A and a number of organizations, however, there was no written documentation of these efforts. Partnerships were clearly formed with the community college and one local CRP. Primarily, the community college provided resources to support Program A. In addition, program staff developed positive rapport with various community college personnel. During 2001-2002, a local CRP supported Program A by employing most of the students in their enclaves and mobile crews. The Transition Coordinator from the local CRP also served as liaison between job coaches, program staff, and parents, and attended many program-related activities such as IEP meetings, the graduation ceremony, and recreation/leisure events

Collaboration occurred to a lesser degree, with local CRPs, Social Security, DDA, DORS, and environmental learning center. The program teacher also worked closely with personnel from the LSS including special education department chairs, and program teachers from the other three postsecondary programs.

*Program Evaluation.* Program evaluation was the one best practice that was not incorporated into Program A. Administrators from the LSS relied on the limited negative feedback from parents, and increasing popularity of the postsecondary programs as a measure of Program A's success. The program teacher conducted informal evaluations by soliciting feedback from paraeducators, and program teachers, and collecting outcome information on students who had exited from Program A. However, the data was not included in any official records or documents.

*Summary of Students', Parents', and Alumni's Perspectives*

Both students and parents expressed optimism regarding the future of students who participated in Program A. It appeared that the most important aspect of future employment was getting paid. Although all respondents reported that they wanted part- or full-time paid employment for students after graduation, few of the students, and none of the parents identified a specific career goal or employment preference. Although students reported that they wanted to work, only two students were able to describe the connection between vocational training and employment.

In addition to securing employment, students and parents held expectations that students would eventually live outside the family home. Most students reported only that they wanted to "be independent, or live on my own." A majority of parents however, envisioned specific residential settings such as supervised apartments and group homes.

Participation in personal relationships and accessing the community were the final two outcomes identified by students and parents. While parents wanted their young adults to socialize or live with friends, several reported that in the future, they wanted to get married and raise a family. Other students expressed an interest in continuing education, and learning to drive or use public transportation.

There was consensus among respondents that students would require supports to achieve the adult life they had envisioned. Among the supports identified by students and parents included help with maintaining a household, managing money, securing employment, and finding a home. While half of the parents maintained that their young adults would require travel training in order to live independently, none of the students

viewed this as a need. Also, although two students reported that in the future they would need assistance with childrearing, none of the parents identified parenthood as a future expectation for their young adults.

When students, alumni, and parents were asked questions regarding the role of Program A in helping to prepare students for the future, a majority of these respondents agreed that the program played a positive role in preparing students for the future. The program component identified by most respondents ( $n=12$ ) was work experience. There were several parents ( $n=2$ ) and students ( $n=3$ ) who believed that program staff helped by encouraging students to be more independent at the college campus and community, and by teaching students independent living skills such as travel training. Four of the alumni credited the program for facilitating the connection with local CRPs. Only three students believed that their involvement in the IEP was helping them achieve their future goals.

Findings on the postschool outcomes indicated after graduating from Program A, most students received services from CRPs and were employed. Although these alumni were employed, most worked in enclaves or mobile crews operated by a local CRP. A majority of former students also mentioned that they participated in activities within the community, were involved in personal relationships. The focus group with alumni also revealed however, independent living was one outcome that had yet to be realized by a majority of former students. All but one of these alumni reported that they continued to live at home after exiting the school system. It appeared that the two students who were unable to complete Program A had limited options. For these students, their choices were to return to the high school or drop out of public school.

## Chapter 5: Discussion

A qualitative single case-study was used to describe the characteristics of Program A, a public school-sponsored program for students with significant disabilities (SD) ages 18 to 21, and to gain insight into the perspectives of consumers. Perspectives from students with SD and their families offer a unique view on this type of educational option and contribute to the literature on transition needs for young adults. This chapter is organized around issues surrounding program development and implementation, sustainability, and evaluation; implications for future practice and research are discussed in each. Limitations of this study and contributions to the literature are also identified.

### *Issues in Program Development and Implementation*

Postsecondary opportunities for individuals with SD have existed since the 1970's (Caparosa, 1985; Corcoran, 1979; Dahms et al., 1977; Kreps & Black, 1978; Low, 1975; Snider & Roderfeld, 1979; Wood et al., 1977). These programs were typically developed for adults with SD, and focused on integrating adults with SD into the community and providing "normalized" experiences (Bilovsky & Matson, 1974; Jones & Moe, 1980). Although the normalization principle (Nirje, 1969; Wolfensberger, 1972) was the underlying philosophy behind these early interventions, there was no additional conceptual framework or empirical data to support or direct such programs. Thus, there were few guidelines or indicators that could be used to expand or replicate these efforts. Most of these programs remained largely separate from the rest of the campus and there was little documentation of the outcomes of these

programs in terms of participations' quality of life, employment, or integration into the community (Neubert et al., 2001).

Since the early 1990's there has once again been a growing interest in providing postsecondary programs and services for individuals with SD. This time the interest is in providing programs and supports for students with SD who are between ages 18 to 21, and have not exited public schools (Bishop et al. 1995; Hall et al., 2000; Moon & Inge, 2000; Neubert et al., 2002; Schuh et al., 1998; Tashie et al., 1998; Weir, 2001).

Similar to the programs from the 1970's and 1980's, these efforts have been in response to provide age appropriate and inclusive opportunities to young adults with disabilities in the community. There is a small but growing body of literature on these opportunities but we have little in depth knowledge of how these efforts were started and ultimately what students and parents think of participating in programs on postsecondary sites. In studying Program A, issues concerning program development and implementation were apparent and are discussed in terms of (a) justification for older students with SD on campus; (b) barriers to program development and implementation; (c) involving stakeholders; and (d) implementing best practices.

*Justification for serving older students with SD on campus.* Program A was developed at a local community college through the LSS's efforts to shift services for students with SD from segregated special schools to neighborhood elementary and secondary schools in the early 1990's. As the LSS moved these students in more inclusive settings, parents and teachers feared that having such students remain in high school after age 18 would lead to social isolation and sought more age-appropriate experiences. Positions papers written in the 1990's shared these views in calling for

schools to provide transition and educational opportunities in age-appropriate settings for students at age 18 (Patton et al, 1996; Smith & Puccini, 1995).

Although the philosophical principle of providing age-appropriate settings for older students with SD was the justification for the development of Program A, there were practical reasons for locating the program on a local community college. These included the campus's close proximity to high schools that served students with SD, access to employment sites, and the community college's willingness to enter into this venture. This willingness was exemplified in the 2000-2001 course catalog that included a mission statement stating the community college was committed to serve "its diverse community as a center for lifelong learning to improve the quality of life (p.6)." Moon and Inge (2000) and Noble (1990) also maintained that this traditional mission of service to the local community made community colleges a setting conducive to the development of alternative services for nontraditional student populations, such as students with SD. It should be noted that one of the program developers selected the community college because she had a "connection" with personnel at the college.

In the last several years, there have been recommendations and guidelines available to assist program developers initiate alternative programs and support services for students with SD (Grigal et al., 2002; 2001; Hall et al. 2000; Hart et al., 2001; Moon et. al., 2001; Neubert, et al., 2002). For example, Grigal et al. (in press) developed a guide for those interested in creating or expanding programs and services in postsecondary settings. The focus is on conducting a needs assessment to first determine whom the program will serve and how it will differ from services offered in

the high school. This in turn guides the development and implementation of the program.

These recommendations may help ensure that current and future programs and services provide the intended integrated, age-appropriate experiences to older students with SD. However, when the Director of Special Education and area specialist developed Program A almost a decade ago, they were presented with a daunting task of creating a new program without a model or guidelines. While it appeared they drew from research on inclusive education (e.g., Falvey et al., 1995; Lipsky & Gartner, 1997; Stainback & Stainback, 1996; Villa & Thousand, 1995; Wizner, 2000) and best practices for transition (Heal & Rusch, 1995; Hughes et al., 1997; Kohler, 1993; 1996; Kohler & Rusch, 1995; Rusch et al., 1994; Rusch & Millar, 1998; Sale et al., 1991), similar to the programs for adults with SD during the 1970's, Program A was developed without the benefit of a theoretical framework or data-based evidence.

*Barriers to program development and implementation.* Establishing innovative educational programming that does not fit into the traditional high school framework, obviously can present program developers with barriers. Gugerty (1994) found barriers that limited access to post-secondary education for individuals with SD including instructors who did not take ownership of students, poorly trained staff, unclear goals for programs or services, outdated curricula, and weak leadership. While these barriers were not clearly evident in Program A, others emerged such as, securing space on-campus, tackling logistical and administrative challenges, and using specific criteria for the selection of students for Program A. These barriers were also noted by Grigal et al.

(2001) when they interviewed teachers from 13 programs on postsecondary sites, and by Hart et al. (2001) who described an individual support approach.

For individuals who wish to start programs and services for students with SD in postsecondary sites, it is important to consider these challenges. By learning from others, it is possible to identify and resolve many of these barriers, before resources are committed and programs are implemented. This can be accomplished through conducting a needs assessment, developing an action plan, planning with interagency committee, and identifying community resources (Grigal et al., *in press*). Solutions to attitudinal barriers should also be addressed during program development. For instance, one program developer from the LSS noted that college administrators were concerned about negative responses from community college students. However, in 10 years, the interactions between students with SD and typical college students were generally positive and these concerns did not materialize.

Overcoming the organizational and attitudinal barriers that may arise when developing and implementing integrated postsecondary opportunities for older students with SD will also require school and community personnel to express a willingness to be flexible and “think outside of the box” in terms of scheduling, staff time, and resources. The LSS that operated Program A demonstrated these qualities in their alternative solutions to several issues that arose during program development and after implementation. For example, due to the limited space on-campus during the morning hours, the LSS adjusted Program A’s hours of operation from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., which were later than typical high schools. For the purposes of recording attendance and enrollment, the LSS created additional ID numbers specifically for alternative programs

such as Program A. Also, special arrangements were made for a paraeducator from Program A to stop by a local high school during the mornings, to pick up lunches for students at the college who were eligible for the free lunch program.

