

# PART 1

## Introduction to the Guide

### Overview of Transition

1

The notion of transition implies movement from one situation to another. Critical and not-so-critical transitions are part of everyday life for all individuals. This is especially relevant for persons with disabilities. Despite the universal nature of this notion, specific transition planning activities are mandated for only two of the many possible transitions through which children and youth with disabilities pass. First, a transition plan must be part of the Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) for every toddler eligible for services under the provisions of Part C of the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA; 1990). This plan serves to smooth the movement of these young children from early intervention to early childhood special education or another subsequent setting. Second, transition planning must be initiated by age 16 for all youth who receive special education and related services under IDEA. It should be noted that in some states, transition planning begins at an earlier age—typically, age 14.

The importance and impact of transition planning and services were recognized in the early 1980s and have continued to be recognized. Transition planning is now a major part of the secondary experience for students who receive special education services. The Individuals With Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA; 2004) continued the mandate of transition services that was first introduced into law in 1990. Still, there is a wide range of professional awareness of and commitment to transition services and the planning needed to be successful in the transition services delivery process.

### Definition of Transition and Transition Services

Transition from school to postschool settings has been defined in different ways over the years. One of the first definitions, from Will (1984), stressed that transition is “an outcome-oriented process” (p. 1). Her fundamental idea was retained in the definition of transition services contained in IDEA (1990). Other definitions of transition have been developed by various sources. In 1994, the Division on Career Development and Transition (DCDT) produced one of the most comprehensive definitions of transition, reflecting the best blend of contemporary thinking on this topic. The definition underscored the realities associated with change. It pointed out that as students leave school, they will have to assume a variety of adult roles in the community. It also stressed the proactive aspects of transition education and the importance of actively involving students in this process whenever possible. The definition, written by Halpern (1994), reads as follows:

Transition refers to a change in status from behaving primarily as a student to assuming emergent adult roles in the community. These roles include employment, participating in post-secondary education, maintaining a home, becoming appropriately involved in the community, and experiencing satisfactory personal and social relationships. The process of enhancing transition involves the participation and coordination of school programs, adult agency services, and natural supports within the community. The foundations for transition should be laid during the elementary and middle school years, guided by the broad concept of career development. Transition planning should begin no later than age 14, and students should be encouraged, to the full extent of their capabilities, to assume a maximum amount of responsibility for such planning. (p. 117)

The language used in IDEA of 2004 to define transition services articulates what schools need to do to be in compliance with the transition services mandate. The federal definition stresses the importance of a results-oriented process:

The term “transition services” means a coordinated set of activities for a child with a disability that—(A) is designed to be a results-oriented process, that is focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the child with a disability to facilitate the child’s movement from school to post-school activities, including post-secondary education, vocational training, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living or community participation; (B) is based on the individual child’s needs, taking into account the child’s strengths, preferences, and interests; (C) includes instruction, related services, community experiences, the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives, and, when appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation. (Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004, 20 U.S.C § 1400 *et seq.*)

2

The definition of transition services emphasizes the importance of instruction as a key part of the process to address student needs.

## Importance of Transition Services

To understand the importance of good transition planning, it is useful to consider the outcomes associated with successful functioning in adulthood, which is the ultimate goal of transition planning efforts. In our opinion, the ultimate outcome for which all transition efforts should be directed is to help create lives that are characterized by a sense of personal fulfillment. This concept relates closely to the notion of quality of life, as discussed by Halpern (1993). Halpern suggested that quality of life—or personal fulfillment—relates to three elements: happiness (transient state of affect), satisfaction (feelings and behavior patterns associated with different adult roles), and sense of general well-being (enduring sense of satisfaction with one’s life). We believe that all that we do as professionals involved in transition efforts should be guided by the overriding theme of enhancing the students’ quality of life by imparting the means for them to be personally fulfilled.

