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The Importance of Self-Determination Interventions for Transition-Age Youth with Disabilities

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**The Importance of Self-Determination Interventions for Transition-Age
Youth with Disabilities**

by

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Chapter 1: Introduction

According to Carter, Lane, Crnabori, Bruhn, and Oakes (2011), “self-determination reflects the capacity to direct one’s life in ways that are personally valued” (p. 100). As students with disabilities enter and advance through their secondary educational experience, an emphasis on encouragement and support in developing a student’s self-determination becomes more valuable. Self-determination can usually be placed into seven realms: 1) decision-making, 2) problem-solving, 3) goal-setting, 4) self-advocacy, 5) self-management, 6) choice-making, and 7) self-awareness. Instructional interventions that focus on these components are essential for students with disabilities to become more self-determined and consecutively increase the probability of positive post school outcomes. As noted by Shogren, Wehmeyer, Palmer, Rifenshank, and Little (2015), “One personal characteristic researchers have hypothesized to influence post school outcomes is self-determination, and a small body of research has suggested a relationship between higher levels of self-determination when exiting school and positive adult outcomes” (p. 262).

Skills associated with self-determination permeate through all secondary content standards. Given that research has demonstrated a link between self-determination and positive school and post school outcomes, there is a need to examine the implementation and outcomes of specific self-determination instruction. According to Raley, Shogren, and McDonald (2018) self-determination skills develop over time as young people have opportunities to develop self-direction through applying goal-setting, problem solving and self-regulation skills across contexts. Self-determination instruction provides strategies to help build these skills which can enable students to achieve positive school and post school outcomes.

Historical Background

Encouraging and developing student's self-determination emerged as an instructional focus area in special education in the 1990s as a result of recognition of need to improve post school outcomes for youth with disabilities. Transition planning is now securely established as a very important component of educational programming for youth with disabilities. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) (2004) mandates that schools make coordinated efforts to facilitate students' access to a variety of post school activities, including community participation, independent living, integrated employment, and postsecondary education and training. Equally as important are the student's ability to direct and align those activities to their personal values and interests and decide for themselves how they will meet their goals and take responsibility for their own actions. As work skills and technology change in our society, transition plans and implementation of these plans needs to follow suit. The understanding of the importance of transition is not new, but how to meet the needs of the student in the most meaningful and relevant way needs to continue to be examined and developed.

Research Question

One question guides this literature review:

1. What is the importance of self-determination interventions for transition age youth with disabilities?

Importance of Topic

As a high school special education teacher, a high importance is placed on transition and self-determination skills through intervention instruction. Encouraging the student to be as involved as possible in the transition planning as well as goal-generating and tracking is necessary for success in and out of school. The challenge remains for educators to find effective and meaningful self-determination curriculum for transition age students. Shogren et al. (2015) noted “some of the main reasons for efforts to promote self-determination emerging as a valued instructional area in special education and transition were the hypothesized relationship between instruction in self-determination, higher levels of self-determination when exiting secondary school and more positive adult outcomes” (p. 256). Many special educators have heard of self-determination and believe that it is important to teach the skills that self-determination encompasses. However, teachers believe that the self-determination content that they received in their undergraduate and graduate programs did not meet their needs. While most teachers believed that self-determination skills were very important, many questioned the effectiveness of the methods that they were using (Thoma, Nathanson, Baker, & Tamura, 2002)

Focus of Paper

The Academic Search Premier was used as a starting point for my literature review of peer-reviewed studies related to self-determination and transition age youth. I used several keywords and combinations of keywords to locate appropriate studies: secondary, transition, self-determination, special education, and post school outcomes. To locate the most current information, I also utilized: The Journal of Special Education, Exceptional Children, Behavioral Disorders, Career Development and Transition for Exceptional Individuals, Journal of

Intellectual Disability Research, Career Development and Transition for Exceptional Individuals, Remedial and Special Education, and Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

The purpose of this literature review was to examine the importance of self-determination interventions for transition age youth with disabilities. The first seven studies look at a variety of interventions and the differential impact of implementing them. The next study examines the relationships between the elements of self-determination and the impact of disability category in order to guide instruction. The following study examines the implementation of a comprehensive transition assessment focused on the students' perspectives of a range of transition issues including self-determination. The last two studies examine educators' intentions and efforts to promote self-determination in high school classrooms and also analyze where teachers were acquiring their self-determination intervention trainings.

Shogren et al. (2018) examined the impacts of implementing the Self -Determination Learning Model of Instruction (SDLMI) alone as compared to implementing the SDLMI combined with Whose Future Is It (WF), with transition aged students with intellectual disability in the state of Rhode Island. SDLMI does not deliver standardized content related to transition planning but instead is an intervention instruction to be used by educators to shape their own instruction to be student-directed versus teacher-directed. This intervention focuses on individualized self-regulation, problem-solving and goal-setting. WF is a curriculum for teachers to guide the delivery of their instruction on specific self-determination skills. Both interventions are evidence-based practices that affect self-determination while youth are in school as well as post school employment outcomes. However, the combined impact of SDLMI and WF has not been examined. The importance of this study, according to the authors, was due to data that continues to suggest that only a small percentage (10%) of adults with intellectual

and developmental disabilities in the United States are competitively employed in their communities. To address the needed change in the state of Rhode Island, an area of emphasis was placed on the ability of secondary special education teachers to implement interventions that enhanced self-determination skills. Self-determination was recognized as a research-based practice that could be used in schools' transition supports to affect both positive outcomes in school but also post school outcomes.

The sample consisted of 340 transition-age students that were qualified for special education services under the category of intellectual disability, from 17 school districts. Participants ranged in age from 10 to 21 years. Participants were randomly assigned to the SDLMI only or SDLMI + WF conditions over the course of a year. Districts, teachers and students were relatively evenly split between the groups. Student self-determination was assessed using the pilot version of the *Self-Determination Inventory, Student Report and Parent/Teacher Report* and *Goal Attainment Scaling (GAS)*. Data were received at the beginning and the end of the year. Invariance testing was used to establish an interference across time and groups. Latent mediation was used to explore the change in self-determination and the impact of the scores.

The findings suggest that changes in self-determination were reported by both students and teachers over the 1-year period with most of the change in the SLDMI only group. It appears that the SDLMI intervention influences self-determination from student's perspective as well as actual goal attainment from the teacher's perspective. The fact that there were fewer significant changes in the SDLMI+WF group could be based on the required time that an addition of standardized curriculum required, which could diffuse the focus of goal setting and

attainment through SDLMI. Several limitations must be considered when analyzing this study. First, the implementation and data collection efforts occurred in a real-world context with changing demands which made analyzing data on the multiple factors that affect variability in outcomes, challenging. Limitation in the data available across sources and across systems for the evaluation also proved to be a trial. Tracking data on the youth who transitioned from the school system to adult services and supports proved to be more challenging than anticipated. This study exposes the importance of ongoing work to ensure that young people with disabilities are at the center of identifying and working towards meaningful goals for their future to ensure a positive transition experience.