In addition to addressing these logistical issues, the LSS restructured the roles of program staff. In the absence of a principal and other LSS personnel on-campus, the program teacher took on more administrative duties including supervising the paraeducators, collaborating with representatives from the LSS, college, and community agencies, submitting requests for funds, ordering materials, and publishing monthly newsletters. The two paraeducators assumed responsibility for the planning and delivery of classroom instruction and, provided direct support to students in regular college courses and within the community. Program staff also supported students outside of their regular duty hours. While program staff commented positively on their jobs, they did express feelings of isolation and were overwhelmed with the added responsibilities that were the result of being the only LSS personnel on-campus. These changes in roles and responsibilities are similar to the ones reported by Hart et al. (2001) for teachers who provided individual support services.

These issues should be addressed by school system administrators during program development in the future either through policy development, creating new positions for staff, and working with families to understand the importance of changing the student's schedule to align with age-appropriate programming. According to Certo et al. (1997) restructuring students' schedules and the roles of school personnel would enable local school systems to deliver educational programming that more closely mirrors the organization of services available after graduation.

Securing resources for Program A was another key issue that was dealt with creatively by the LSS. From its inception, the LSS assumed responsibility for furnishing much of the resources to support the program including, program staff, transportation and related-services (e.g. OT, PT, speech) for students, basic office equipment, and instructional materials. These resources were partially paid for through “third-party billing,” federal monies recovered by the LSS for special education services rendered to students receiving medical assistance

The community college also supported Program A by providing access to a classroom, office space, and campus facilities, and permitting students to audit select college courses, and participate in college-sponsored activities and organizations. This partnership in which the college provided “in-kind” contributions is typical of how other postsecondary programs and services have been funded in past years (Dailey, 1982; Frank & Uditsky, 1988; Grigal et al., 2001; Low, 1975; Neubert et al., 2001; Page & Chadsey-Rusch, 1995; Panitch, 1988).

Program A was unique however, in that a local CRP agreed to employ students from the program in their enclaves and mobile crews, and contribute job coaching services, uniforms, and transportation to and from home and work. Also, students who received SSI were eligible for tuition waivers from the community college. Thus, students from Program A who enrolled in college courses, were required to pay only for fees associated with the courses. The issue of the school system paying for the costs of college was not brought up by anyone during this study, and is an area that deserves further investigation. Individuals who wish to develop alternative programs for older

students would do well to follow the example set by Program A, and look towards nontraditional sources of support.

*Involving stakeholders.* Involving various stakeholders in the development of programs and supports should be considered by establishing planning or advisory committees comprised of students, parents, and representatives from the LSS, community college, and local agencies (Dailey, 1982; Grigal et al., 2002; Moon et al., 2001; Neubert et al., 2002; Wood et al., 1977). Having these groups of stakeholders provide input during program development allows key issues such as the development of program goals and methods for evaluation, establishment of admissions process, identification of funding sources and program locations, and logistical concerns (e.g. transportation, liability, and attendance) to be better addressed (Grigal et al., in press; Moon et al., 2001).

When Program A was initially established during 1994, a formal planning committee was not employed and is not used presently. Although representatives from the community college participated in meetings to develop Program A on-campus, the Director of Special Education, area specialist, and program teacher from the LSS were solely responsible for the initial planning, development of curriculum, and selection and referral of students. Developing programs in isolation in the future will only serve to isolate the students that participate in them, and it will require the teacher and staff to spend time developing collaborative relationships while they are responsible for the students' goals and services. Employing a larger committee to address the issues related to program planning can pave the way for staff and students, and to formalize the process.

Soliciting input from stakeholders should not be limited to program development. Securing feedback from the community college or other local agencies on an on-going basis may foster relationships that maintain involvement and sustain these postsecondary opportunities for students with SD. School personnel should incorporate formal processes that would enable school systems, parents, the community college, and other local agencies to address concerns that may arise after programs and services have been implemented. This may include assigning liaisons, conducting surveys and focus groups, establishing regular conferences, and participating in IEP meetings. Although several of these methods were implemented in Program A during past years, there was indication that they were no longer effective or being put into practice, and that school personnel must again address this issue.

*Implementing best practices.* During the 1990's best practices in secondary education and transition services evolved (Benz et al., 1997; Heal & Rusch, 1995; Hughes et al., 1997; Kohler, 1996; Kohler & Rusch, 1995; Morningstar et al., 1999; Neubert, 2000; Rusch et al., 1994; Rusch & Millar, 1998; Sale et al., 1991; Thurlow & Elliott, 1998; Wehmeyer, 1998). Program A had adopted many of these best practices. For example, there was a strong emphasis on community-based instruction (CBI) in Program A. Students were afforded opportunities to participate in recreational, service learning and transition-related activities in a variety of settings in the community. One of the highlights of the school year for most students was the annual overnight camping trip. Program staff also used CBI activities as a means to practice independent living skills, and provide "on-the-spot teaching" of functional academic skills as situations arose in real life.

Program A also used the best practice of interagency collaboration. The program teacher demonstrated collaboration with representatives from the LSS, the community college, and local CRPs. These collaborative efforts resulted in many benefits to the program. For instance, a local CRP agreed to place most of the students in their work enclave sites, and donated job-coaching services. Also, the program teacher was able to secure materials and equipment from the community college without a formal written agreement. As one of the first public school-sponsored postsecondary programs for 18 to 21 year old students with SD, to be established in the State, Program A has served as a model for many subsequent programs. Although Program A implemented many best practices in transition, some no longer reflected the current state of the art practices in special education and transition service delivery.

For example, there was limited individualization and opportunities to demonstrate student choice; students were restricted in their choices of college courses, and types of employment. Students had no input the instructional and CBI activities, and were required to participate in these activities as a group. Furthermore, they had limited participation in the IEP process. Unfortunately, other students with disabilities have also reported similar experiences with limited choice and individualization (Malian & Love, 1998; Morningstar, 1997; Powers et al., 1999).

Interestingly, despite having few occasions to explore expressed interests and visions for the future, most students believed that they had “more freedom” in Program A. This supports other research that students with disabilities did not expect to make decisions, and tended to view themselves as passive participants in the development of their educational program (Gallivan-Fenlon, 1994; Lehmann et al., 1999; Powers et al,

1999). These disappointing findings highlight the need to initiate self determination instruction for students with disabilities before entering in programs and services within the community college and other postsecondary settings.

In addition to having limited opportunities to demonstrate individual choice, there was little evidence to indicate that students accessed inclusive experiences as a result of participating in Program A. Similar to postsecondary programs that have been developed for adults with SD, students received much of their academic instruction in segregated settings (Caparosa, 1985; Corcoran, 1979; Dahms et al., 1977; Kreps & Black, 1978; Low, 1975; Neubert et al., 2001; Snider & Roderfeld, 1979; Wood et al., 1977). Although all students worked in community settings, a majority were placed in enclaves and mobile crews that were comprised of only workers with disabilities. Opportunities for extended social interactions occurred primarily during the inclusive college courses. The transient nature of the community college, and the limited number of days that students were on-campus also served to decrease their access to same-age peers without disabilities. More information is needed on how to broaden school systems' and community agencies' views of these programs as truly inclusive opportunities that are individualized. Future investigations may wish to draw on the work of Hart et al. (2001) and Page and Chadsey-Rusch (1995), who incorporated individualized supports for students with SD participating in opportunities at postsecondary sites.

Individuals seeking to develop postsecondary options for older students with SD must understand that all settings will have benefits and drawbacks. When searching for age-appropriate settings, program developers must look towards their goals, and the

needs of students with SD to serve as the basis for selection. Regardless of the location of these postsecondary programs and services, these program developers must ensure that students with disabilities are afforded opportunities for inclusion and social interactions with same-age peers without disabilities. As illustrated in this case-study, locating a program on a college campus does not guarantee that integration will occur. While community colleges have many characteristics that make it ideal for serving a diverse student population, such as proximity to the community, open door policies, and lower cost, these same qualities may also limit the inclusive opportunities desired by students with SD and their parents (Grigal et al. 2002; Moon & Inge, 2000; Neubert et al., 2002). Also, because community colleges typically have smaller campuses, and do not offer housing, it may be difficult to secure space on-campus, and address independent living skills.

The choices that students must make during their high school years should directly influence their participation in a postsecondary program and ultimately outcomes. Instruction in self-determination, student-centered planning, and other skills should ideally have laid the foundation for student participation in this program. Implications for practice include the need for high school teachers to include these practices early on so that personnel in postsecondary programs can assist students achieve their goals and dreams. With limited staff, it is not feasible for teachers in postsecondary sites to accomplish all these tasks. Starting at an early age will enable students with SD to use their previous experiences and skills to develop a realistic plan for the future and to fully participate in the transition process.

Other program components that did not reflect best practices include career awareness activities and training in independent living skills. For example, students in Program A no longer received career interest inventories because program staff found the results to be unhelpful. Vocational exploration was limited to the types of employment provided by local CRP's. Also, students did not receive individualized travel training. The LSS and a local CRP provided transportation for students in the program. These limitations may have been due to the program staff's' expectation that most students would be employed by local CRPs after exiting the public school system. This belief is supported by findings that indicate after exiting Program A, a majority of students entered enclave employment with local CRPs. The program teacher expressed an interest in providing students with "hands on" instruction on cooking and maintaining a home. However, because she had no access to the appropriate facilities, instruction in these skills was limited to classroom discussions.

Individuals responsible for developing educational programming for students with SD must address the underlying disincentives to employment and independence. Program A was initiated in order to provide students with inclusive, age-appropriate experiences that would promote the attainment of positive postschool outcomes. However, issues such as limited employment opportunities available through local CRPs, and a state service system that places priority on addressing the needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities, may serve to discourage the development of independent living skills and participation in competitive employment. Rather than benefiting students, incorporating the recommended best practices such as natural supports, individual placements in competitive employment, and travel training

may result in reducing SSI and medial assistance benefits, and jeopardize eligibility for the long-term funding needed for vocational rehabilitation and support services.

If students are to achieve their desired goals of integrated employment in chosen careers, and an independent adult life, changes must occur in how individuals with disabilities are served and funded for vocational and support services. It may be necessary to differentiate curriculum and transition services for students determined eligible and ineligible for support services. Local CRP's should also play a greater role in service delivery prior to students exiting public schools. Certo et al. (1997) believed that the funding and organizational limitations of public school, vocational rehabilitation, and developmental disability systems can be surmounted, and proposed a service integration model in which these three agencies shared responsibly for delivering and funding transition services during the students' last year in public school. The collaboration between Program A and a local CRP offered an example of the different ways that public schools and service agencies can share responsibilities. However, school systems that are interested in establishing similar relationships should consider developing formal partnerships that are secured by written agreements dictating the responsibilities of each organization, and broadening services to include placing students in individual jobs within the community rather than enclave employment.

