

**An Evaluation of the Steps Secondary Special Education Teachers Practice Prior to  
Implementing Community-Based Vocational Instruction to Students with Disabilities**

by

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## Abstract

Employment is an important factor in meeting fundamental needs of life (e.g., food, shelter, and clothing) and can increase opportunities for socialization with peers (Pickens & Dymond, 2015). Despite the benefits of employment, individuals with disabilities are less likely to engage in employment after graduating from high school, as compared to those without disabilities (Pickens & Dymond, 2015). Community-based vocational instruction (CBVI) is a common method used in educational settings to systematically teach vocational skills in community environments to high school students with disabilities (Cimera, 2010; Kim & Dymond, 2010). This study attempted to examine the planning practices of CBVI implemented by secondary special education teachers in Alabama.

To provide baseline data and expand on research regarding CBVI, a nonexperimental mixed methods research design was implemented in this study. An original survey (e.g., *An Evaluation of the Steps Practiced Before Implementing Community-Based Vocational Instruction*) was developed and utilized to examine the preparation steps practiced by secondary special education teachers of students with disabilities in Alabama. Survey items were developed through reoccurring statements located in literature reviewed. Internal consistency of the survey was determined through a preliminary exploratory factor analysis to identify how items loaded. Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients were reported for each of the planning themes of CBVI. One factor (e.g., *Preparation*) was determined, accounting for 57% of the variance.

This study examined the planning practices of 91 special education teachers in Alabama

and reported the extent to which the participants were trained, suggested facilitators, and observed barriers when implementing CBVI. A total of four research questions facilitated the evolving process of this study. This study found that of those surveyed, special education teachers in Alabama were planning prior to implementing CBVI and participated in an average of two and a half trainings prior to implementing CBVI to students with disabilities. Additionally, this study found that there was a significant difference in the planning practices of those who received two or more training methods as compared to those who had received less than two training methods. Furthermore, results from analyses revealed that professional development training on CBVI impacted the planning practices of special education teachers more significantly than any other type of training method on CBVI.

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## CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

Wehman (1997) defines transition as making adjustments and life changing experiences that take place as individuals with disabilities move from school to independent living, employment or postsecondary education. Transitions are a routine part of an individual's educational experience; therefore, transitions should be seen as exciting and something to look forward to. However, many students with disabilities may see transitioning from school to adult life as challenging or something to be feared.

Transitioning to a new routine or environment can be a daunting task. For individuals with disabilities and their families, transitioning from school to adult life requires an extensive amount of planning, knowledge, and coordination as compared to those without disabilities (Lin, 1998). To help ease fear associated with transitioning, high school special education teachers and transition practitioners can implement transition preparation programs. For students with disabilities, preparing for employment while in high school is a factor in determining a successful transition from high school to post-school employment outcomes. Transition education helps to prepare individuals for the upcoming transitions they will face. Lack of preparation can prevent individuals from being successful when they are met with opportunities for transition, especially in employment.

When the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (1975) was reauthorized in 1990, and renamed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), special education teachers legally became responsible for planning and implementing transition services for all students

with disabilities ages 16-21, which includes preparing them for employment. The passage of IDEA (1990) marked a shift from transition services being considered a charitable effort for individuals with disabilities to complete integration in the world of employment and education (Flexer et al., 2008). While legislative efforts are responsible for encouraging the improvement of transition services for students with disabilities, these individuals are still experiencing poorer post-school outcomes, as compared to people without disabilities (Harris & Associates Inc, 2000).

### **Statement of Problem**

According to the Department of Labor, the current unemployment rate in America is 5.6%, whereas the unemployment rate for individuals with disabilities is doubled that amount at 11.2% (2016). Lack of employment can result in individuals with disabilities being more likely than those without disabilities to live in poverty (Harris & Associates Inc, 2000). While legislation calls for preparation across all domains of life, gaining employment is the means to achieving independent living. Employment preparation programs for students with disabilities while in high school is documented as a predictor for gaining successful employment after exiting high school (Carter, Austin, & Trainor, 2011).