Although SDLMI has been demonstrated to be effective in impacting the outcomes for students with disabilities, Raley et al. (2018) researched the impact of SDLMI when used class wide as a Tier 1 intervention with students with and without disabilities in inclusive core content classes in order to support all students to achieve academic goals. This was a small pilot study of the use of the SDLMI in inclusive secondary Algebra classrooms.

Students with and without disabilities aged 14 to 16 years across two inclusive secondary math classes participated in the study. Of the students that were receiving special education services, two had attention deficit hyperactive disorder (ADHD), one had vision loss or blindness, one had a physical disability and one identified as having two or more disabilities. The majority of participants identified as white. In the two Algebra classes, SDLMI lessons were overlaid on the traditional algebra curriculum. Fifteen-minute lessons were delivered twice a week at the beginning of the class period and focused on goal setting and attainment associated with the Algebra curriculum, over a period of 16 weeks. A member of the research team

implemented the SDLMI in the first Algebra class period and the teacher implemented the SDLMI in the second Algebra class period. The SDLMI is divided into three distinct phases of instruction. Set a Goal is Phase 1, Take Action is Phase 2, and Adjust Goal or Plan is Phase 3. Each phase presents a problem that students must solve by answering four student questions that intend to teach students how to regulate action to reach self-selected, independently made goals. The Self-Determination Inventory: Student-Report was used to measure self-determination before and after implementation of the SDLMI. Data on the student's goal attainment were collected using Goal Attainment Scaling (GAS). GAS involves establishing goals and indicating a range of outcomes that would illustrate student progress toward achieving the goal.

The study used a one-group, pretest-posttest design and combined the data from students across the two classes for analysis. The effect sizes suggest that implementation of the SDLMI had an effect on student self-determination, but the degree of the effect was small. The mean GAS score was 55.00 and 91.2% of the goal attainment scored were 50 or higher on the GAS scale, suggesting an acceptable outcome for almost all goals set by students. Goal attainment percentages indicate that most students met or exceeded their self-set criteria related to the math goals than failed to meet them over the course of the academic semester.

Although the findings suggest that students with and without disabilities were able to set and achieve goals with the SDLMI model, this study did not find significant changes in the self-determination scores. This finding is consistent with previous research that suggests that ongoing and repeated exposure to instruction, such as SDLMI, is needed to strengthen outcomes. This study also used a small sample of students without the presence of a control group which limited the ability to determine causality of the intervention and outcomes.

Wehmeyer et al. (2012) examined the causal relationship of teaching SDLMI and student self-determination. They hypothesized that students exposed to the SDLMI in the treatment group would show larger increases in self-determination than students in the control group. Up to the date of this study, there had been no studies that provide casual evidence linking SDLMI with self-determination.

Participants were 312 high school students with intellectual disabilities or learning disabilities from 20 school districts located in three states: Kansas, Missouri, and Texas. Participants ranged from 13.5 to 21.3 years of age. The majority of the participants were Caucasian and 43% of the students were eligible for free or reduced lunch. The researchers implemented a group-randomized, modified equivalent control group time series design over 2 years to examine the impact of the SDLMI on self-determination. They assigned campuses that agreed to participate as a “treatment” or “control” campus. During Year 1 of the project, they trained the teachers to implement SDLMI and they then implemented it with the students. Teachers at the control campuses continued with their normal instruction. During Year 2, they trained the teachers that had not had the training previously and they implemented the model to their students. Teachers from Year 1 continued to implement the model with their students. Therefore, all students received the SDLMI in Year 2 to ensure that all students could benefit in being involved. The *ARC’s Self-Determination Scale* (SDS) was used for measurement which is a 72-item self-report measure based on the functional theory of self-determination. A total of 148 points are available on the scale, with higher scores indicating higher levels of self-determination. The *AIR Self-Determination Scale* (AIR) was also used and consists of 24 questions in four different sections that include things such as things students do related to self-

determination, how students feel performing these things, opportunities at home for self-determination and at school. The researchers used the structural equation modeling (SEM) to examine the relationship between the SDLMI and student self-determination outcomes. SEM has advantages over ANOVA in that it has the ability to represent hidden constructs without measurement error. It also involves the integration of measurement models, which specify the relationships among latent and observed variables.

Within group comparisons showed that the intervention group showed significant improvements on both the AIR and SDS from baseline to the final measurement point according to the chi-square difference test. The control group showed only slight increases in self-determination. The control group actually decreased in self-determination scores between the first and second measurement times but then increased between the second and third measurements. The between group comparisons showed that no between group differences in self-determination were seen with the AIR or SDS measurement at the three time points. The effect sizes demonstrate that students who received the SDLMI intervention at baseline had larger increases in self-determination than those students receiving the intervention and the second time point. Though there were limitations such as student self-report assessments, difficulty of standardized assessment of fidelity, and lack of representation of numerous disability categories, this study provided evidence that after 1 year of intervention of SDLMI, high school students with cognitive disabilities had significantly better academic and transition goal attainment outcomes. This study also provides evidence that instruction with SDLMI over 2 years significantly improves self-determination.

Shogren et al. (2015) followed students who participated in previous group-randomized, control group studies which examined the effect of self-determination in secondary school into adulthood in order to explore the relationship between self-determination and adult outcomes, as well as the impact of exposure to self-determination interventions. The previous studies conducted group-randomized, control group studies to examine the efficacy of several self-determination interventions on student self-determination in secondary school. The findings of these studies were that students who were exposed to self-determination curriculum showed significantly greater growth in self-determination.

Participants were 779 students with disabilities recruited from six states (Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma, and Texas) and 50 school districts. Any participant who was enrolled in high school and had contributed data to the previous studies was eligible to participate in the present study. Participants ranged in age from 14.3 to 21.8. All participants had Individualized Educational Plans (IEPs) while they were in high school and the majority were served under the categorical label of learning disability (37%) or intellectual disability (30%). The majority of the participants were Caucasian (56.7%). Each high school that agreed to the study was assigned to be a “treatment” or a “control” group. The first 3 years of the 2-year follow-up study involved project staff mailing out adult outcome surveys to the students, 1- and 2-years post-school. Baseline data were collected prior to the study which included demographic information and measures of self-determination, including the SDS. The same data collected at baseline were also collected during the second and third years of the project to examine changes in student self-determination as a function of exposure to self-determination interventions. To measure adult outcomes, a survey was used from previous research and included the following:

Employment, Community Access, Financial Independence, Independent Living, and Life Satisfaction. The SEM method was used because it allowed the researchers to move beyond looking simply at single indicators of adult outcomes and look at adult outcome constructs with multiple indicators.