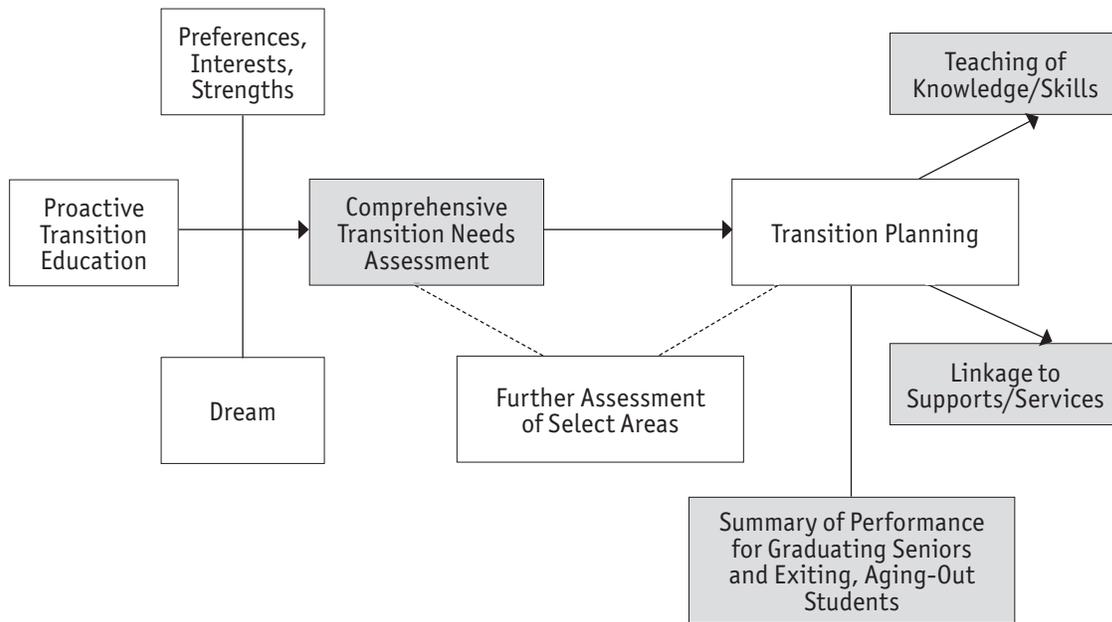
In our opinion, to enjoy some sense of personal fulfillment, an individual must be reasonably successful in meeting the challenges of everyday life, whether at work, at home, in school, or in the community. Various sources (Brolin, 1993; Cronin, Patton, & Wood, 2007) provide taxonomies of the major demands encountered in adulthood. People who feel that they are personally fulfilled do not always deal successfully with the day-to-day issues that arise in their lives; however, they are more likely than other individuals to handle those issues successfully most of the time.

The transition planning process, as mandated in IDEA of 2004, should identify a student’s interests, preferences, strengths, and needs. Subsequently, transition-related goals should be generated based on the data related to these four areas. Ultimately, the student will need to be linked to supports and services that will be needed in life when school is completed. In addition, the student will need to be taught the knowledge and skill sets that will contribute to his or her success when school is over. This guide is designed to assist with the knowledge and skill-sets challenge.

## Transition Planning Model

Although the process of identifying transition needs, strengths, preferences, and interests; generating transition plans based on these areas; and then addressing these areas through instruction and linkage activities is a relatively simple idea to conceptualize on a general level, the process gets much more complex as one looks closer. Figure 1 illustrates the key elements of this process. As can be seen in the figure, two immediate outcomes of assessment are possible: (1) recognition that more in-depth information is needed and (2) development of transition-related goals: knowledge and skills needs, which should be addressed through the development of instructional goals and subsequent instructional activities, and supports and services needs, which should be addressed through the generation of linkage goals and related activities to ensure that requisite connections are made.

**Figure 1**  
Transition planning process.



*Note.* From *Transition Planning Inventory* (2nd ed.) by J. R. Patton and G. M. Clark. Copyright 2014 by PRO-ED, Inc. Reprinted with permission.

*Instructional goals* relate to knowledge and skills needs and should be written in the Individualized Education Program (IEP) as academic, behavioral, or social goals. For instance, if it is determined that a student needs to develop a specific study skill, such as note taking, to perform better in college, then an IEP goal should be written to address this need. *Linkage goals* focus on making connections to the supports and services that will be needed in postschool situations. Continuing with the postsecondary education scenario referred to above, a college-bound student with disabilities could benefit from accessing the services of an office dedicated to working with students with special needs. A linkage goal should be written that ensures that the student is connected to this support service.