According to Luecking and Fabian (2000), students with disabilities should be trained in real-work environments because these individuals can have difficulty with generalizing skills learned in a classroom. Secondary special education teachers are tasked with the responsibility of ensuring that students with disabilities are exposed to employment preparation programs while they are in school. A solution to providing employment preparation services to students with disabilities is for special education teachers to implement meaningful job preparation programs

that include instruction in community environments. Exposing students to various job sites in the community can help a student transfer job readiness skills from one environment to another.

Current research documents that teaching students with disabilities life skills in real-world environments promotes acquisition and generalization of daily living and vocational skills (see Chapter II). Test et al., (2009) reported findings from eight studies demonstrating the effectiveness of teaching daily living and vocational skills in community settings (Alberto, Cihak, & Gama, 2005; Ayres, Langone, Boon, & Norman, 2006; Bates, Cuvo, Miner, & Korabek, 2001; Cihak, Alberto, Kessler, & Taber, 2004; Heller, Allgood, Ware, & Castelle, 1996; Mechling & Ortega- Hurndon, 2007; Schloss et al., 1995; Taylor, Collins, Schuster, & Kleinert, 2002; Izzo, Cartledge, Miller, Growick, & Rutkowski, 2000; Sinclair, Christensen, & Thurlow, 2005). These eight studies substantiate community-based instruction as an evidence-based practice for students with disabilities. The literature used to substantiate community-based instruction (CBI) as an evidence-based practice revealed that researchers implemented their interventions with students with disabilities who were already participating in pre-established community-based programs. The interventions aimed to teach valuable daily living skills to students with disabilities. However, none of the studies focused on the development of the actual practice or program of CBI prior to implementing the interventions.

Community-based instruction is an effective practice for teaching daily living skills to individuals with disabilities when rigorous interventions are developed, employed, and assessed. Implementing community-based vocational instruction (CBVI) is a type of employment preparation program that can help increase positive post-school employment outcomes for students with disabilities (Kim & Dymond, 2010). However, despite teachers implementing

community-based instruction to students with disabilities, post-school employment outcomes for students with disabilities are still grim.

Community-based vocational instruction provides students with access to authentic work environments to teach them real-life vocational skills. With increased opportunities for CBVI, students can build a repertoire of appropriate work behaviors that might not otherwise be learned in a classroom. Wehman (2006) acknowledged the importance of CBVI by stating that students need opportunities to learn general and specific job skills in community settings where the skills are used so that CBVI in real-world environments can better prepare students for a successful transition to employment. Literature also suggests what practitioners should do prior to implementing community-based instruction, which can also be used to inform practitioners on how to implement effective CBVI programs. However, a comprehensive model for planning for CBVI does not exist in literature. The components suggested by researchers needed to establish effective CBI and CBVI programs are depicted in tables provided in Chapter II. These tables provide a list of suggested program preparation components and steps for teachers to practice as they establish and implement successful community-based programs.

If students are to participate in an effective and meaningful community-based experience, practitioners must develop quality program structures (Kohler, 1996). In other words, prior to students engaging in community-based vocational experiences, the program coordinator must complete several tasks, steps and activities. A thorough review and synthesis of literature revealed that there are five overarching themes to consider when developing high quality community-based vocational instruction programs (see Chapter II, Table 1). These five themes include: (a) *approval*; (b) *safety and liability*; (c) *personnel*, (d) *job site development*; and (e) *student development*.

## Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the extent to which teachers in Alabama are implementing the five over-arching planning themes of CBVI prior to implementing CBVI within their own programs. This study attempted to evaluate the steps and components practiced by secondary special education teachers of students with disabilities before CBVI is implemented. What steps are teachers taking before they engage in CBVI with secondary students who have disabilities? Specifically, to what extent are recommended steps for preparing for CBVI practiced *before* beginning the job preparation program in a community setting?

The goal of this study was to document what Alabama special education teachers of students with documented disabilities are practicing *before* implementing CBVI. This study reports steps practiced by teachers in the following areas before CBVI is implemented with students with disabilities: (a) *approval*; (b) *safety and liability*; (c) *personnel*, (d) *job site development*; and (e) *student development*.

No documented studies have provided practitioners with a means to evaluate current CBVI programs or the extent to which research suggests components or steps for planning for CBVI occur. How to improve employment preparation programs for students with disabilities might become more evident through analyzing and generating data on this topic. Additionally, increasing the likelihood of individuals with disabilities experiencing increased post-school outcomes in the area of employment may be impacted by research and results generated through this study.