To find the relationship between self-determination status when leaving secondary school and adult outcomes, researchers tested for invariance in the beta pathways across the control and treatment groups and then tested the significance of the beta pathways across the control and treatment group. It was found that SDS at Time 1 predicted SDS at Time 2, which predicted SDS at Time 3. SDS at Time 3 significantly predicted Community Access at Time 4 ($\beta=1.078$) and at Time 5 ($\beta=0.948$). In Employment, SDS at Time 3 significantly predicted Employment at Time 4 ($\beta=0.504$) but not at Time 5, although Employment at Time 4 predicted Employment at Time 5 suggesting an ongoing indirect effect of self-determination. SDS at Time 3 predicted a significant decrease in Financial Independence at Time 5. For the second research question, which looked at exposure to self-determination interventions while in secondary school impacting the relationship between self-determination status when leaving secondary school and adult outcomes, they found that there were significant differences across groups in SDS at Time 1 and 2, as well as significant differences in Life Satisfaction, Community Access, and Employment at Time 4. With the exception of Life Satisfaction, the control group scored higher.

The results for both research questions suggest that self-determination status when exiting high school does impact adult outcomes, but the nature of the relationships are complex. Youth's current level of self-determination predicts their future level of self-determination. Self-determination status at Time 3, which was their last year of high school, predicted higher levels

of community access and employment outcomes 1-year post school. They also found that youth with higher levels of self-determination were more likely to have a job and have access to job benefits 1-year post high school. The control and treatment group students showed reductions in community access and employment 2 years post school. The treatment group had slightly higher levels of life satisfaction and financial independence. Some of the limitations were that the samples were not national samples, students with diverse personal characteristics were included but were not analyzed, and there were large amounts of missing data. This study indicates the need for further research looking at the relationship between exposure to self-determination interventions and outcomes.

Powers et al. (2012) performed a longitudinal, randomized trial to evaluate the effect of the *TAKE CHARGE* self-determination intervention for improving the transition outcomes of at-risk youth who are in both foster care and special education.

The intervention was evaluated using two independent groups x three repeated measures design. Sixty-nine youth were enrolled over three study periods and randomly assigned to either the treatment or comparison group. The youth were assessed at baseline, at post-intervention and then a 1-year follow-up. The 69 youth that were recruited had four criteria: (a) receiving special education services, (b) 16.5 to 17.5 years of age, (c) under the guardianship of Oregon DHS with at least 90 days in foster care, and (d) attending a large school district in the study targeted region. The comparison condition was the Foster Care Independent Living Program (ILP) which provides independent living services to youth in foster care. This service includes classes on topics such as budgeting, cooking, and preparing a resume and is supported by a case manager, peer support, and assistance in applying for resources. The intervention group participated in the

TAKE CHARGE intervention for approximately 12 months. The intervention included two parts: (a) individual coaching sessions in the application of self-determination skills in order to identify and reach transition goals and carry out a youth-led transition meeting, and (b) workshops for youth that are in foster care to meet with former foster care recipients. The ARC Self-Determination Scale was used to measure self-determination. The Quality of Life Questionnaire, a widely used standardized measure, was used to assess the participant's quality of life. The Transition Planning Assessment was used to measure the participant's transition planning knowledge and engagement. The Outcome Survey is a self-report measure completed by participants that shows perceptions about their readiness for independent living, this was also used to assess employment, education and living status.

At post intervention, 38% of intervention group participants and 26% of the comparison group had completed their secondary education. At follow-up, 1 year later, it increased to 72% for the intervention group and 50% for the comparison group. Fourteen percent of the intervention group and 19% of the comparison group reported working in paid jobs at the baseline time. At post-intervention, the intervention group went up to 34% and the comparison group went down to 16%. At follow-up, 28% in the comparison group and 45% in the intervention group were working in paid jobs. The two groups differed on the average of post-intervention and follow-up compared to baseline, $t(116) = 2.10$; $p = .0378$. The intervention group scored significantly higher than the comparison group at post intervention and follow-up as well. In the identification of accomplishments section, the groups were not different at baseline, but were different at post-intervention, $t(86) = 4.18$; $p < .0001$, and at follow-up, $t(86) = 3.39$, $p = .0011$. The intervention group also reported more accomplishments at post-

intervention and follow-up when compared to the comparison group. In the area of transition goals, there was a difference between groups at follow-up, $t(79)=2.94$, $p=.0043$. For the Quality of Life Questionnaire results, the model assuming compound symmetry was rational. There were no differences between the groups comparing post-intervention to follow-up, but the average of post-intervention and follow-up versus baseline did differ significantly, $t(116)=2.55$; $p=.0120$. The intervention group reported having significantly higher quality of life than the comparison group. For the Use of Transition Services, researchers found that the differences at post-intervention and follow-up showed the treatment group accessed more transition services than the comparison group. The treatment group reported higher engagement in key independent living activities at post-intervention and follow-up when compared to the comparison group.

Significant group differences were detected at post-intervention for self-determination, quality of life, youth identified accomplishments, youth involvement in transition planning, use of transition services, and engagement in independent living activities. Also, at the 1-year follow-up, youth in the intervention group demonstrated higher rates of employment and high school completion along with greater participation in higher education as compared to youth in the comparison group. Some of the limitations to this study included a small sample size, there was no control group and there were limited resources to the differing needs of the youth that were studied. This study offers encouraging evidence that self-determination intervention is effective in supporting youth in special education to promote their transition success post school.

Wehmeyer, Palmer, Shogren, Williams-Diehm, and Soukup (2013) looked at establishing a causal relationship between interventions to promote self-determination and the outcome that youth with disabilities become more self-determined. The researchers hypothesized that students

with disabilities who received interventions in self-determination over a 3-year period would show significant differences in their growth on student self-report measures of self-determination when compared to a control group who did not receive specific self-determination interventions.