Not every transition area identified as needing attention will require both instructional and linkage goals. This guide is dedicated to providing school-based transition personnel with instructional activity ideas for addressing the instructional goals that evolve from the transition planning process. A separate resource that is related to addressing the linkage needs of students is also available as part of the *Transition Planning Inventory—Second Edition* (TPI-2; Patton & Clark, 2014).

### TPI-2 System Components

This guide has been developed for use in one of two ways. It is easily used as part of the TPI-2 system, as the organizational features of this guide correspond exactly with the organizational schema of the TPI-2. However, this guide can also be used as a resource for school-based transition personnel who do not use the TPI-2. Both options are described in this section.

The TPI-2 is an assessment instrument for identifying the perceived needs, strengths, preferences, and interests of students based on the ratings of the student, his or her parents, and school personnel. The instrument contains two main components: (1) an assessment of preferences and interests, completed by students and parents, and (2) a set of three rating scales for Student, Home, and School, each with 57 transition planning statements that are organized around the three transition areas of working, learning, and living (the Student rating scale is designed to be completed by the student; the Home rating scale by the student’s parents, guardians, or caregivers; and the School rating scale by school professionals). Results identify

relative strengths, current or emerging preferences and interests, as well as areas for additional assessment and competencies for which the student would benefit from additional instruction and experiences. By aligning with each TPI-2 item, this book provides instructional activities that could support students to develop or improve those skills needed to achieve their postschool goals.

For those who do *not* use the TPI-2 as part of the transition assessment process, this guide can easily connect to any other system that has been implemented for determining transition needs. The instructional activities are organized around the areas of working, learning, and living and provide a plethora of ideas any teacher can use to address the transition instructional needs of students. Whenever possible, linkages are also made to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS; National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010). This alignment is described in detail in the following section. The direct linkages of transition competencies with the CCSS provide educators in states committed to the CCSS with a means of pursuing achievement of standards that are relevant to the school-to-adult-living transition process.

## Connecting Transition Instruction to the Common Core State Standards

The CCSS, referred to as the College and Career Readiness Standards in some states, have been adopted by nearly every U.S. state. These standards identify the knowledge and skills students need to possess to become college and career ready. As the foreword to the standards states,

the Common Core State Standards provide a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn, so teachers and parents know what they need to do to help them. The standards are designed to be robust and relevant to the real world, reflecting the knowledge and skills that our young people need for success in college and careers. (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010)

The standards provide the science of education, but the art is in the instructional strategies and learning activities that teachers incorporate to engage all students in the content. In other words, the CCSS provide expectations for learning at each grade level, but teachers prepare students to attain these levels of understanding through excellence in teaching. This preparation includes relating the content to students' experiences and the community context to bring the standards to life and support students in moving toward their postsecondary goals through the development of transition competencies in employment (e.g., career choice and planning, employment knowledge and skills); education or training (e.g., further education and training, functional communication, self-determination); and independent and community living (e.g., independent living, personal money management, community involvement, leisure activities, health, and interpersonal relationships). This viewpoint is reiterated by employers and college personnel. In a 2014 national survey that asked employers to rate the importance of job candidate qualifications, the top five skills identified were (1) the ability to work in a team structure; (2) the ability to make decisions and solve problems; (3) the ability to plan, organize, and prioritize work; (4) the ability to verbally communicate with persons inside and outside the organization; and (5) the ability to obtain and process information (National Association of Colleges and Employers, 2014). Think about these skills. Which ones relate to traditional language arts and mathematics content? Which skills would you classify as transition competencies?

While postschool planning (i.e., transition) is mandated for students with disabilities, many young adults without disabilities do not graduate from high school with the skills and experiences to be successful in postsecondary education, employment, and/or independent living. Looking at the principles of universal design for learning, we know that designing instruction that addresses the diverse needs of students with disabilities frequently proves to be equally beneficial for students who do not have disabilities (Basham, Israel, Graden, Poth, & Winston, 2010; Rose & Gravel, 2010). The same holds true in the transition from high school to adult life. All students experience this transition, and while their support needs vary, all students benefit from instruction, projects, in-school activities, and community experiences that help

them determine their goals after high school, plan for meeting these goals, and practice the skills that are valued in the workplace, college, and community life. Unfortunately, the general education curriculum and now the CCSS have often been seen as separate from instruction that supports the development of transition competencies.