There are additional issues pertaining to best practices that warrant further discussion. First, many of the best practices in secondary special education and transition are implied rather than validated through empirical research (Green & Albright, 1995; Johnson & Rusch, 1993; Kohler, DeStefano, Wermuth, Grayson, &

McGinty, 1994). Therefore, there is a strong need to develop and research a set of indicators to dictate how to provide best practices for students with SD in postsecondary settings. While the literature in secondary education and transition services includes descriptions of a broad set of practices, no criteria have been established to judge whether certain standards have been met. Although functional academic skills instruction was provided to students in Program A, there were no guidelines to dictate which academic skills should be taught to older students with SD, and how instruction should be delivered in high school versus postsecondary settings. For example, students in Program A continued to receive remedial instruction in basic math facts (i.e. addition, subtraction, and division). Students with SD who are ages 18 to 21 however, have limited time left in their entitlement to public education. Rather than teaching basic skills, the emphasis of instruction during their last two years in public school, should be on the application of functional academics to a variety of real world settings (i.e., at work, on campus and within the community).

The development of guidelines that include indicators can serve as benchmarks to address the criticisms that many best practices are unsubstantiated. In terms of practice, it would be helpful to program teachers responsible for selecting curriculum, and planning specific postsecondary opportunities for students with SD. Without a set of indicators to illustrate which practices are effective, program staff may rely on subjective views of what individuals with disabilities need.

Also, programs and services offered on college campuses and community settings should not be a repetition of those currently available in high schools. Findings from this case-study indicate that alumni and parents expected more out of Program A

and perceived the academic instruction afforded students to be unchallenging. One alumnus pointed out, “It’s just like repeating high school all over again.” School administrators must rethink the purposes of serving students with SD on college campuses and community settings. Rather than viewing them solely as alternative, age-appropriate locations in which to provide the same programs and services that are offered in high school, programs and services located on postsecondary settings should be the next step in the transition process. While Program A and other similar programs are a step in the right direction, clearly more is needed to be done in the effort to provide instruction that offers the challenges the students and parents desire, and preparation for adult life.

### *Issues in Long-term Sustainability*

When innovative educational practices such as postsecondary programs and services for students with SD are implemented, a concern that often arises is how to sustain these programs and services on a long-term basis. Program A, which has operated for nearly a decade on the campus of a community college, offers evidence that long-term sustainability can be achieved.

Program evaluation should play an important role in providing justification for the continuation or termination of programs and services in postsecondary settings. There are however, other factors that may also impact sustainability. When Benz et al. (2000) elicited the perspectives of students who participated in the Youth Transition Program (YTP), a program for students with disabilities who required support beyond the services typically provided by the local school system, the findings illustrated that the YTP staff played key roles in helping students address educational and personal

issues, and enabling them to “stay on track.” Gugerty (1994) also found that exemplary programs shared many characteristics such as highly skilled staff who demanded high performance of themselves, their peers, and students; strong administrative support; an organizational structure that reflected extensive planning and focused on “customer service”; flexibility in staffing and the organization, and team effort.

In this case study, LSS personnel who initiated Program A identified similar factors that they believed contributed to the program’s longevity including a supportive LSS, a community college committed to serving the community, and program staff who worked effectively on a college campus without a lot of direct supervision. There was evidence to suggest that this commitment by the LSS was also key to the program’s sustainability over time. In addition to continuing to fund Program A, administrators from the LSS implemented policies that served to maintain the program at the local community college. For example, when Program A became an increasingly popular option for families and students with SD, the LSS established additional programs on a second community college campus, 4-year university, and a building shared by a local CRP, to meet the added demand for postsecondary experiences.

As more families seek age-appropriate experiences for students with SD who are between the ages of 18 to 21, there will be increased pressure on public schools to meet these students’ needs in postsecondary settings. How to serve these additional students when existing programs have limited space or resources is an issue that must be addressed by local school systems. Although replicating programs and services on 2-year and 4-year college campuses, may seem an obvious choice, similar to the LSS that initiated Program A, school personnel may wish to explore alternatives such as

community settings, or providing individual supports (Hart et al., 2001; Neubert et al., 2002; Page & Chadsey-Rusch, 1995). These options offer many benefits including better employment opportunities, easier access to office or classroom space, and more flexible schedules (Neubert et al., 2002). Also, developing services that are not located on postsecondary institutions does not prohibit these students from participating in college courses and activities in the community.

In an effort to address the on-going concern with placing “inappropriate students” (e.g. with challenging behaviors, or were medically fragile) who could jeopardize the program’s ability to remain on the college campus, the LSS developed a set of admission criteria and designated school administrators to oversee the selection and referral of potential students. School administrators must exercise caution that efforts to preserve programs and services located in community colleges and other age-appropriate settings, do not inadvertently exclude students from participation. There is a need for discussion on how to support a diverse student population in postsecondary settings. Interagency collaboration, person-centered planning, and parental and student involvement will be critical in the efforts to provide services for students with a variety of needs, on-campus and within the local community. Through careful planning, school systems may be able to develop multiple options for all students ages 18 to 21, depending on their goals, needs, and interests.

Although securing support from the LSS may facilitate the long-term sustainability of a program, it seems, so does having program staff who possess the skills needed to work in unique environments such as college campuses. There is evidence to show that the program teacher and paraeducators assigned to Program A

positively contributed to the program's longevity, and success by demonstrating qualities such as dependability, initiative, flexibility, sensitivity, and collaborative skills.

The CEC has developed professional standards for special educators, transition specialists, and paraprofessionals. However, these competencies apply only to personnel who work in high schools (Council for Exceptional Children, n.d. a; Council for Exceptional Children, n.d. b). Also, while Hart et. Al (2001) have identified the roles and responsibilities of personnel who provide students with individual supports, they did not list the skills needed by such personnel. There is a need for research to identify the skills and competencies required by teachers and paraprofessionals who serve students with disabilities in non-traditional settings. This clearly has implications for universities in terms of training secondary and transition specialists in the future, and for administrators responsible for hiring school personnel.

For postsecondary programs and services to be sustainable over time, they must remain relevant for consumers. Program A has demonstrated that almost 10 years after it was initially implemented, the program continued to meet students and families requests for a college experience. There were however, a few students and parents who indicated that they expected something more from Program A. Securing feedback from these consumers during the planning process and periodically after postsecondary programs and services are implemented, may also ensure that school systems revise goals for their programs and identify the needs of those who desire more from their postsecondary experiences than to be just on-campus. Again, these issues deserve further attention in future research.

In addition to students with SD and parents, school personnel must elicit the opinions of other stakeholders who support local school systems efforts to provide postsecondary opportunities to older students with SD. Historically, aside from affording access to college campuses, or providing services, these postsecondary intuitions and community organizations have had a limited role in these public school – sponsored postsecondary programs and services (Neubert et al., 2001). Program A has illustrated that this continues to hold true, despite the program teacher's attempts to establish an informal rapport with college personnel and promote the program. There was little evidence in this Program or in the literature, that school system administrators were actively pursuing collaborative efforts with community colleges or other postsecondary sites in a systematic manner. More research is needed to develop a better understanding of the needs of community colleges, local CRPs' and state agencies may encourage the involvement that is needed to sustain programs and services on-campus, and enhance the postsecondary opportunities for older students with SD.

#### *Issues in Program Evaluation*

Program A was shown to be sustainable on a community college campus. However, in 10 years there had only been informal attempts to document outcomes, consumer satisfaction, or whether the original intentions to provide integrated age-appropriate experiences had been achieved. Administrators from the LSS viewed the limited parental complaints, and the continued demand for Program A as indicators of the program's success.

Incorporating methods to record outcomes and evaluate program goals is often overlooked during program development and implementation. Typically, program

evaluations are conducted in response to requests or legal mandates (Thurlow & Elliott, 1998). In their review Neubert et al. (2001) found only one postsecondary program for adults with SD, which featured program evaluation. Neubert et al. (2004) also found evidence of program evaluation efforts in only two of 13 postsecondary programs for students with SD Hart et al. (2001) offered the only example of an individual supports model that employed a variety of methods to assess effectiveness of planning, adequacy of services and supports, and satisfaction with the person-centered approach. Practitioners can draw from these studies and will profit from implementation guides that incorporate evaluation activities as part of the planning and implementation process such as those proposed by Grigal et al. (in press).

Including consumers' perspectives on newly developed programs and services is vital at this point in time and deserves much more attention in terms of research and practice. Most students, alumni, and parents from Program A expressed overall satisfaction with the program. However, several were dissatisfied types of work experiences, classroom instruction, and the limited individualization and self-determination. These areas could easily be target for improvement as a result of evaluation.

Perhaps one of Program A's most noteworthy accomplishments was that a majority of students exited the school system and entered the local CRPs, without experiencing any break in services. Despite this seamless transition, many former students had yet to attain the outcomes that they had envisioned. None were enrolled in continuing or adult educations courses at the community college after exiting Program A, and a majority of the alumni continued to live at home. Several students had

employment goals that differed significantly from their enclave work experiences. Practitioners must work to incorporate person centered planning and career exploration so students can make realistic goals about their employment.

In this climate of limited educational budgets and increased accountability, documentation of a program's effectiveness is necessary for long-term sustainability, replication, and expansion. This is especially critical for local school systems that initiate alternative programs and services for students with SD ages 18 to 21, using short-term funds such as grants and federal demonstration projects (e.g. Grigal et al., 2001; Hall et al., 2000). Information on cost-benefits analysis, documentation of outcomes, and student and parent input is clearly needed and should provide justification for additional resources or staff, once grant federal funding is discontinued.

There is also a need for additional investigations that compare the experiences and outcomes of students who have received special education services in different settings such as traditional high schools, 4-year universities, community settings, and those students who have received individual supports. Only through a better understanding of these various service-delivery models can educators determine which ones provide inclusive, age-appropriate experiences and lead to positive postschool outcomes. Also missing is research documenting the views of students with SD who drop out of postsecondary programs before the age of 21. Exploring the experiences and perspectives of these students, and their reasons for their dissatisfaction may be also be useful as educators work towards improving services for older students with SD in postsecondary settings.