Participants were 371 high school students receiving special education under the categorical areas of mental retardation (28%) or learning disability (72%). Participants were recruited from six states and 50 school districts. Participants ranged from 14 to 20 years of age. The majority of the participants were Caucasian and 35% of the students were eligible for free and/or reduced-price lunch. Participants were recruited for involvement in a 5-year longitudinal study looking at the impact of interventions promoting self-determination and student's self-determination and post school outcomes. Baseline data pertaining to self-determination were collected and then collected again at the end of both the second and the third school years to document changes. Two primary assessments were used, *The ARC's Self-Determination Scale* and the *AIR Self-Determination Scale*. Teachers in the intervention group, selected from a menu of interventions that had been developed to promote self-determination. *The Choice Maker Curriculum* consists of three sections: (a) Choosing Goals (b) Expressing Goals, and (c) Taking Action. The *Self-Advocacy Strategy* has students progress through a series of lesson plans that are designed to enable students to gain a sense of control and influence over their learning and development. *Steps to Self-Determination* involves lessons using modeling, cooperative and experimental learning, discussions and lectures through which students focus on setting and attaining goals, self-advocacy, and decision-making. *Whose Future Is It Anyway?* consists of 36 sessions that included: (a) self and disability awareness, (b) making decisions about transition related outcomes, (c) identifying and securing community resources to support transition

services, (d) writing and evaluation transition goals and objectives, (e) communicating effectively in small groups, and (f) developing skills to become an effective team member, leader or self-advocate. The *Self-Determined Learning Model of Instruction (SDLMI)* is a model of teaching based on the elements of self-determination, problem-solving, self-regulation, and student-directed learning. *NEXT S.T.E.P Curriculum* uses videos and printed materials developed to help students become motivated to engage in transition planning, self-evaluate transition needs, identify and select transition goals and activities, take responsibility for their transition planning meetings and monitor their transition plans.

To address the primary research question of, participation in a self-determination intervention significantly affects the self-reported self-determination of students with disabilities, the researchers used multilevel latent growth curve modeling to examine differences in self-determination scores on the *AIR Self-Determination Scale (AIR-S)* and the *ARC's Self-Determination Scale (SDS)* across control and intervention group participants. The original multi-group model suggested a significant overall increase in AIR-S scores over time, $F(1,446)=32.10, p<.0001$ and a significant intervention group effect, $F(1,365)=8.62, p<.005$. The intervention group showed a significantly more positive increase on the AIR-S over time. The initial multi group growth curve model for the SDS suggested a significant increase in SDS scores overtime, $F(1,448)=51.73, p<.0001$, but not a significant intervention group effect or group by time interactions.

The results of this study suggest that interventions to promote self-determination results in significant changes in student self-determination; however, the specific pattern of differences varied across the two student report measures. This could be due to previously confirmed

research suggesting that the two self-assessments are measuring different aspects of self-determination. The AIR-S seems to measure the student's capacity and opportunity for self-determination and may be more sensitive to short term changes in skills, attitudes, and environmental opportunities for self-determination. As shown by the results of the SDS, translating self-determination skills into actual changes in the student's behavior may be a more complicated process. Some limitation to this study includes participants leaving the study, students being exposed to different self-determination interventions, and the fact that so many variables attribute to a student's self-determination. Although there is always a need for more intervention strategies in self-determination to meet the differing needs of students, this study shows that there are many tools available that effectively promote self-determination.

Carter et al. (2011) developed a comprehensive outline of interventions addressing the self-determination of students with or at risk for Emotional Behavioral Disorders (EBD). The researcher's goals were to: (a) identify those areas of concentration in the literature addressing self-determination, (b) determine gaps in the knowledge base, and (c) use the findings to offer recommendations to the field of EBD for future focus. The questions that they sought out to answer were, for which students and within which educational contexts have these interventions so far been evaluated? As well as, which elements of self-determination have been the focus of empirical evaluations for this disability group and has self-determination been addressed as primarily an intervention (independent variable) or an outcome measure (dependent variable)?

To identify the articles that were to be used in this review, the researchers did a systematic electronic search. The articles were then reviewed using a multiple-gating review procedure. The first stage involved reviewing titles and abstracts. The second stage involved

reviewing each article for four criteria (type of article, target population, setting and presence of self-determination component). The third stage involved reading each article in its entirety to determine if the article had the full set of criteria. The psychology and educational databases included were ERIC, PsycInfo and Wilson Education Abstracts. Eighty-one articles were reviewed from 46 different journals.

More than half of the articles (54.3%) were published between 2000 and 2008, 33% were published between 1990 and 1999 and 12% were published before 1990. These studies included a total of 16,426 student participants. Among the articles included in this study, all included at least one male student and 42 included at least one female student. This aligns with national data indicating that males are more often identified EBD than females. Only 42% of the studies had information about race/ethnicity of the students. Among these 34 studies, 31 included at least one student who was European American and 24 that at least one was African American. Studies less often included students who were Latino/Hispanic, Asian American, Native American or Pacific Islander. Only 39% of the articles included a socioeconomic status of the participating students, their schools and/or the surrounding community. Fifty-four percent of the studies included participants at the elementary school level, 27% were from the middle school and 16% included participants at the high school level. The majority of the students receiving self-determination within the chosen articles were in elementary school. Although the studies were implemented in a range of settings, the majority of students received self-determination interventions in general education classrooms. Self-determination was addressed as an intervention component in 95% of the studies and as an outcome measure in 42% of the studies. Within that 42%, 37% addressed self-determination as both an independent and

dependent variable. The most frequent intervention components were self-management and self-regulation (65%), followed by problem-solving (37%), and goal setting and attainment. Only 2% of studies addressed self-awareness and 2% addressed self-efficacy. None of the studies examined addressed self-knowledge as an intervention component.

This review of research suggests that instruction in self-determination is permeated within broader interventions rather than standalone interventions. Self-management and self-regulation strategies were the most prevalent intervention components which may be a result of self-regulation deficits that are most often present in EBD students. Very few interventions focused on self-awareness and self-knowledge which seems like the basis of very important foundational skills for a student with EBD. There were also very few studies that looked at the impact and outcome of various intervention strategies in self-determination. A limitation, as seen by the researchers, was the lack of clear participant descriptions and demographic variables. Self-determination is not necessarily universally understood and may be evidenced or valued differently within and across cultures.

Up to the point of this study, there had been little research that examined the relationships between the elements of self-determination and the impact of disability category. Chou, Palmer, Wehmeyer, and Skorupski (2017) chose to examine the different profiles of the combination of three self-report measures of the elements of self-determination behavior (autonomous functioning, problem-solving and internal locus of control) between intellectual disabled (ID) students and learning disabled/emotional disordered students.