Taken as a whole, the CCSS can be overwhelming, so let's focus on an example for one single standard: *CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.6 Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate*. How can we relate the standard to students' postsecondary goals and promote the transfer of skills while supporting students to master this standard? The following are a few ideas that we identified:

- Students participate in mock job interviews with other students, the teacher, or individuals from the community serving as the interviewer. In these interviews, students are asked basic interview questions about their skills, interests, and experience.
- Given scenarios where they might have to ask for help in college or technical school, students act out the scenarios with a partner. Example scenarios may include asking for a copy of the lecture notes, requesting preferential seating, or requesting extended time for an exam.
- Students role-play answering the telephone in a business or professional setting (e.g., stating the business name, asking if they can help, using a friendly tone of voice).

You likely can think of additional lessons or activities that address transition competencies within this standard. We challenge you to think about the instructional activities in a variety of ways.

1. Which activities can you incorporate into the courses that you teach?
2. How might you collaborate with others in your school (e.g., general and special education teachers, guidance counselors, related service providers, administrators) to expand the postschool readiness of all students by integrating real-life activities across multiple courses?
3. What assessment data will help you know when students have reached proficiency in both the CCSS and the transition competency?
4. Which activities could you share with parents to help them support their child's movement toward his or her postsecondary goals?

Instead of waiting for students to ask, "When will I ever use this?" teachers show all students how the content relates to their current and future lives when they design instruction that addresses the CCSS within a real-life context. Research shows that making this connection increases student engagement (National Research Council, 2012), which in turn increases academic achievement (Van de gaer, Pustjens, Van Damme, & De Munter, 2009; Wang & Holcombe, 2010), which in turn improves postschool outcomes (Benz, Yovanoff, & Doren, 1997; Schneider, Kirst, & Hess, 2003). Applying the core curriculum to real-life contexts supports attendance and engagement in school, graduation, and the transfer the knowledge and skills across school, home, and community settings.

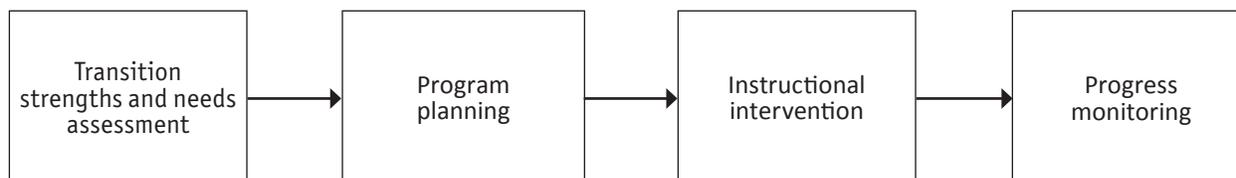
This book provides an array of instructional activities that address both the CCSS and the transition competencies that are vital to the postschool success of students. As an instruction guide, the activities listed are designed to support your brainstorming; please adapt the activities to your contexts and the individual needs and experiences of your students.

## **Ways to Use This Guide**

This instructional resource guide provides teachers (and other important adult personnel involved in the lives of students with special needs at the secondary level) with a variety of appropriate teaching activities and related resources. These activities are useful in the transition planning process based on a student's current level of functioning and educational needs. The ideas provided in this guide will be linked to the goals that are generated after a comprehensive needs assessment has been conducted, as discussed previously and depicted in Figure 2.

## Figure 2

Transition instructional process.



## Assessment-Based Instruction

6

The assessment process, which is part of the transition planning process, must be comprehensive and focus on a student's interests, preferences, strengths, and needs. Several different assessment options are available to school personnel to accomplish this process. The ideas described in this manual can be used with any assessment system.

Two instruments, however, are closely aligned with the organizational structure of this manual and provide school personnel with an age-appropriate, systematic, and comprehensive method that leads to the development of appropriate individual transition goals based on students' current strengths and needs.