While there were no differences in the outcomes of students who received and did not receive SSI, comparative investigations of their outcomes may also be warranted. As state funding and vocational rehabilitation agencies increasingly employ the eligibility for SSI as indicators of disability, there may be greater variation in student outcomes in the near future. For special educators, this may impact what type of services are provided to students with SD during their last two years in public schools, and place greater emphasis on individualized planning for students.

Even without formal evaluation, Program A evolved over the years. Changes were made to program activities, based on informal feedback from paraeducators, and other program teachers. There were also changes in the selection and referral process. When Program A was first initiated, LSS personnel held meetings to inform families and promote the program. As interest in Program A grew, the LSS no longer actively recruited potential participants, and in order to meet the demands, developed three additional programs on other college campuses and community settings. The LSS also developed a set of admissions criteria for determining which students would be eligible to participate in such programs.

Program evaluations must be conducted periodically, to ensure that the practices incorporated in programs continue to reflect the state of the art in special education. Finally, findings from previous evaluations must serve as the basis for future changes to programs. Without these additional steps, administrators will be unable to verify whether the changes result in the desired improvements to programs. The challenge is to determine how school system will undertake these responsibilities and work collaboratively with other agencies to use evaluation data.

*Limitations and Contributions of the Study*

This case-study offers a “thick” description of a single program, and the experiences and perspectives of its students with SD ages 18-21 during the course of a single school year. Therefore, the findings from this case-study can not, and were not intended to be generalized to other programs and students with disabilities. Rather, this study provides information on a relatively new service delivery option in special education and the opinions of students and families involved in the experience.

When considering the findings, several limitations must be considered. First, although every attempt was made to triangulate data across multiple participants, methods, and documents, clearly absent from this case-study are the perspectives of college personnel who were involved in program development, and current administrators who could have addressed policy issues. The descriptions of program development are based solely on the recollections of the program teacher, the program planners, and documentation from the LSS.

Next, while this case study provided insight into the perspectives of students enrolled in Program A during 2001-2002, there were parents and alumni who had graduated from the program and volunteered to participate in individual interviews and focus groups. Thus, the experiences and perspectives of these participants may be unique and is not reflective of all students with disabilities and parents.

Finally, this study used the qualitative approach of a participant observer. Assuming this role allowed me to develop a rapport with school personnel, students, parents, and a representative from a local CRP, and obtain the in-depth descriptions. However, my participation in some activities may have resulted in potential “bias.” For

example, in assuming the role of job coach or paraeducator, I was able to observe students who were working or participating in activities on-campus while causing minimal disruption to the natural environment. However, in taking on this role, the program teacher or paraeducator was then left free to attend to other duties. Providing them with an additional staff person, may have changed the characteristics of certain experiences.

Despite these limitations, this case-study contributes to the literature on secondary education and transition. One of the distinctive aspects of this case-study is that it is the first attempt to look at a program from multiple perspectives. Previous research has offered only descriptions of programs or individual supports (Hall et al., 2000), or obtained information only from school personnel (Grigal et al., 2001; 2002; 2004; Moon et al., 2001; Neubert et al., 2002). This case-study also highlighted several interesting practices that have yet to be documented in the literature. One of the more unique findings was the extensive role that a local CRP played in the daily operation of Program A. Perhaps most important, students with SD, alumni, and parents were given the opportunity to voice their opinions on a postsecondary opportunity and their views on services offered by a local school system; unfortunately, these voices are often silent in research.

Although the findings from this case-study come from a single program, it is my hope that they may be useful to those interested in developing or assessing postsecondary options for older students with SD, and in some small way play a role in helping to improve transition services for students with disabilities.

## Appendix A

### Cover Letters and Consent Forms

#### *Consent Form for Participants with Knowledge of Program and Student Experiences*

#### A Public School-Sponsored Program that Serves Students Ages 18 to 21 with Significant Disabilities in a Community College Setting: A Description of Program Characteristics and Student Experiences

In signing this form, I am attesting that I am over age 18, and am consenting to participate in a case-study that is being conducted by Vanessa Redd under the advisorship of Dr. Debra Neubert, associate professor of Special Education, University of Maryland. The purposes of the research study are to describe the characteristics of the Program A and document the experiences and perspectives of the students and families.

During this study I will be asked to participate in at one or more personal interviews. During the interview(s), and I will be asked to answer questions related to one or more of the following:

- the Program A's initial development and implementation
- the components of the program (e.g. curricula, referral process)
- the students' experiences at the Program A (e.g., work, class, community)

I may also be asked to provide copies of supporting documents related to the questions addressed during the interview. (e.g. pamphlet describing the Program A, written agreement between community college and local school system).

I understand that this research study is not designed to benefit me directly, but to help the investigator learn more about postsecondary programs and the experiences of students with disabilities. In consenting to participate in the personal interview(s), I am giving permission to have my answers recorded on an audio tape. I am guaranteed anonymity in the reporting of the results. No information that is directly related to me personally will be shared with the school system or published in reports, and I will only be identified under a pseudonym. All taped interviews will be transcribed; with access to audiotapes restricted only to researchers. At the conclusion of the study, all audio tapes containing interviews will be destroyed.

I also understand that my participation in this research study is strictly voluntary, and that I may ask questions or decide to withdraw from the study at anytime without risk.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Any questions or concerns regarding this study may be addressed by contacting Vanessa Redd at (301) 948-8469 or via email at valvarez@erols.com, or Dr. Debra Neubert at (301)405-6466.

*Student Cover Letter and Consent Form*

Dear Parents/Guardians:

I am a doctoral student from the Department of Special Education at the University of Maryland, College Park. I wish to conduct a research study on the Program A as part of my doctoral dissertation. I am interested in learning more about the characteristics of a public school-sponsored postsecondary program for students with disabilities, ages 18 to 21, and the experiences and perspectives of the students and families. This information may be helpful to educators who wish to improve existing programs or developing similar programs in other settings.

I am asking students currently enrolled in the Program A to participate in this research study. I have recently visited the classroom and given a presentation to the students. The purpose of this presentation was to describe the study and give students an opportunity to ask questions, and address any of their concerns. To ensure that both students and families understand and are comfortable with the student's role in this study, I have asked students to review this form with you.

Please take a few minutes to read the enclosed consent form and discuss the information with your son or daughter. If you and your son and daughter agree that he or she may participate in this study, please complete and return the consent form in the self-

addressed stamped envelop also enclosed with this letter. If you have any further questions or concerns regarding this study please contact me at (301)948-8469 or via email at valvarez@erols.com. You may also contact my advisor Dr. Debra Neubert at (301)405-6466.

Thank you for your time and interest in this research project.

Sincerely,

Vanessa Alvarez Redd

A Public School-Sponsored Program that Serves Students Ages 18 to 21 with  
Significant Disabilities in a Community College Setting: A Description of Program  
Characteristics and Student Experiences

In signing this form, I am stating that I am a student in the Program A who is over age 18, and am agreeing to participate in a case-study being conducted by Vanessa Redd, a doctoral student under the advisorship of Dr. Debra Neubert, associate professor of Special Education, University of Maryland, College Park. The purposes of this research study are to describe a public school-sponsored program for students with significant disabilities ages 18 to 21 located in a community college setting, and to get a better understanding of the experiences and views of the students and families.

As part of this study:

- I am giving Ms Redd permission to observe my tasks and interactions with others in class, at work, and while I am participating in program-related activities on campus and in the community, several times during the school year. Also, while I am being observed, I may be asked questions about my experiences in these activities.
- I am giving permission for Ms. Redd to receive copies of my IEP and other school records; so that Ms. Redd may get information about my goals and objectives and other school experiences
- I am giving Ms. Redd permission to talk with my teachers, employers, friends at the college, and parents about my experiences in the Program A.

- I will be asked to be a member of a focus group with 3 to 5 other students from the Program A. During the focus group, I will be asked to answer questions and talk about my experiences in the program. My answers will be recorded on audio tape.

I understand that this study will not benefit me directly, but is designed to give Ms. Redd more information about the program and the experiences of the students and families. In agreeing to participate in the study, my real name **will not** be used in the study, nor will personal information be provided to the school or published in reports. All taped interviews will be transcribed; with access to tapes limited only to Ms. Redd and other researchers. When the study is finished all taped interviews will be erased. I understand that I am **volunteering** to participate, and that I am not required to answer any questions that make me uncomfortable. Also, I can quit participating in the study at anytime, and I **will not** get in trouble or be punished in any way.

Student's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

In signing this form, I the parent/guardian of this student, affirm that I have also read this consent form, understand my son/daughter's role in this study, and give him/her permission to participate in the study. Parent or Guardian's

Signature\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_

Please contact Vanessa Redd at (301) 948-8469 or valvarez@erols.com, or Dr. Debra Neubert at (301)405-6466, for any questions or concerns related to this study.

*Parent Cover letter and Consent Form for Focus Group*

Dear Parents/Guardians:

As you know, I am a doctoral student from the Department of Special Education at the University of Maryland, College Park who is currently conducting a research study on the Program A as part of my doctoral dissertation. I am conducting this study in order to learn more about the characteristics of a public school-sponsored postsecondary program for students with disabilities, ages 18 to 21, and the experiences and perspectives of the students and families.

Therefore, I am asking you to participate in a focus group discussion being held on \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_. Sharing your opinions and experiences may help me and other educators get a better understanding of what is important to parents and students who participate in postsecondary programs for students with disabilities, ages 18 to 21. Such information is valuable if we are to develop innovative programs and services that will truly meet families' and students' needs.

Please take a few minutes to read the enclosed consent form. If you agree to participate in a focus group discussion, please complete the information and return the consent form in the self-addressed stamped envelop also enclosed with this letter. If you have any further questions or concerns regarding this study please contact me at

(301)948-8469 or via email at valvarez@erols.com. You may also contact my advisor Dr. Debra Neubert at (301)405-6466.

Thank you for your time and interest in this research project.

Sincerely,

Vanessa Alvarez Redd

A Public School-Sponsored Program that Serves Students Ages 18 to 21 with  
Significant Disabilities in a Community College Setting: A Description of Program  
Characteristics and Student Experiences

I am attesting that I am over age 18, am a parent or guardian of a student enrolled in the Program A, and am agreeing to participate in a focus group discussion that is part of a larger case-study being conducted by Vanessa Redd a doctoral student under the advisorship of Dr. Debra Neubert, associate professor of Special Education, University of Maryland, College Park.