In order for a teacher to participate in this study, the following inclusion criteria were established. A teacher must (a) have taught students with disabilities in grades 9-12 (including repeating seniors), (b) currently (at the time of the study) implement CBVI, or (c) plan to

implement CBVI in the next academic school year, or (d) have implemented CBVI in the past academic school year. The secondary special education teacher must have taught students who were pursuing one of the three diploma pathway options outlined by the Alabama Department of Education (e.g., General Education Pathway, Essential Skills Pathway, or the Alternate Achievement Standards Pathway).

### **Research Questions**

This study investigated the following questions:

1. To what extent are Alabama teachers of students with disabilities planning for community-based vocational instruction (CBVI) before implementing the program?
  - a. To what extent are secondary special education teachers of students with disabilities seeking approval for CBVI before implementing the program?
  - b. To what extent are secondary special education teachers of students with disabilities planning for safety before they implement CBVI?
  - c. To what extent are secondary special education teachers of students with disabilities arranging for personnel before they implement CBVI?
  - d. To what extent are secondary special education teachers of students with disabilities developing job sites before they implement CBVI?
  - e. To what extent are secondary special education teachers of students with disabilities preparing students before they implement CBVI?
2. To what extent are special education teachers trained prior to implementing CBVI? To what extent are special education teachers willing to participate in professional development training on implementing CBVI?
3. Is there a relationship between the types of training special education teachers have

received and their planning practices prior to implementing CBVI?

4. a. What recommendations do teachers currently implementing CBVI programs or who previously implemented CBVI programs suggest for teachers to consider before implementing CBVI?
- b. What barriers do teachers who are currently implementing CBVI programs or who previously implemented CBVI programs report for teachers to consider before implementing CBVI?

### **Overview of Research Design**

The research design used in this study was a non-experimental, descriptive, program component evaluation survey developed by the researcher (e.g., *An Evaluation of the Steps Practiced Before Implementing Community-Based Vocational Instruction* survey; see Appendix A). Fitzpatrick, Sanders, and Worthen (2004) state that if policy makers and practitioners are to make intellectual choices regarding the implementation of programs, which parts of a program are beneficial, or what components of a program should continue, an evaluation is necessary. Component evaluations of a program can answer the questions: what is taking place, what components of a logic model are effective, is a program being implemented with efficacy and whether or not a program should be discontinued (Fitzpatrick, Sanders, & Worthen, 2004)? The programmatic model for CBVI developed by Schiffer and Rabren (2015) initially provided logic as to how CBVI is to be conducted (see Chapter II). Further review of literature on the steps of CBVI depicted the key variables and behaviors needed by practitioners *before, during,* and *after* CBVI, which aim to help increase employment preparation experiences for students with disabilities. This study systematically gathered and analyzed information regarding the extent to which special education teachers are planning *before* implementing community-based

vocational instruction to high school students with disabilities. This study also aimed to analyze what steps special education teachers practice prior to implementing CBVI to students with disabilities.

Data were collected via an electronic survey. The researcher employed two methods to recruit individuals as participants in this study. The first method included the researcher emailing all 137 school districts in Alabama. These 137 special education coordinators in Alabama were asked via email to disseminate the electronic survey to all secondary special education teachers (9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade teachers) of students with disabilities in their districts across 337 high schools in Alabama. After two weeks, if a district had not responded, the researcher called the special education coordinator and then upon agreement to participate, the researcher again emailed the survey link to be distributed to secondary special education teachers to the coordinator.

The second method employed by the researcher was through recruiting participants face-to-face at the 27<sup>th</sup> Alabama Transition Conference. The researcher obtained permission from the conference director to recruit participants. Seventy-four participants were recruited through advertising with a poster and verbally asking people to participate. After 8 weeks of the survey remaining open, access to the survey was disabled. Overall, 91 useable surveys were obtained through data collection procedures. Data were collected through the online survey and then analyzed. Findings from the results are reported in Chapter IV. The electronic format of the survey and the electronic retrieval of the data collected allowed for information to be directly collected from secondary special education teachers regarding the steps they take to plan for CBVI. This study investigated planning components practiced *before* implementing CBVI. Furthermore, this study attempted to evaluate the preparation component of CBVI programs in

Alabama as a means of providing descriptive data of the steps taking place prior to implementing CBVI in school districts in the state. The context in which CBVI should be implemented is at the local school and community level to individual students with disabilities.