- *Transition Planning Inventory—Second Edition* (TPI-2; Patton & Clark, 2014) provides important information related to 57 transition planning statements, organized around 11 critical adult outcome domains. This information is obtained through ratings provided by the student, someone at home, and school personnel.
- *Informal Assessments in Transition Planning—Second Edition* (Gaumer Erickson, Clark, & Patton, 2013) is a resource guide that provides special educators with two levels of assessment: (1) more detailed information on each of the 57 items of the TPI-2, and (2) 52 informal assessments that can be used in classroom settings with students.

Assessment is extremely important and necessary; however, alone it is not sufficient and must be accompanied with proper planning and effective intervention, based on the plans that are generated. Thus, after the assessment phase is completed, learning opportunities targeting identified transition goals are required. Furthermore, the intervention that is provided must be monitored regularly to determine if progress is being made toward the transition goals, as noted in Figure 2.

## Typical Users of the *Transition Instruction Guide*

The primary persons who will likely use this manual are school-based personnel who have responsibility for transition planning and services. Teachers will find the instructional ideas particularly helpful when designing lessons. Most of the suggestions can be easily woven into instructional lessons at the secondary level. Guidance counselors will find many activities associated with employment and further education to be useful when preparing students for the future.

We also believe that parents and home-school providers might find the contents of this manual appealing. They may implement certain activities at home to assist their transition-age children to prepare for life after high school. They may choose to use this resource to supplement their son's or daughter's school activities or use it as a substitute for missing activities if the school provides only minimal transition instruction or services.

## Ways to Use the *Transition Instruction Guide*

The *Transition Instruction Guide* can be used in conjunction with the TPI-2 or in a stand-alone fashion. In other words, one can use it without any connection to the TPI-2.

**Table 1**  
Intervention Example, Implemented for Jimmy

<b>TPI-2 item</b>	<b>Present level of functional performance</b>	<b>Annual goal</b>	<b>Transition Instruction Guide activity</b>
Knows how to use local transportation systems when needed. [Scale: 0–5, with 5 depicting a high level of competence] School Rating: 1 Home Rating: 1 Student Rating: 3	Jimmy is able to identify the bus route and successfully take the bus from his home to his part-time job. He does have difficulty reading bus schedules and determining when to be at the bus stop at times other than when he usually goes to work.	Jimmy will be able to identify and successfully ride three new bus routes that are not part of his regular transportation routine, without support, when he needs to go to different locations in his community.	Students analyze a bus route or a city map to make decisions based on questions such as: What is the shortest distance from their home to the grocery store? What is the quickest route from their home to the grocery store? If there is construction on one road, what is the best alternative route?  <i>CCSS-specific standards: MATH (HSG-GMD.A.1; HSG-GPE.B.7)</i>

**Use with the TPI-2**

The TPI-2 provides a detailed profile of perceived levels of competence across 57 transition skills. Raters generate goals and objectives for items in which the student shows low levels of competence or has not had an opportunity to develop competence. Instructional intervention related to the generated goals is then implemented. As part of good practice, the implemented intervention should be monitored to determine if the student is making progress. The activities in this manual provide ideas for structuring lessons to accomplish goals written for those areas requiring increased levels of competence.

Table 1 provides an example of how this process might look. This example of a student named Jimmy illustrates one of the 57 transition skills on which his teacher, his parent, and Jimmy himself thought he displayed low levels of competence (Column 1). The second column shows Jimmy’s present level of functional performance, and the third column provides an example of a goal that might be generated for Jimmy in regard to this particular skill area. The last column shows an activity taken from this manual that can be used as part of an ongoing series of lessons that addresses this particular transition skill area.

**Use as a Stand-Alone Resource**

Although this manual is organized using TPI-2 transition domains and skill areas, it is easy to identify needed transition-related instructional activities regardless of how those needs have been determined. However, under IDEA 2004, some type of age-appropriate assessment of a student’s strengths and needs has to be performed and documented.

The process of using this manual as a stand-alone resource is similar to the process using the TPI-2 (see Figure 2), except for the different assessment-based component for determining strengths and needs. So, if school-based personnel can obtain a comprehensive assessment of an individual’s transition needs, it is easy to identify specific activities in this manual that can be used for instructional purposes.