The purposes of the study are to describe the characteristics of a public school-sponsored program for students with significant disabilities ages 18 to 21 located in a community college setting and explore the experiences and perspectives of the students and families.

I understand that I am being asked to participate in a focus group discussion with 5-9 other parents/guardians, scheduled to take place at \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_. During the discussion, I will be asked to answer questions and discuss my son/daughter's experiences in the Program A.

In consenting to participate in the personal interview(s), I am giving permission to have my answers recorded on an audio tape. I am guaranteed anonymity in the reporting of the results. No information that is directly related to me personally will be

shared with the school system or published in reports, and I will only be identified under a pseudonym. All taped interviews will be transcribed; with access to audiotapes restricted only to researchers. All information shared during the focus group discussions will be confidential. No information related to me personally will be shared with the school system or published in reports. At the conclusion of the study, all audio tapes containing interviews will be destroyed.

I understand that this study is not designed to benefit me personally, but to provide the investigator with information about the Program A and the experiences of students and families. My participation in this focus group is strictly voluntary. I am not obligated to answer any questions that make me feel uncomfortable, and I may participate in the discussion only when I wish to do so. Furthermore, I may withdraw from the study at anytime without penalty.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Any questions or concerns regarding this study may be addressed by contacting Vanessa Redd at (301) 948-8469 or via email at valvarez@erols.com, or Dr. Debra Neubert at (301)405-6466.

Appendix B  
Individual Interview Guides

*Interview Guide: Program Development/ General Characteristics*

Date\_\_\_\_\_ Location of Interview\_\_\_\_\_

Interviewee\_\_\_\_\_ Title:\_\_\_\_\_

Contact Info:\_\_\_\_\_

Time: Start\_\_\_\_\_ End\_\_\_\_\_ Interview Number\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Initial Interest in Program**

**Program Development**

When did the program start?

What were the reasons for the initial interest in the development of this program?

Please describe how this program developed? (Explain process)

What kinds of things did you come across that facilitated the development of this program?

Probe: attitudinal, organizational)

What kinds of barriers did you come across that made it difficult to develop this program?

Probe: attitudinal, organizational

### Program Planners

Who was involved in program development?

**Probe:** Were there any specific individuals or group of individuals who made a significant impact on the development of this program? (e.g. administrators, college, parents, students, teachers, outside agencies)

What were your/their roles? (program developers)

### Long-term Sustainability

Why do you think this program has been able to be sustained over the long-term? (8 years)

What would it take to ensure that this program can be continued over the long-term?

What are some of the barriers that would make it difficult to sustain this program?

### Evaluation

How do you evaluate the program?

Are program evaluations conducted? If so, please describe them.

Do you conduct follow-up on graduates of the program? If so, how?

**Probe:** survey, interviews, Ask for data- if collected

### Population Served

What population of students is the program designed to serve? How was this determined?

Are there specific criteria for selecting potential students for the program?

Can you describe the process for referring and selecting students to participate?

How are students and families informed about this program?

How many students can be served at any one time?

What happens when there are more students than there are spaces available in the program?

### Location of Program

Please describe the programs current location?

**Probe:** location on campus, classroom/ office, access to facilities and resources

### Current Responsibilities

How did you initially get involved with the program?

Do you have any current responsibilities related to the program? If so, please describe.

Are there any other individuals or organizations that have any responsibilities related to the program? If so please describe their roles.

**Probe:** School Personnel (e.g. teacher, instructional assistants, school administrators, school psychologist, OT, PT, guidance counselor, high school teacher, nurse, transition facilitator), College personnel (e.g., administrators, instructors), Employers, Community agencies (e.g. DDA, DORS, CRPs, social services)

Can you describe the type of collaboration occurs between the program and specific personnel or organizations? If so how?

**Probe:** e.g., between teachers/ instructors, LSS and college, adult service agency

Is there a written agreement between any of the organizations or individuals involved?

**Probe:** e.g., LSS & College, LSS & CRPs

### Resources

How is the program/students funded?

**Probe:** Does cost-sharing occur or LSS only

What resources do you provide?

**Probe:** e.g., materials, money, classroom, access to facilities, jobs, transportation, etc.

Additional Comments

Is there anything about the program's development and general characteristics that we haven't cover and should be addressed?

Additional Informants

Do you know of anyone else who may have information about the program?

Contact information:

Supplemental Documents

*Interview Guide: Program Components*

Interviewee \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Info: \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Location of Interview \_\_\_\_\_

Interview Number \_\_\_\_\_ Time: start \_\_\_\_\_ end \_\_\_\_\_

**Program staff**

Teachers       Instructional Assistants

Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Students Served**

How many students are you serving this year? \_\_\_\_\_

What types of disabilities do they have?

### **Program Schedule**

Which academic calendar do you follow? Describe your yearly calendar.

Probe: LSS or community college schedule, Staff and students first/last day of school

What do you do about holidays,  $\frac{1}{2}$  days, delayed openings?

What are the program's hours of operation?

Describe a typical weekly schedule

Probe: How is this schedule determined?

## **Program Components**

### **Functional Academics**

1. Which functional academic skills do you address?

**Probe:** e.g., math, reading, writing

2. How do you teach these skills?

Describe the materials & curriculums used.

### **Career Awareness/ Vocational Training**

1. What types of career awareness/ exploration do you do?

Describe activities, curriculum used.

2. Do students participate in jobs within the community? Paid/ or unpaid?

Describe the different types of jobs.

3. Who is responsible for job development?

Describe the process of job development and placement.

4. Who is responsible for providing initial training and follow-up?

5. How are students involved in job development?

6. Do the students keep their jobs when they exit the program?

### **Daily/ Independent Living Skills**

1. Which independent/ daily living skills do you address?

**Probe:** e.g., meal planning/ cooking, house keeping, laundry

2. How do you teach these skills?

Describe the materials & curriculums used.

### **Travel Training**

1. How do students travel to and from the program? Within the community?

Who pays for transportation e.g., bus fare?

2. Are students travel trained? If so, who provides travel training?

### **Self Determination/ Student Involvement**

1. Do you address self-determination or self advocacy? If so, how?

Describe curriculum & materials used.

2. Are students involved in the development of their IEP goals? If so how?

3. Do students participate in their IEP meetings? If so, describe their participation?

**Probe:** attend meeting, student-directed, provide input on strength/needs, etc.

### **Social/ Personal Skills**

1. How do you teach social and personal skills?

Describe curriculum & materials.

2. Do you address issues related to the following: If so, how?

- sexuality, personal relationships
- sexual harassment
- personal safety
- substance abuse

### **Linkages with Adult Services**

1. How are students linked with CRPs? Describe process.

2. How are students and families informed about the various agencies?

3. Who is responsible for establishing these linkages?

**Probe:** e.g., teacher, transition facilitator, parents

**Inclusion/ Integration**

1. Do students have opportunities to interact with same-age peers without disabilities?

If so, how often and what types of activities?

2. How are students supported in their inclusive activities or classes?

Probe: DSS, natural supports, accommodations, staff supports

3. How are you promoting inclusive opportunities for students?

4. Do you think that their present level of interaction with same-age peers is sufficient?

If not, do you have any additional plans for increasing the students' opportunities for inclusion? Describe plans.

**Family Involvement**

1. Describe family involvement in the program.

2. Are families involved in the development of IEP goals? IEP meetings? If so, how?

3. How are you promoting the families' involvement in the students' program?

5. Do you think that their present level of involvement is sufficient? If not, do you have any additional plans for increasing their involvement? Describe your plans.

## **Student Assessments**

What types of assessments do you use?

**Probe:** formal-educational & psychological evaluation, adaptive behavior scales, informal assessments- interest inventories, interviews, observation, checklists, evaluation forms, etc.

How often is the student assessed?

How is this assessment information used?

## **Conclusion**

Is there anything else about the program's components that you would like to talk about, that haven't already been covered?

## **Supplemental Documents**

*College Instructor Interview Guide*

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Location of Interview \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewee \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Info: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: Start \_\_\_\_\_ End \_\_\_\_\_ Interview Number \_\_\_\_\_

1. How did you initially get involved with [Program A]?
  
2. Do you have any current responsibilities related to the program? If so, please describe.
  
3. Do you collaborate with the personnel/staff of the program? If so, can you describe the types of collaboration that has occurred?
  
4. Is there any written agreement between you/the instructor and [Program A]?
  
5. Can you please describe your college course?

Probe: activities, course requirements, schedule, number of students enrolled

6. Are the students with disabilities (from program) expected to meet the same requirements as the regular college students?

7. What types of accommodations are provided to the students with disabilities?
8. What were your initial feelings toward having these students with disabilities enrolled in your class? Have they changed?
9. How have the other college students reacted to having these students with disabilities in their class?
10. Are there opportunities in class, for students with disabilities to interact with their nondisabled peers?
11. Do interactions occur in class, between the students with disabilities and their nondisabled peers? If so, can you describe the types of interactions that occur between these students?
12. Is there anything else about your experiences with students with disabilities that we have not covered and should be discussed?

*College Student Interview Guide*

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Location of Interview: \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewee: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Information: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_ End: \_\_\_\_\_ Interview Number: \_\_\_\_\_

One of the things that I am interested in understanding is the types of experiences that students with disabilities have on college campuses. Specifically, I am interested in their experiences with typical college students. One of the reasons that you were selected to participate in an interview is that I have observed you interacting with the students in the class.

1. Please state your name, age, and how long you have been at the community college.
  
2. What kinds of experiences have you had with people with disabilities in the past?

3. What were your initial feelings towards taking a college course with students with disabilities?
4. Now that you have been in the same class for an entire semester, have your feelings changed? If so, how?
5. Can you tell me why you initially decided to associate with the students with disabilities?
6. Can you describe the types of interactions that you have had in class with students with disabilities?
7. Are your interactions with students with disabilities different from how you interact with the other college students in class? How are they different?
8. How do you perceive your role when you interact with the students with disabilities?
9. Do you have any contact with the students with disabilities outside of class?
10. Is there anything else about your experiences with students with disabilities that you would like to share?