A total of 96 middle school and high school students, ages 13 through 22 years were recruited from seven school districts within three states to participate in the study. Of these

participants, 48% were identified ID, 39% were labelled as having learning disabilities (LD), and 14% had identifies emotional disorders (ED). The 96 students were grouped into two disability groups based on their disability and level of cognition. The students that were in the ID group had global cognitive impairments and the students in the LD and ED groups had no global cognitive impairment. The ID group was 48% of the total participants and the LD/ED group was 52%.

Three measures of component elements of self-determination were administered to the students. These measures were the Self-Determination Scale (SDS), the Autonomy, Problem-Solving Survey (PSS), and the Nowicki-Strickland Locus of Control Scale (NSLCS). These measures were completed in a small group or one-on-one with needed supports. The SDS is a student's self-report measure of self-determination that consists of 72 items and four sections. Students report each item with a response from one of the four choices and a score is assigned accordingly: 0=I do not even if I have the chance, 1=I do sometimes when I have the chance, 2=I do most of the time I have the chance, and 3=I do every time I have the chance. Higher scores indicate higher elevated levels of autonomous functioning. The PSS contains 42 items assessing aspects of social problem-solving. These skills are assessed by responding to statements, such as "When I have a problem I think about the best way to solve it." This assessment has five answers to choose from: 1=not at all true of me, 2=a little bit true of me, 3=sometimes true of me, 4=a lot of times true of me and 5=always true of me. Higher scores reflect higher ability to problem solve. The NSLCS contains 40 items measuring a person's internal or external perceptions of control and impact on choices and decisions. Participants answer each statement with a yes or no response. One point is given for an external response and no points are given

for an internal response. Higher scores indicate a lower internal locus of control. Descriptive statistics of means and standard deviations of the three measures were summarized to demonstrate group performance on the component elements of self-determined behavior. Next, a multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) was done to examine differences in scores on the combination of three measures of component elements of self-determined behavior by the two groups with age as a covariate.

The results of this study were that students with ID and students with LD and ED were different in the combination of three component elements; however, the two groups were not different on any single measures of component elements of self-determined behavior exclusively. MANCOVA results showed significant differences between the two groups; however, the follow-up univariate tests do not show any group difference in any single measure of the component behaviors. The study shows that the students with LD or ED report higher levels of performance on the three component elements of self-determination than the students with ID, which shows that the two groups have different instructional needs. Students with ID may need more supports in components such as problem-solving and autonomous functioning. The limitations to this study consist of the restriction of only including three component skills and only three disability categories.

Collier, Griffin, and Wei (2016) examined the implementation of a comprehensive transition assessment called the *Student Transition Questionnaire* (STQ). The intention in developing this assessment tool was to provide teachers with an easy-to-use and socially valid assessment focused on the students' perspectives of a range of transition issues including self-determination. The goals of the study were to investigate the factor structure of the STQ,

document student's self-ratings using the STQ and to investigate how consumers perceive the STQ.

The STQ assessment entails students rating themselves on a wide range of transition items. To develop the STQ items, a combination of more than 200 items were drawn from a review of transition literature and assessments which included the *Transition Planning Inventory*, the *Enderle-Service Rating Scale*, the *ARC's Self-Determination Scale* and the *Choice Maker Assessments*. The STQ is a 38 item paper-pencil assessment in which the students rate their agreement with each item on a 7-point Likert-type scale (0=disagree, 6=strongly agree) and higher scores indicate more agreement/positive perceptions on a particular topic.

There were two phases to this study. The first was the Pilot Administration Phase and the second was the Stakeholder Evaluation Phase. The first phase consisted of a total of 186 students with disabilities in grades 10-12. Of the 186 students, 60% were male and 40% were female. Seventy-five percent of the students were Caucasian followed by 15% being Hispanic/Latino. Sixty-eight percent of the participants were from families of low socioeconomic status. The majority (73%) of the participants were learning disabled and the remaining participants had disabilities including other health impairment (8.6%), mild intellectual delay (5.4%), autism spectrum disorder (3.8%), emotional behavioral disorder (3.8%), speech language impairment (2.2%), traumatic brain injury (1.6%), and orthopedic impairment (1.6%). Once the researchers calculated the initial descriptive statistics, they conducted a maximum-likelihood factor analysis on the data matrix to determine which factors emerged from the STQ items. The second phase consisted of students, parents of the participating students and professional in the transition realm. The students were all in high

school and had completed the STQ. There were 29 students in total and of those students, 45% were male and 55% were female. Sixty-two percent of the students had a learning disability and 17% had other health impairments. The remaining students had primary disabilities that fell under the categories of speech, emotional behavioral and intellectual. The parents and professionals that participated were mainly female and Caucasian. Open-ended questions were developed for both the student, parent and professionals groups that related to the applicability and the usability of the STQ, the relationship between using the STQ and transition planning and the limitations of the STQ.

In Phase 1, five factors emerged from the factor analysis accounting for 45% of the variance. The first factor was independent living skills, factor two was participation in school, community and work settings, factor three was future planning and goal attainment, factor four was disability awareness and factor five was vocational rehabilitation. Participants highest rated was factor one ($M=4.94$, $SD=1.99$). The lowest self-rated factor was Factor 5 and within this low rating it was the students with learning disabilities that rated the lowest which provides important information about the specific needs of students with learning disabilities.

In Phase 2, four themes emerged from analyzing the student's comments which included: (a) user-friendly features, (b) support provided by teachers, (c) active participation in transition planning, and (d) limitations of the STQ. The most common of these, with 56% of the comments, was related to the user-friendliness of STQ. The fewest comments (11%) suggested the STQ needed improvement. Four themes also emerged from the parent and professional groups, including: (a) information about students' perspectives, (b) preview of the IEP, (c) user-

friendly features, and (d) limitations of the STQ. The most comments (35%) indicated that the STQ was user friendly

Even with the limitations to this study, it was very insightful when examining transition assessments for effective planning for a student's future. The limitations included participants being a convenience sample from schools in a single district, most participants being Caucasian from lower economic households and having a diagnosis of learning disabilities. Effective planning must be focused around the student's perspectives, interests, goals and preferences with opportunities for enhanced self-determination. By being involved in meaningful transition assessment, students are more likely to engage in goal-setting and self-reflection and can create meaningful discussions about their transition with teachers, parents, and other team members.

Carter, Lane, Pierson, and Stang (2008) examined educators' intentions and efforts to promote self-determination in high school classrooms. They looked at how high school teachers evaluate the importance of providing instruction in each of the seven self-determination skill domains, to what extent high school teachers actually deliver instruction in each of these domains, if general and special educators share similar priorities in the area of self-determination, and if there are similar opportunities for receiving self-determination instruction available across curricular areas. The researchers hypothesized that special education would attach greater importance to providing instruction across all areas of self-determination relative to general educators and allow for greater amounts of instructional time to these areas. They also hypothesized that somewhat fewer opportunities for receiving self-determination instruction would be available in core academic general education classes.