This study helps improve the quality of CBVI programs in Alabama by providing special education teachers with recommended practices on how to develop high quality community-based vocational instruction programs. This study collected data conceptualizing secondary special education teachers of Alabama's strengths and areas of improvement needed when developing CBVI programs prior to implementation initiated by recommend practices from literature.

### **Significance of the Study**

The results from a literature review first revealed the horrific conditions that individuals with disabilities lived in from the early 1900s until advocacy and legislation enacted change. Furthermore, research revealed that services evolved from excluding individuals with disabilities to integrating them into society. Practices on how to improve outcomes for students with disabilities revealed that an evidence-based practice, community-based instruction, helps improve generalization of skills and outcomes for students with disabilities. Eight studies identified a range of skills to teach students with disabilities in community settings. A further in depth review of the literature revealed that while there are eight studies substantiating community-based instruction as an evidence-based practice, the topic needed narrowing down. This narrowing of the topic of CBI resulted in three non-experimental studies that emerged from 2010 through 2015, which examine the barriers, facilitators, and personnel involved when implementing CBVI, making this topic a relatively new area of research.

While studies on the barriers, facilitators, and the extent to which teachers are

implementing employment preparation programs have been conducted, no similar studies examining the extent to which components and preparation steps of CBVI are being implemented have been conducted. Specifically, no studies focused solely on analyzing the preparation steps teachers should take to plan for CBVI or the extent to which practitioners implement the recommended planning steps of CBVI, as a means to enhance employment preparation programs for students with disabilities. The results of this study may serve as (a) a source for future research on this topic, (b) an assessment tool helping practitioners evaluate the extent to which other state's practitioners are practicing the preparation components of CBVI *before* implementing the program, and (c) a guide to help special education teachers establish a CBVI.

### **Limitations of the Study**

There are some limitations to consider when interpreting the results of this study. The administration of the electronic survey in this study was disseminated to 137 special education coordinators, and 74 conference attendees. There are 338 high schools in Alabama; therefore, this survey could have potentially reached 338 or more high school teachers of students with disabilities. The researcher was unable to determine if the survey was forwarded to willing teachers in Alabama across the 137 local education agencies. A review of literature conducted by Cook, Heath, and Thompson (2000) revealed that a researcher who disseminates a survey electronically could estimate a 25% to 35% response rate. This study attempted to receive at least a 25% representative response rate of the state's population of secondary special education teacher, but that did not occur. A low response rate limited the researcher's ability to glean an accurate descriptive representation of the components being implemented and preparation steps practiced by all special education teachers in Alabama prior to implementing CBVI. This means

that the findings in Chapter IV may not be generalizable. The desired return rate did not prove to be true for this study. Approximately, 91 teachers participated in this study, resulting in only a 9.26% response rate from secondary special education teachers in Alabama. These factors should be taken into consideration when reviewing the findings of this study.

### **Definitions of Terms**

The following is a list of definitions to clarify important terms or acronyms used throughout this study in order to understand each term within the context of this study.

**Community Experiences (CE):** “Community experiences are activities occurring outside the school setting, supported with in- class instruction, where students apply academic, social, and/or general work behaviors and skills” (Rowe et al., 2015, pp. 120).

**Community-based Instruction (CBI):** Teaching functional skills that take place in the community that target skills where they would naturally occur (i.e., grocery shopping, banking, ordering at a restaurant (Browning et al., 1983).

**Community-based Vocational Instruction (CBVI):** Instruction “provided in integrated community settings” (Kim & Dymond, 2010, pp. 314). For the purposes of this paper, CBVI is where students with significant disabilities are taught job skills in environments where the specific targeted job skill would be naturally occurring. Community-based vocational instruction consists of paid and non-paid work experiences such as: job shadowing, volunteering, internships, and apprenticeships (Test et al., 2006; Kim & Dymond, 2010)

**Secondary Special Education:** For the purpose of this study, secondary special education refers to students with disabilities who are in grades 6-12, and/or ages 14-21.