*Parent Interview Guide*

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Time Start: \_\_\_\_\_

Stop: \_\_\_\_\_

**Opening Question/Statement**

Please tell us your name, your son or daughter's name, and when he or she first started in the program, expected year he/she will graduate.

**Probe:** started last year 00-01, this year 01-02

**Decision to Attend**

1. Think back to when your son or daughter was in high school. How did you learn/find out about the program? Tell us about it.
2. What were your reason(s) for deciding that your son or daughter should participate in this program?
3. Please describe the process order for your son/daughter to be in the program?

**Probe:** describe the steps/process for getting into program; who was involved in the decision-making, application, visit, talk with son/daughter & teachers

### **Student Experiences within Program**

1. Can you describe some of the experiences that your son/daughter has had while participating in the program? **Probe:** Give examples of things your son or daughter has done /learned in relation to the program? Give examples: community-based trips, classroom instruction, campus activities, etc.)
  
2. Who decided that your son or daughter should have these types of experiences? Did you have any input in the decision making?
  
3. Of all the experiences that your son/daughter has had while in the program, which one do you like the most? What are your reason(s) for choosing this experience?
  
4. Of all the experiences that your son/daughter has had while in the program, which one of these experiences did you like the least? What are your reason(s) for choosing this experience?

### **Preparation for Adult Living**

1. How do you envision your son or daughter's life after he/she leaves the program?

**Probe:** work/employment, living arrangements/lifestyle, postsecondary education, continuing & adult education, community participation.

2. Do you think your son or daughter will need any help/ assistance in order to have this lifestyle? If so, what types of things will he or she need help with?

**Probe:** vocational training, adult services, travel training, independent living

3. Which experiences at the Program A are helping/has helped your son or daughter get ready for the future?

4. Does your son or daughter participate in the IEP meeting? If so, describe how he or she participates.

5. Does anyone help your son or daughter prepare for the IEP meeting? If so, describe how?

6. Are you involved in the IEP meeting? If so, how?

7. Does anyone help you prepare for the IEP meeting? If so, describe how?

**Outcomes**

1. For the parents of students who are exiting the program, can you please describe what your son/daughter will be doing when she/he exits the program?
2. What types of services, if any will they be receiving?

**Perspectives on Program**

1. How do you feel about your child participating in the program?
2. What are the benefits of having your son/daughter participate in the program?
3. What are the limitations of the program?
4. If you were in charge, is there anything you would do differently or change about the program?

**Closing Question/ Statement**

Does anyone have anything else they would like to share about their child's experiences with the program?

## Appendix C

### On-Campus Outreach Survey Data for Program A

Name of Program: Program A (also part of the LSS Outreach Program)

Local School System:

Program Site: Community College

Site address: Program A

Contact Person(s) & Title: Program Teacher, Coordinator

Phone:

Fax:

Email:

Program Start Date: September, 1994

Years in Operation: 6

Description of Setting:

Program is located in a community college setting, in the Social Science and Human Development building.

Access to:  phone,  Xerox,  computer,  fax  mail system

Actual location on Campus: (building/near depts.) Program is located in a community college setting, in the Social Science and Human Development building. Near the campus center which houses the bookstore and cafeteria.

Comments on location: They have had access to one classroom in the afternoons for last six years. They have access to other classes by arrangement. On Monday, Wednesday, and Friday they are signed up for the computer room. But they don't always use it. They have one designated office which houses 3 computers, a copier, a fax and a refrigerator and files. Confidential files are kept at sending schools.

Program Teacher has mailbox at college and a home school (High School) and gets email through the college-county pays for Internet access. Attendance used to be a problem; they would have to call it in every week. Now they put on report card- they now monitor their own attendance. The issue of free and reduced lunch is dealt with by assistants, who pick up lunches from school for some students if they have the right to it. Refrigerating medication has not been an issue.

Program staff includes:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Special Ed teachers from LSS	How Many?	1
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Instructional Assistants from LSS	How many?	2

1 IA is certified in social studies, the other has some college background

No College Campus Staff: Community college staff is available on consulting basis, They use AV personnel

No University Staff/College Interns/Students from campus:

No Interns from college –have described program in Intro t sec. ed. Classes. They have a Best Buddies program –trying to “rekindle”-they are trying to hook up with international club on campus (hope to have a peer buddy type thing). Have money from Student Activities for Best Buddies. They are listed in student activities book as a club (so they have a little money). It’s hard to get going on 2-yr campus because students come and go, have jobs.

Other: Don’t have nurse- student needs to be independent, if on medication, the student must handle it (this issue is handled in IEP meeting). It’s becoming an issue- new guidelines say can’t come to this program if need one on one- part of eligibility for this program.

Is there a written agreement regarding liability?  Yes       No

Need to get from the county.

#### FUNDING SOURCES

program is funded fully by the LSS

program is funded jointly by LSS and college

The college contributes the following monies/personnel/resources:

Classroom space

Access to phones

Access to facilities:

personnel:

Community College gave access to phone, desk, classroom in afternoon, desks from the onset. LSS provides computers, file cabinet but had to fight for money from LSS in the beginning. Currently Don't use substitutes at all – staff is very close and works well together. Students do not pay any application fee to college and LSS provides transportation. If take college class and are on SSI their tuition is waived – but pay admission fee (\$28). If not on SSI, choose to pay for campus course (\$60 a credit) most is one credit. To get the waiver for tuition student must fill out a document that Program Teacher or counseling gives them – take to social security administration bldg. nearby and they get documentation. It's possible she could use credit card to pay but doesn't want to do that

Does cost sharing occur?  Y  N If so, how?

Cost for facilities, resources and access is waived. There are four programs in LSS now – Program Teacher hopes budget will be better with recognition of "formal" programs. Program Teacher has a credit card for books, copying, TV, video

Number of Students served in 1998-99:

14 students this year started with 17 (one went to other postsecondary program), one works fulltime, other 2 dropped out (one babysitting, one to live with boyfriend).

Started with six in 1994-95 with no assistant

#### Age Range:

This is two-year program NOW-they have new guidelines. It is supposed to be the last two years of their program, so most are 19, a few have been here for 3 or 4 years. LSS is looking at other options for students (she like s2 yr. program). The problem is what to do after 4yr. of high school, then what for a year, her program for 2 years. She's seen regression if students stay in program for more than 2 years (students get comfortable).

#### Types of Disability: MR/LD

#### Criteria used for Selection Process:

- Students are 19 years old (DOB before September 1) and exit in May of the year that they turn 21
- Students receiving certificate
- Students transition from high school life skills program and IEP contains IMAP goals
- Student demonstrate a level of independence in HS and on work sites and function without 1:1 supervision
- Students have satisfactory school attendance and exhibit satisfactory behavior

## REFERRAL PROCESS

Referrals are made by: (please check all that apply)

students and their families are referred to program by Work study teacher

students and families receive information about program at Info sessions

students and families are referred to program through IEP meetings

students and families receive a program brochure from many sources

students and families find the program through word of mouth

Is there a waiting list? No Estimated number on waiting list: 0

## DESCRIBE THE REFERRAL PROCESS:

They had open houses, information sessions for parents, she went into high school and talked with a group of families. Now she had rapid increase of students, not much need for PR-actually more stringent guidelines. In the past, had dept chairs ask to come to IEP meetings. Now have to go through area coordinator-from administration-to chairs, if you have a student interested in Program A, contact your area coordinator-then she would get invited to IEP meeting. This year she sat down with 2 chairs, area coordinator and went through a list of students. If a student has medical issues or needs a one on one problem very difficult to get into program. If problems with behavior, it is VERY difficult to have them in classrooms at the college. Campus is accessible but there are problems-students who use wheelchairs and scooters coming soon.

Program A has open house for families-students take lots of responsibility for running this. This year Program Teacher wants to do an appreciation luncheon for staff on

campus and the Student activity coordinator has agreed to help. Families and students are welcome-now will limit to those admitted to the program

#### NEW STUDENT PROTOCOL

Describe the process through which an incoming student's program is determined:

At open house Program Teacher talks to families about transportation issue, first day orientation with new and old students (breakfast), rules and regulations, packet goes home. There is a sheet with all information that needs to be filled out at IEP meetings- likes to have this before student comes (she wants IEP, educational assessments).

Parents and students sign copy of rules. No one has ever left program-one student went back to high school- didn't like program.

What are the incoming assessment tools used?

Informal assessments are used (math problems) along with Educational assessment, and IEPs (on IEP is summary of educational assessment). Beginning of the year packet has interest inventory, etc. Also, Program Teacher and staff talk to teacher, family and student. Most of the verbal information is passed on to her-some students come with resumes.

Are family members involved? X Y    N

If so, how? Program Teacher talks to parents about transportation, sends home beginning of the year packet. Parent must sign rules.

Please describe on-going assessment tools used: (type, when used, by whom, how often)

Person-centered planning

Interest Inventories

Ongoing observation in community and in class (we have forms)

Informal interviews with student

Informal interviews with families

other: mostly teacher made materials, much of the assessments are not written, but verbal.

## COMPONENTS OF THE PROGRAM

(please check all that apply)

functional academic

- Use the Syracuse curriculum

\_X\_ job development

- Transition facilitator finds some of the jobs
- Done on Tuesday & Thursday

\_X\_ self-determination or self-advocacy skills

- Use Wehmeyer curriculum
- Role play in classroom

\_X\_ career awareness or exploration

- Students use career center
- Have guest speakers come in

\_X\_ recreation/fitness

- Students walk on track after computer lab
- Students do aqua fitness, circuit training
- Bowling and movies

\_X\_ job follow-up or follow-along

- Program Teacher and IA do all

\_X\_ travel training

- Use MTA and school bus
- Reserve bus to go to mall

- Only group that takes school bus to work is school for the blind or LOCAL CRP vans- otherwise jobs close to home (walk bike, parents)

X link with adult service providers

- LOCAL CRP has picked up 2 students in last year- working 2 days a week, job coaching and transportation (ages, 20, 21)
- They visit local CRP's-parents always welcome
- Come in and talk about their organization, services provided
- Go to Transition Fairs

X paid jobs in community

- Several students vol. at school for the blind-has a nurse at School for the Blind (one in wheelchair, one is first year)
- Food service, mail room, teacher asst., vocational training opportunities

X independent living/daily living skills

- Work on social skills, job skills

X sexuality, sexual harassment

- Use circles curriculum
- Distribute pamphlets

X students participate in their IEP meetings

- She sends goals home before IEP meeting
- Some attend some don't
- Students participate with Program Teacher before hand-don't do student directed IEP meetings- she seemed unsure
- IEP meetings are held at school-often at work or on campus

X unpaid internships in community

- One student volunteers at School for the Blind

X social/personal skills

Describe the community-based vocational training and employment component of your program: (attach weekly schedule)

- M.W.F Students come 9:35 – 10 am
- Go to computer lab by 10 am (some come late)
- Students do not go home school first
- Buses come from 4-5 in afternoon
- Students use MTA, school bus, for off campus activities
- Mall is close to campus, students went downtown on school bus
- Go bowling, museums, and malls

Have there been any changes in the policies or attitudes of the college staff or administration toward your program or students since the program began?