Participants for the study were 340 educators working within eight economically diverse high schools. The majority of the educators were female (57.2%) and Caucasian (79.3%), which depicted the demographic makeup of the secondary educators in the state at the time. The educators reported an average of 12.8 years' experience with most (57.7%) holding a graduate degree. Three quarters of the educators were general education, 16.2% were special educators and the remaining 8.8% reported other program responsibilities with their school. Seventy-seven percent taught only core academic classes, 9.8% taught only elective classes, and 12.9% taught both. Participants worked at eight high schools within three school districts in a western state and served both urban and suburban communities. The mean ethnicity of students across all schools was 45.8% Caucasian, 41.7% Hispanic, 6.5% Asian American, 2.4% African American and 3.6% other ethnicities. Educators rated each of seven instructional domains associated with self-determination along two dimensions. First, teacher rated the importance of teaching each skill domain relative to other instructional priorities in their classroom. Ratings were along a 6-point Likert-type scale rating from *low* (1) to *high* (6). Secondly, teaches rated how often they taught each skill in their classroom. Ratings were provided on the same scale from *never* (1) to *often* (6). The researchers used descriptive and correlational statistics to summarize ratings of importance and actual instruction across all respondents. Repeated measures of analysis of variance (ANOVAs) with contrasts, compared educators' ratings of importance and actual instruction across the self-determination domains. They then computed one-way fixed-effects multivariate analyses of variance (MANOVAs) using the general linear model to evaluate differences in rating of importance and actual instruction associated with teacher type and curricular area. For each MANOVA, they treated the subgroup membership (teacher type or

curricular area) as a fixed-effect factor. Dependent variables were the item level responses which were choice-making, decision-making, goal-setting and attainment, problem-solving, self-advocacy, leadership skills, self-awareness and self-regulation skills.

Educators generally noted *moderate* to *high* levels of importance to each of the seven component elements of self-determination. They also reported that they *sometimes too often* taught each of the seven skills associated with self-determination, in their classes. There was a strong relationship between educators' ratings of domain importance and the time that they devoted to these skill areas in their classrooms. Special educators rated providing instruction in self-determination as significantly more important as the general educators did. The ratings of the importance of providing instruction in skills that promote self-determination found that educators teaching in both academic core classes and elective classes were significantly higher than those of educators only teaching academic core classes.

Increasing access to the general education curriculum for student with disabilities in order to ensure that all students' progress toward the same state and local curricular standards, has been a prominent push in education. Another prominent push has been the importance of self-determination skills within the transition process for students with disabilities in order to promote success in secondary school and post school. This study found that general educators attached ample importance to promoting multiple component elements of self-determination in their classroom. Some of the limitations to this study include the fact that the findings were based on educators' self-reports which introduce the potential for desirable outcomes, they were only able to account for a small proportion of the variance in educators' ratings of self-

determination importance and instruction, and they did not explore the specific instructional curricular strategies that educators were using.

Since the importance of self-determination in transition planning for students with disabilities seems to be pretty well rooted in the research surrounding the transition planning process, Thoma et al. (2002) investigated whether special educators were learning about self-determination in their teacher preparation courses, what strategies they learned and how effective they believed those strategies to be.

For this study, special educators were identified from the department of education in five southwestern states. Five-hundred were then selected from these at random. Of the 500 selected, 43 participated in the study. From these 43, 62.8% described themselves as licensed special education teachers, 37.2% were working on a limited license, 44% had graduate degrees, and the years of experience ranged from 0 to 33.

A 46-item survey was developed to assess teachers' perceptions and skills in supporting/teaching the components of self-determination. The questions were multiple choice and Likert-scale format. Four of the questions assessed demographic information, four questions addressed the participants' teaching positions, and the remainder of the questions related to self-determination. Respondents were asked to rate their ability to teach each of the seven skills related to self-determination, the importance of the skill and the effectiveness of the strategies used on a 5-point scale (1=extremely important/effective, 5=very unimportant/ineffective).

Seventy-five percent of the respondents reported that they were familiar with the term *self-determination*, and 25% said that they were not, and 67% said that the training or instruction that they had received regarding self-determination was not adequate to implement strategies

successfully. Thirty-two percent of respondents said that they learned about self-determination in graduate level courses, 25% said that it was from journal articles and 23% were from workshops and conference presentations. Eighteen percent said that they learned about self-determination from books, 16% from undergraduate classes, and 14% from school district in-services. Sixty-nine percent said that it was extremely important to teach this information in undergraduate programs and 74% said it was extremely important to teach it at the graduate level. When teachers were asked whether they had developed goals related to self-determination for student, 58% said that none of their students had goals related to self-determination on their IEPs.

Most special educators have heard of self-determination and believe that it is important to teach the component skills of self-determination. However, the knowledge that the teachers received in undergraduate and graduate programs seem to have fallen short of their perceived needs. The special educators questioned the effectiveness of the current method that they were using to teach self-determination skills and many of the methods were unknown to the teachers, such as commercially available curriculum and self-centered planning methods. The limitations to the study were that it relied solely on teachers' self-reports, which could reflect what the teacher hoped to do or what they wish they were doing.

Summary of Chapter 2 Review Research

Eleven studies were chosen for review that evaluated the importance of self-determination interventions for transition age youth with disabilities. Table 1 presents these studies in the same chronological order in which they appear in Chapter 2.

Table 1

Summary of Chapter 2 Findings

AUTHORS	STUDY DESIGN	PARTICIPANTS	PROCEDURE	FINDINGS
Shogren, Burke, Anderson, Antosh, Wehmeyer, LaPlante, & Shaw (2018)	Quantitative	340 transition age students that were qualified for special education services under the category of intellectual disability from 17 school districts	Participants were randomly assigned to the SDLMI-only or SDLMI + WF conditions; districts, teachers and students were relatively evenly split between the groups.	Changes were reported for self-determination and its characteristics by students and teachers over the 1-year period, with the most change in the SDLMI only group.
Raley, Shogren, & McDonald (2018)	Quantitative	312 students with and without disabilities aged 14 to 16 years across two inclusive secondary mathematics classes. Of the students with disabilities, two had attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), one had vision loss or blindness, one had a physical disability, and one identified as having two or more disabilities.	The Self-Determination Learning Model of Instruction was piloted in two inclusion math classes for both special education and general education students over a 16-week period of time. The Self-Determination Inventory: Student-Report, data on the goal attainment of students as well as social validity data was collected to find the effects.	Positive findings related to goal attainment and social validity were found.

