

Preface

For the past 30 years, a number of works have dealt with the transition of youth, with all types of disabilities and giftedness, from secondary schools to the demands and opportunities of adulthood. These materials have assisted us greatly in examining, planning, acting upon, and evaluating the services, supports, and programs created to assist youth in their transitions. This book adds to that body of capacity-building literature by offering in-depth perspectives on outcomes, issues, and options of a specific but diverse group—youth with learning disabilities—as they move from high school to adult life. Challenges in independent living, social and interpersonal networks, further learning, and employment typically were ignored in the past due to perceptions that these students needed assistance only in connecting with higher education supports or that they were heading straight into employment. Professionals quickly learned that a failure to address transition needs in *each* of the major life domains could, and does, pose very serious problems for many young adults, including individuals with learning disabilities.

The importance of *comprehensive* transition planning for this group of students was the impetus for bringing this collaborative effort to print, since time—in the school day, in the years in school—appears insufficient to address the variety of needs across multiple domains that an individual might experience. The contributors to this volume have been active and interested in both secondary transition and education of students with learning disabilities for many years. The chapters focus on areas that have the greatest implications for these adolescents' preparation, and the authors present cogent arguments for thorough consideration regarding these topics. As comprehensively and clearly as possible, the authors address the educational, employment, social, and living options available to and critical for persons with learning disabilities. The result is a collection of interrelated chapters that offer rich insights into current trends and promising practices for individuals with learning disabilities who are moving into new stages in their lives. Because the order of the chapters attempts to more or less parallel an unfolding of the journey taken by the person preparing for adult life activities, readers are encouraged to peruse the text from beginning to end. We are hopeful that the material covered provides a foundation to help professionals involved in transition planning become better “tour guides” for the paths upon which students are embarking.

The philosophical approaches held by the editors of this volume have been greatly influenced by many different professionals in the field, such as Dr. Robert Stodden, Dr. Lee Wiederholt, Dr. Frank Rusch, Dr. Donn Brolin, Dr. Gary Clark, and many others. This work also represents the culmination of a process that received substantial support in the development phase from PRO-ED, an organization that realized an opportunity to champion more far-reaching treatment of transitions among persons with learning disabilities than individual efforts had accomplished, and in the publishing production process from the Hammill Institute on Disabilities. Indeed, the Institute agreed to allow this volume's royalties to be donated to the Division on Career Development and Transition (DCDT) of the Council for Exceptional Children. The

very professional, capable staff at PRO-ED and the Hammill Institute have consistently provided uniquely focused guidance, ensuring quality outcomes through an extensive review process and giving other editorial assistance where needed. We thank them for their endurance with this lengthy project. In particular, we owe the authors of the chapters herein a great deal of gratitude and respect for their work and their patience with the completion of this volume. We hope you agree that this text meets the challenge of guiding us all to facilitate the movement from school to adult life for persons with learning disabilities and others.

GB, JRP, PK, and DSB