X Yes      \_\_\_ No

If so, please describe:

At first everyone was tentative, students were less mature, students are blending in better-her staff is young (blend in well)

With whom do you collaborate from your LSS?

How often?

(yearly, monthly, weekly, daily)

Special Ed Teachers (work study) from sending schools

Reg Ed Teachers

School Psychologist do revaluations

Guidance Counselors

Principals funding

Transition Specialists

Other(s):

Some teachers visit this program. Program Teacher has some involvement with IMAP (meeting), but doesn't attend faculty meetings. Some collaboration with regular ed teachers from sending schools- art teacher expressed interest in coming to campus.

School psychologist will do all students' evaluation on campus. No one gets OT or speech therapy. There is no collaboration with guidance counselors. Program Teacher speaks with principals mainly to get money. The Area specialist is Program Teacher's main contact with LSS, she also works with the transition facilitator (one for her area) and the Director of Special Ed.

What LSS activities do you collaborate on?  IEP meetings  referrals

family support  funding  transportation

Other(s): The four LSS outreach programs do their graduation together. They also are now meeting regularly. This program will visit other postsecondary program to do a college activity picnic. There is a camping weekend-for all program participants and have plans to do an alumni weekend. Would like to start scholarship fund.

Who do you report to at your LSS?

Area Coordinator of Special Education and Director of Special Education

Interagency Collaboration occurs with:	How Often?	Activities
Include?		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DDA		transition night, student interviews
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> local adult service providers		transition night, student interviews
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DORS		
<input type="checkbox"/> social service personnel		as needed
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> employers		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> staff/faculty from the college campus		talk to teachers before students
attend class		

Other: Office of special education services (DSS) on campus to get students help with basic math review

Lead Person Involved at the College: (name) -doesn't know title (Dean?). She was involved from the beginning (she was an education professor\_

#### FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

Families are contacted: as needed by phone

Is family input regarding the student's program sought annually? X Y    N

If so, How? IEP meetings and informal contacts. Parents also welcome at open house and orientation.

## INCLUSION

Students interact with same age peers without disabilities in the following activities:

- Instructional assistant goes to water aerobics; one goes to lift weights
- They usually talk with professors/instructors before student goes
- There is DSS- office of special services. One student took basic math review (needed documentation)
- Students have been mostly in PE courses, some art, stagecraft, and one math review
- Keyboarding would be nice but it is in evening, can audit some classes
- Students also do service learning hours by volunteering. They go to environmental learning center. They work (rake, sweep trail, plant, mulches, student in wheelchair does paper work). Students go through fall on Fridays (3 hours- eat lunch there) and go again in April and May.

Please list any plans you have for increasing the inclusive practices of this program:

Program Teacher plans to resurrect Best Buddies on campus and student will join international club. Would also like to have access to the dorms

## PROGRAM EVALUATION

Major goals or objectives of your program?              Employment and socialization

Program evaluation activities include:

They have newsletter which goes to students and to alumni in which they update what graduates are doing. All follow up activities are informal. The alumni go camping with group, and will be included in the picnic. There are no formal measures of student, parent or employer satisfaction

Other:

## TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE NEEDS

What are the greatest challenges/ barriers for this program?

- Student dependency on parents is an issue-need to increase expectations of independence
- Residential component would be nice-self advocacy is greatly needed

What aspects of your program or services need development or expansion?

- More space for program
- Training for parents- independence, have you planned for the future?
- More activities to bring alumni, families, students together

What type of technical assistance or training would you like to receive in regards to future development or expansion?

- Parent training component
- Staff-technology
- Employer partnerships

What advice or “tips” would you have for personnel from other LSS who are considering starting a postsecondary program for students ages 18-21?     NONE

Do you have any students who have recently been determined ineligible for SSI? NO

Would you be interested in having your program listed on our Web page? YES

Would you like to be linked so that people can contact you? If so, how (email or phone)  
EMAIL OR PHONE

Would you be willing to share your experience at a local conference? Would your  
students be interested in participating or presenting?         YES

## Appendix D

### Student & Alumni Focus Groups: Interview Guide

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Time Start: \_\_\_\_\_ Stop: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Materials needed:

- List of student experiences / program components (based on data)
- Large sheets of paper
- Markers
- masking tape
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

#### Opening Question/Statement

Please tell us your name, age, when you first started in the program, and when you expect to graduate. **For alumni:** year that you graduated.

**Probe:** started last year 00-01, this year 01-02, graduated in 1999

**Decision to Attend**

1. Think back to when you were in high school, before you got here. Do you remember how you learned about the program? Tell us about it.
2. Why did you decide to come to this program?
3. Who helped you make the decision to come to the program?
4. What did you have to do to get into the program?

**Probe:** describe the steps/process for getting into program; e.g., who was involved, application, visit, talk with parents & teachers

**Student Experiences within Program**

**Refer to the list and student responses for the following questions:**

1. Think about the experiences that you have had while in this program. Tell us about them. (**Note: Write responses on flip chart**)

**Probe:** Describe your experiences on campus. Describe your experiences in the community. Give examples of things are you doing/learning?

2. Here's a list of additional experiences that some of you had previously mentioned.

Have you had any other experiences that are not on these lists, and should be included?

**(Note: Show list of experiences & verbally review student responses and list)**

3. Are there things on these lists that you have not experienced, and should be removed?
4. In order to have these experiences, did you need any help? Please describe the type of help that you needed.

**Probe:** Did you need any help to learn or do these things?

5. If you could only have one, which one of these experiences did you like the most?

Why?

6. If you had to pick just one, which one of these experiences is your least favorite?

Why?

### **Preparation for Adult Living/Outcomes**

1. Think about your life after leaving the program?

**For alumni:** Can you describe what your life is like now?

**Probe:** work/employment, living arrangements/lifestyle, postsecondary education, continuing & adult education, community participation.

2. Do you think you will need/ needed any help once you leave/left the program in order to have this lifestyle?

3. What types of things will/did you need help with?

**Probe:** vocational training, adult services

4. Which experiences at the program are helping/helped you get ready for adult life?

5. Does/Did anyone you prepare for the IEP meeting? If so, describe how?

6. Describe what you do during your IEP meeting.

### **Student Satisfaction**

1. How does/did being in the program make you feel?

2. Is/Did the Program A meeting/meet your needs? How?

**Probe:** outcome areas- work, independent living, adult services, postsecondary/continuing ed., community participation

3. What do/did you like about best about the program?
4. If you were in charge, is there anything you would do differently or change about the program? Why would you change this/these?

**Closing Question/ Statement**

Does anyone have anything else they would like to say about their experiences with the program?

**Appendix E**  
**Document Summary Form**

Site:\_\_\_\_\_

Date:\_\_\_\_\_

Document No.\_\_\_\_\_

Date received/ picked up:\_\_\_\_\_

1. Name/ Description of document:
2. Event or Contact document is associated with:
3. Summary of document content:
4. Significance of document:

## Appendix F

### Categories and Subcategories of Codes

Q.S.R. NUD.IST Power version, revision 4.0.

PROJECT: Project A

- (1) /Program Development and Implementation
  - (1 1) /Program Development and Implementation/Rationale
    - (1 1 1) /Program Development and Implementation/Rationale/Normalized setting
    - (1 1 2) /Program Development and Implementation/Rationale/Practical reasons
    - (1 1 3) /Program Development and Implementation/Rationale/Current Need
  - (1 2) /Program Development and Implementation/Resources
    - (1 2 1) /Program Development and Implementation/Resources/Community College
    - (1 2 2) /Program Development and Implementation/Resources/LSS
    - (1 2 3) /Program Development and Implementation/Resources/Local CRP
    - (1 2 4) /Program Development and Implementation/Resources/Families Students and Others

- (1 3) /Program Development and Implementation/Staffing Decisions
  - (1 3 1) /Program Development and Implementation/Staffing Decisions/College
  - (1 3 2) /Program Development and Implementation/Staffing Decisions/Transition Coordinator
  - (1 3 3) /Program Development and Implementation/Staffing Decisions/LSS
    - (1 3 3 1) /Program Development and Implementation/Staffing Decisions/LSS/Paraeducators
    - (1 3 3 2) /Program Development and Implementation/Staffing Decisions/LSS/Program Teacher
    - (1 3 3 3) /Program Development and Implementation/Staffing Decisions/LSS/Administrators
    - (1 3 3 4) /Program Development and Implementation/Staffing Decisions/LSS/Other
  - (1 4) /Program Development and Implementation/Admissions into Program
    - (1 4 1) /Program Development and Implementation/Admissions into Program/Informing Families
    - (1 4 2) /Program Development and Implementation/Admissions into Program/Selection Referral
    - (1 4 3) /Program Development and Implementation/Admissions into Program/Admissions Criteria
  - (1 5) /Program Development and Implementation/Facilitate Initial Development and Sustainability
    - (1 5 1) /Program Development and Implementation/Facilitate Initial Development and Sustainability/Supportive LSS
    - (1 5 2) /Program Development and Implementation/Facilitate Initial Development and Sustainability/Willing Community College
    - (1 5 3) /Program Development and Implementation/Facilitate Initial Development and Sustainability/Reciprocal Relationship
    - (1 5 4) /Program Development and Implementation/Facilitate Initial Development and Sustainability/Good PR