Table 1 (continued)

AUTHORS	STUDY DESIGN	PARTICIPANTS	PROCEDURE	FINDINGS
Wehmeyer, Shogren, Palmer, Williams-Diehm, Little, & Boulton (2012)	Quantitative	312 high school students with intellectual disability or learning disability recruited from 20 school districts located in three states and ranging in age from 13.5 to 21.3 years.	Campuses that agreed to study were assigned either “treatment” or “control” groups. Treatments groups underwent the SDLMI instruction for one year.	Significant differences were found in latent means across occasions and differential effects due to the SDLMI across disability category.
Shogren, Wehmeyer, Palmer, Riftenbark, & Little (2015)	Quantitative	Follow-up analysis of 779 students with disabilities recruited from six states and 50 school districts.	Participants were recruited to participate in a longitudinal study examining the impact of interventions to promote self-determination in secondary school. Also involved a 2-year follow-up to explore the impact on adult outcomes.	Self-determination status upon exiting high school predicts positive outcomes in the areas of achieving employment and community access 1-year post school and that exposure to self-determination in secondary school may lead to more stability in student outcomes.
Powers, Geenen, Powers, Pommier-Satya, Turner, Dalton, Drummond, & Swank (2012)	Quantitative	69 youth, ages 16.5 to 17.5 years of age whom were receiving special education services, under the guardianship of Oregon DHS and attending a large school district in the study targeted area.	Students were exposed to the TAKE CHARGE curriculum or to the foster care independent living program over the course of a year.	Youth in the intervention group completed high school, were employed, and carried out independent living activities at higher rates than the control group.

Table 1 (continued)

Wehmeyer, Palmer, Shogren, Williams-Diehm, & Soukup (2013)	Quantitative	371 high school students receiving special education services under the categorical areas of mental retardation or learning disabilities.	Students were randomly assigned to an intervention or control group with students in the intervention condition receiving multiple components to enhance self-determination.	All students in the study showed improvement in self-determination over the 3 years of study. However, students in the intervention group showed significantly greater growth.
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Table 1 (continued)

AUTHORS	STUDY DESIGN	PARTICIPANTS	PROCEDURE	FINDINGS
Carter, Lane, Crnabori, Bruhn, & Oakes (2011)	Qualitative	A total of 81 articles that met criteria and were coded for purposes of the review.	A comprehensive, systematic review of school-based intervention studies addressing the elements of self-determination for students with and at risk for Emotional/Behavioral Disorders.	Examined studies primarily addressed a narrow range of self-determination elements as intervention components or outcome measures with relatively few studies addressing students from culturally diverse backgrounds.
Chou, Palmer, Wehmeyer, & Skorupski (2017)	Quantitative	96 middle school and high school students ages 13 through 22 years from seven school districts within three states. 46 participants were within the identified ID category, 37 were LD and 13 were ED.	Examined the profiles of the combination of three self-report measures of component elements of self-determined behavior between two groups. Data were analyzed from the participants who completed three self-report instruments (The <i>ARC's Self-Determination Scale</i> , the <i>Problem-Solving Survey</i> and the <i>Nowicki-Strickland locus of Control Scale</i>)	Each group had different profiles within the combined three component elements of self-determination but groups were not different on any single measure of component.

Table 1 (continued)

AUTHORS	STUDY DESIGN	PARTICIPANTS	PROCEDURE	FINDINGS
Collier, Griffin, & Wei (2016)	Quantitative	186 students with disabilities in grades 10 through 12. 60% male and 40% female. 75% Caucasian, 15% were Hispanic/Latino, 4% were African American, 3% were Native American, 2% were Asian and 1% were Pacific Islander.	The Student Transition Questionnaire (STQ) is a 38-item paper-and-pencil assessment used to obtain information about students' perspectives related to multiple transition- related areas.	Was found that the STQ was useful in distinguishing students' perceptions of personal strengths and needs as well as helpful in promoting student engagement in transition planning.
Carter, Lane, Pierson, & Stang (2008)	Quantitative	Examined the endeavors of 340 general and special educators to promote student self- determination in high school classrooms.	Educators completed questionnaire items individually and anonymously and placed them in a sealed box. Descriptive and correlational statistics to summarize ratings of importance and actual instruction was used.	Educators generally credited <i>moderate</i> to <i>high</i> levels of importance to each of the seven component elements of self- determination. Educators reported that they <i>sometimes</i> too <i>often</i> taught each of the seven skills.
Thoma, Nathanson, Baker, & Tamura (2002)	Quantitative	500 special educators were randomly selected, 43 participated in the study. 62.8% described themselves as licensed special education teachers; 37.2% were working on emergency credentials or limited licenses. 44% of the participants had graduate degrees.	A 46-item survey was developed to solicit teacher's perceptions and skills in supporting and teaching the various components of self- determination and how important the core competencies of self- determination are in teachers' own lives.	Special educators have heard of self- determination and believe that it is important for students with disabilities but believe that the knowledge that they received in undergraduate and graduate programs fell short or their needs.

Chapter 3: Conclusions and Recommendations

The purpose of this research paper was to examine the importance of self-determination interventions for transition age youth with disabilities. Chapter 1 provided background information on the topic and Chapter 2 presented a review of the research literature. In this chapter, I discuss conclusions, recommendations and implications from research findings.

Conclusions

Seven of the 11 studies focused on a variety of interventions and the differential impact of implementing them (Carter et al., 2013; Powers et al., 2012; Raley et al., 2018; Shogren et al., 2015; Shogren et al., 2018; Wehmeyer et al., 2012; Wehmeyer et al., 2013). One study examined the relationships between the elements of self-determination and the impact of disability category in order to guide instruction (Chou et al., 2017). One study examined the implementation of a comprehensive transition assessment focused on the students' perspectives of a range of transition issues including self-determination (Collier et al., 2016). The last two studies examined educators' intentions and efforts to promote self-determination in high school classrooms and also analyze where teachers were acquiring their self-determination intervention trainings (Carter et al., 2008; Thoma et al., 2002).