- (1 5 5) /Program Development and Implementation/Facilitate Initial Development and Sustainability/Meets Students and Family Needs
- (1 5 6) /Program Development and Implementation/Facilitate Initial Development and Sustainability/Characteristics of Program Staff
- (1 6) /Program Development and Implementation/Barrier to Initial Development and Sustainability
  - (1 6 1) /Program Development and Implementation/Barrier to Initial Development and Sustainability/Challenges to Initial Implementation
  - (1 6 2) /Program Development and Implementation/Barrier to Initial Development and Sustainability/Inappropriate Placements
  - (1 6 3) /Program Development and Implementation/Barrier to Initial Development and Sustainability/Negative Impact on College
- (2) /Program Components
  - (2 1) /Program Components/CBI
    - (2 1 1) /Program Components/CBI/CBI Activities in Program
    - (2 1 2) /Program Components/CBI/Students views of CBI
    - (2 1 3) /Program Components/CBI/Planning CBI Activities
  - (2 2) /Program Components/Functional Academics
    - (2 2 1) /Program Components/Functional Academics/Instruction in Segregated Setting
    - (2 2 2) /Program Components/Functional Academics/Instruction in community
    - (2 2 3) /Program Components/Functional Academics/Students and parents views of functional academics
  - (2 3) /Program Components/Social Skills
    - (2 3 1) /Program Components/Social Skills/Class discussions, Teachable Moments

- (2 3 2) /Program Components/Social Skills/Curricula and other materials
- (2 3 3) /Program Components/Social Skills/Sexuality and Relationships
- (2 4) /Program Components/Independent Living
  - (2 4 1) /Program Components/Independent Living/Personal hygiene
  - (2 4 2) /Program Components/Independent Living/Maintaining a household
  - (2 4 3) /Program Components/Independent Living/Recreation and Leisure
  - (2 4 4) /Program Components/Independent Living/Travel Training, Personal Safety
- (2 5) /Program Components/Inclusive Opportunities
  - (2 5 1) /Program Components/Inclusive Opportunities/College Courses
  - (2 5 2) /Program Components/Inclusive Opportunities/College sponsored activities and programs
  - (2 5 3) /Program Components/Inclusive Opportunities/College students and personnel's views
  - (2 5 4) /Program Components/Inclusive Opportunities/Incidental Interactions
  - (2 5 5) /Program Components/Inclusive Opportunities/Friendships
- (2 6) /Program Components/Work Experiences
  - (2 6 1) /Program Components/Work Experiences/Enclave employment
  - (2 6 2) /Program Components/Work Experiences/Individual placements
  - (2 6 3) /Program Components/Work Experiences/work schedules

- (2 6 4) /Program Components/Work Experiences/Non-paid work
- (2 6 5) /Program Components/Work Experiences/Consumer's views
- (2 7) /Program Components/Career Awareness-Vocational Training
  - (2 7 1) /Program Components/Career Awareness-Vocational Training/Career awareness
  - (2 7 2) /Program Components/Career Awareness-Vocational Training/Work related social skills
- (2 8) /Program Components/Self-Determination Student Involvement
  - (2 8 1) /Program Components/Self-Determination Student Involvement/Self-determination instruction
  - (2 8 2) /Program Components/Self-Determination Student Involvement/Involvement in Educational Program
  - (2 8 3) /Program Components/Self-Determination Student Involvement/Students views
  - (2 8 4) /Program Components/Self-Determination Student Involvement/Parents views
  - (2 8 5) /Program Components/Self-Determination Student Involvement/Balancing student self-determination and parent input
- (2 9) /Program Components/Family Involvement
  - (2 9 1) /Program Components/Family Involvement/Family involvement in IEP
  - (2 9 2) /Program Components/Family Involvement/Family involvement in transition
  - (2 9 3) /Program Components/Family Involvement/Family Involvement in students' schedule
  - (2 9 4) /Program Components/Family Involvement/Family involvement in social activities
  - (2 9 5) /Program Components/Family Involvement/Parental communication

- (2 10) /Program Components/Interagency Collaboration
  - (2 10 1) /Program Components/Interagency Collaboration/Partnership with Community college
  - (2 10 2) /Program Components/Interagency Collaboration/Partnerships with local CRP
  - (2 10 3) /Program Components/Interagency Collaboration/Partnership within LSS
  - (2 10 4) /Program Components/Interagency Collaboration/Partnerships with Community Organizations
- (2 11) /Program Components/Program Evaluation
- (3) /Views on Program Role in Preparing for Future
  - (3 1) /Views on Program Role in Preparing for Future/Supports Needed to Achieve Goals
  - (3 2) /Views on Program Role in Preparing for Future/Role of Program with Preparing for Future
  - (3 3) /Views on Program Role in Preparing for Future/Future Goals
  - (3 4) /Views on Program Role in Preparing for Future/Outcomes
    - (3 4 1) /Views on Program Role in Preparing for Future/Outcomes/2002 Graduates
    - (3 4 2) /Views on Program Role in Preparing for Future/Outcomes/Program Alumni
    - (3 4 3) /Views on Program Role in Preparing for Future/Outcomes/Non Completers
- (4) /Demographic Info on Participants
  - (4 1) /Demographic Info on Participants/Parents/guardians
  - (4 2) /Demographic Info on Participants/Alumni

- (4 3) /Demographic Info on Participants/Student
- (5) /Description of Program
  - (5 1) /Description of Program /Goals
  - (5 2) /Description of Program /Date Started Program
  - (5 3) /Description of Program /Number of Students Served
  - (5 4) /Description of Program /Schedule
  - (5 5) /Description of Program /Location

**Note:** The first number represent categories while subsequent numbers represent subcategies.

## Appendix G

### Example of Agreements and Disagreements during Coding

++++++

+++ ON-LINE DOCUMENT: AD Interview Program Teacher 10-3-01

1398 \* V.R.: What about things like use of the library or the gym?

1399 \*The pool? Does the college provide that?

1400 P.T.: Yeah, we have in the past—we haven't done it much lately

1401 because there's just not enough time, but we've utilized the pool and

1402 the weight room. We've utilized the gym facilities, physical education

1403 building, the library. And we've haven't gone to the library in a

1404 while, I will say, for any specific lesson. The college provided at

1405 one time a library orientation lesson, and they will provide it.

**1406 Again, we haven't—we don't have enough time to even—to get to that,**

**1407 at least so far we haven't this year. Considering we have only two**

**1408 days with the students, it's a lot. And if we do go into the community**

**1409 on one of those days, then it's one day. So, I mean, it's a really**

**1410 tight schedule and we have a lot of curriculum materials to get through**

**1411 as well.**

1412 \* V.R.: What about—you had mentioned a van?

1413 P.T.: Oh, right. Right. Well, the LSS refuses—I'll say this

1414 loud and clear—they will not allow me to drive the van for—I'm sure

1415 it's insurance purposes and liability during the school day. So I can't

1416 transport the students at all.

1417 \* V.R.: Has to be on the school bus?

1418 P.T.: Now, if I went and got—this is crazy, but this is the way it

1419 is. I was told if I went to get a bus driver's license and there is a

1420 bus on campus, which there is a small bus, technically, I am

1421 supposedly able to do that. But then, I have to be tested, drug

1422 tested, whatever, I mean, go through the whole procedure of the bus

1423 driver. I still don't understand how that's any different, but in

1424 their eyes, that's the way it is. Now, I have used the van, the college

1425 van, on the weekend. That's my own time, and I have requested it.

**1426 And we have gone to the University of Maryland for Best Buddies annual**

**1427 fair, whatever. And again, that's my own time, so...**

+++++

+++ ON-LINE DOCUMENT: VR Interview Program Teacher 10-3-01

1398 \* V.R.: What about things like use of the library or the gym?

1399 \*The pool? Does the college provide that?

1400 P.T.: Yeah, we have in the past—we haven't done it much lately

1401 because there's just not enough time, but we've utilized the pool and

1402 the weight room. We've utilized the gym facilities, physical education

1403 building, the library. And we've haven't gone to the library in a

1404 while, I will say, for any specific lesson. The college provided at

1405 one time a library orientation lesson, and they will provide it.

1412 \* V.R.: What about—you had mentioned a van?

1413 P.T.: Oh, right. Right. Well, the LSS refuses—I'll say this

1414 loud and clear—they will not allow me to drive the van for—I'm sure

1415 it's insurance purposes and liability during the school day. So I can't

1416 transport the students at all.

1417 \* V.R.: Has to be on the school bus?

1418 P.T.: Now, if I went and got—this is crazy, but this is the way it

1419 is. I was told if I went to get a bus driver's license and there is a  
1420 bus on campus, which there is a small bus, technically, I am  
1421 supposedly able to do that. But then, I have to be tested, drug  
1422 tested, whatever, I mean, go through the whole procedure of the bus  
1423 driver. I still don't understand how that's any different, but in  
1424 their eyes, that's the way it is. Now, I have used the van, the college  
1425 van, on the weekend. That's my own time, and I have requested it.

**Note:** This contains text units that were coded “Resources/Community College” by the researcher and research assistant. The areas highlighted in bold indicate disagreements in coding.

## Appendix H

### Sample Daily Schedule for Students during Spring 2002

		MONDAY			WEDNESDAY		
		Students: A, B, C, D	Students: E	Students: F, G, H, I	Students: A, B, C, D	Students: E	Students: F, G, H, I
9:30	COMPUTER LAB	COMPUTER LAB	COMPUTER LAB	COMPUTER LAB	COMPUTER LAB	COMPUTER LAB	COMPUTER LAB
11:00	Drop off Books, Change				Drop off Books, Change		
11:15	AQUA FITNESS	LUNCH	LUNCH	AQUA FITNESS	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH
12:15	Free Swim Shower Change	Math/Reading	Math/Reading	Free Swim Shower Change	Vocabulary	Vocabulary	
1:00	LUNCH in classroom	Keyboarding	Aerobic Weight	LUNCH in classroom	Keyboarding	Aerobic Weight	

	MONDAY			WEDNESDAY		
	Students: A, B, C, D	Students: E	Students: F, G, H, I	Students: A, B, C, D	Students: E	Students: F, G, H, I
1:30	Math/Reading		Training			Training
				Vocabulary		
2:30	Phonics/ Checkbook Math	Phonics/ Checkbook Math	Phonics/ Checkbook Math	Menu Math/ Following Directions	Menu Math/ Following Directions	Menu Math/ Following Directions
3:00	Job Skills	Job Skills	Job Skills	Social Skills	Social Skills	Social Skills

**Note:** Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays were allocated work days for these students. Other students in Program A worked five days per week, and had no schedule for additional instruction or activities at the community college or community.

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