Of the seven studies that examined self-determination interventions and their impact, three of them focused on the SDLMI intervention specifically. Each of these studies found positive school and post school outcomes when implementing this specific intervention (Raley et al., 2018; Shogren et al., 2018; Wehmeyer et al., 2012). Raley et al. (2018) looked at implementing SDLMI in a high school inclusion Algebra class with both special education and general education students. They found that general educators can implement SDLMI with

students with and without disabilities and that it led to students achieving self-selected goals related to the core content. Social validity information from this study also provided further evidence of the degree to which students and their teacher benefited from using the SDLMI, and the level of self-reported student satisfaction suggests that students were satisfied with the SDLMI lessons overall. Wehmeyer et al. (2012) examined the relationship between SDLMI and self-determination in transition aged youth with cognitive disabilities and found that students had significantly better academic and transition goal attainment outcomes and had greater access to general education curriculum after one year of the intervention. Over 2 years of using the SDLMI intervention showed significant improvement in student's self-determination. Shogren et al. (2018) also looked at the impact of implementation of SDLMI but examined the impact of this intervention alone versus implementing the SDLMI combined with WF with transition-aged students with intellectual disabilities. They found that students in the SDLMI-only group reported significant increases in their self-determination scores and teachers saw student's goal attainment as predicting change in self-determination.

The following three studies examined a variety of different self-determination interventions and found positive school and post school outcomes from their implementation (Powers et al., 2012; Shogren et al., 2015; Wehmeyer et al., 2013). Powers et al. (2012) evaluated the efficacy of the *TAKE CHARGE* self-determination intervention for improving the transition outcomes of youth in both foster care and special education. Youth in the intervention group revealed moderate to large effect sizes in self-determination, quality of life, and utilization of community transition services. Youth in the intervention group also were employed, completed high school and carried out independent living activities at higher rates. Shogren

et al. (2015) examined the implementation of the WF intervention and found that self-determination status when exiting high school predicts positive outcomes in gaining employment and community access and that exposure to the self-determination intervention leads to more stability in student outcomes over time. Wehmeyer et al. (2013) looked at the causal relationship between efforts to promote self-determination and enhancement of the self-determination of youth with disabilities. This study used a variety of different self-determination interventions and found that students that received the intervention showed significantly greater growth in self-determination. Carter et al. (2011) conducted a comprehensive, systematic review of multiple self-determination intervention studies and their components for students with EBD. Carter et al. recognized the association between self-determination and improved educational and post school outcomes, however, found that these studies primarily addressed a narrow range of self-determination elements as intervention components or outcomes measures.

Chou et al. (2017) examined the instructional needs in self-determination based on disability category and Collier et al. (2016) examined a student assessment that allows youth with disabilities the ability to practice various self-determination skills within a personally meaningful context. Both of these studies spoke to the importance and the value of self-determination as a large component of the transition process. Carter et al. (2008) and Thoma et al. (2002) found that educators attached considerable importance to providing instruction in skills related to self-determination and that they believe that it is important to teach the core component skills that allow students an opportunity to be self-determined.

Overall, all of the studies contained proclamation of the importance of self-determination interventions for transition-age youth with disabilities. In the studies that examined self-determination interventions and their outcomes (Carter et al., 2013; Powers et al., 2012; Raley et al., 2018; Shogren et al., 2015; Shogren et al., 2018; Wehmeyer et al., 2012; Wehmeyer et al., 2013), individuals showed higher levels of employment, community access, a stronger desire to live independently, increased levels of self-determination, increased quality of life, higher rates of graduating high school, and higher rates of employment than students who were not exposed to a specific self-determination intervention. In the studies that looked at self-determination within disability categories, student self-assessments of self-determination skills and teacher's perceptions of self-determination, self-determination was noted as a best-practice procedure in the education of students with disabilities with a high level of importance in the transition process.

Recommendations for Future Research

Within the research, there were many limitations and recommendations that permeated throughout. Some of the limitations dealt with the participants of the studies themselves, while others discussed the assessments used and the multiple variables of self-determination. The importance of self-determination was noted in all of the studies and future research was encouraged. It was recommended that the limitations to each study were considered and resolved with future research.

Of the studies that examined specific self-determination interventions and their outcomes (Carter et al., 2013; Powers et al., 2012; Raley et al., 2018; Shogren et al., 2015; Shogren et al., 2018; Wehmeyer et al., 2012; Wehmeyer et al., 2013) researchers noted small sample sizes, lack

of differing disabilities, lack of racial/ethnic diversity, self-report assessments, data availability across sources and across systems, missing data and multiple variables contributing to self-determination, as limitations to their studies. Chou et al. (2017) also noted lack of self-determination components being studied and lack of diversity in disability categories. Like the above-mentioned studies, Collier et al. (2016) noted the small sample size and the lack of racial/ethnic diversity as limitations. The two studies that examined educators' intentions and efforts to promote self-determination in high school classrooms and where teachers were acquiring their self-determination intervention trainings (Carter et al., 2008; Thoma et al., 2002), noted the use of self-report assessments as a limitation due to the potential for social desirability ratings.

Although the increase in importance of self-determination within the transition process is encouraging, there is much that still needs to be examined in the promotion of self-determination. There are now a wide range of instructional programs and assessments that can be utilized when teaching and assessing self-determination, as well as multiple studies that indicate that positive self-determination status is linked to more positive secondary school and post school outcomes. More research needs to be done to unequivocally determine the benefits and the importance of self-determination enhancement for transition success.

Implications for Current Practice

As a high school special education teacher, transition planning is an integral part of the IEP process for a student's school and post school outlook. I am very interested in self-determination skills through intervention, the assessment of self-determination skills, and the training or lack thereof, that teachers receive in self-determination interventions and supports. I

am always searching for how to engage these students not only in their present academics but also in their futures. I have struggled to find good and meaningful curriculum for my students and have created my class from multiple different models such as focusing on executive functions skills, self-advocacy skills and goal-setting. To captivate a teenager's interest in their own future so that they may take more ownership of their behaviors is something that I am very interested in. I believe that having the student be as involved as possible in their transition plans as well as their goal generating and tracking is necessary for success in and out of school. I appreciate the interventions and assessments studied in these articles and I was pleased to note that I am doing some of these same practices with my students. I am also interested in integrating some of the other elements that I have not yet tried based on the positive findings of these studies.

Summary

The studies I selected supported the importance of self-determination for transition age youth with disabilities. All of the studies indicated that higher self-determination levels and self-determination skills are beneficial to individuals. The intervention-specific studies were especially promising. Students who were taught a specific self-determination curriculum experienced higher self-determination levels, higher quality of life ratings, higher levels of employment, and higher levels of community access. These studies suggest the importance of self-determination on future outcomes of students; however, the manner and degree of impact needs to be further explored with consideration to the multiple personal and environmental factors that affect school and post school outcomes. These studies also suggest that teacher's consider self-determination a useful component in their instruction. The challenge remains for

educators to identify effective strategies that capitalize on these components in order for students with disabilities to acquire and apply those skills.

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