**Transition Programs:** “A transition program prepares students to move from secondary settings (e.g., middle school/high school) to adult life, utilizing comprehensive transition planning and

education that creates individualized opportunities, services, and supports to help students achieve their post-school goals in education/training, employment, and independent living (Rowe et al., 2015, pp. 123).

**Transition Services:** IDEA's definition of transition services describes specific areas of transition to include: (a) instruction, (b) community experiences, (c) development of employment objectives, (d) development of daily living objectives, and (e) functional vocational evaluations. In addition, under IDEA of 1990, transition goals and objectives were required to be written into annual IEPs by age 16 and revised annually [20 U.S.C. Chapter 33, Section 1401(a)(91)].

**Work Experiences (WE):** "Work experience is any activity that places the student in an authentic workplace and could include work sampling, job shadowing, internships, apprenticeships, and paid employment. Paid employment can include existing standard jobs in a company or organization or customized work assignments negotiated with the employer, but these activities always feature competitive pay (e.g., minimum wage) paid directly to the student by the employer" (Rowe et al., 2015, pp. 118).

## CHAPTER II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### **Introduction**

*“Life is pleasant and death is peaceful. It is the transitions*

*that are troublesome.” – Isaac Asimov*

Transitions are actions that take place when moving from one activity to the next.

Whatever the next step in life might be will impact whether or not a transition can be made with ease or difficulty. Cimera (2003) states, “simply put, transition is the point in which somebody faces life-altering change” (p. 3). Life is unpredictable, fun, exciting, vivacious, tiresome, hard, and even tragic. Nonetheless, life is full of transitioning from one place or condition to the next, regardless of preparations for these changes.

Transitions that occur throughout one's lifetime can include, but are not limited to: becoming employed, building a family, participating in recreational or leisure activities, or acquiring postsecondary training. For people with disabilities and their families, transitioning from school to adult life requires a more extensive amount of planning, knowledge, and coordination as compared to those without disabilities (Lin, 1998). Wehman (1997) defines transition as making adjustments and life changing experiences that take place as individuals move from school to independent living or postsecondary education. Transition can also be defined as a movement or change in services or programs being provided. Lack of preparation can prevent individuals from being successful when they are met with opportunities for transition.

The purpose of this chapter is to explore how preparation programs can increase positive post-school outcomes for individuals with disabilities. This chapter provides a (a) historical foundation of disability, (b) rationale for transition services, (c) discussion of transition preparation programs and services, and (d) an examination of the development and implementation of evidence-based practices for individuals with disabilities. The current post-school outcomes data is considered to support the need for increased high school preparation programs for students with disabilities. This chapter will conclude with a review of community-based instruction, which is a practice that has been proven effective for increasing post-school outcomes for those with disabilities. More specifically, community-based vocational instruction has been recognized as a means to better prepare individuals with disabilities for success. In order to understand why preparation for success after high school is important, delving into an overview of disability can help professionals understand where society once was in order to appreciate where we are currently. Gaining this perspective provides a foundation of the development of preparation programs for people with disabilities.

### **Historical Foundation of Disability**

#### **Overview**

Stiker (2002) states that “a society reveals itself by the way in which it treats certain significant phenomena” (p.14), and throughout the history of the American society, individuals with disabilities have been viewed as a significant phenomenon. This section will discuss the manner in which individuals with disabilities were treated by American society throughout history. The treatment of individuals with disabilities has been a significant phenomenon in American culture since the early 1900s (Stiker, 2002). A review of the history demonstrates how the American culture has changed its view on individuals with disabilities and the ability that

these individuals have to contribute meaningfully to society. From an anthropological perspective, how people live and interact together reveals the depths of a society (Stiker, 2002). People with disabilities have been a marginalized group of individuals since the late 1800s and before. The way people without disabilities have interacted with those with disabilities over the past 100 years has progressed from an exclusionary practice in the early 1900s to an inclusionary practice in the 2000s.

Historically speaking, certain groups of individuals have been excluded from a progressive society in various ways (Stiker, 2002). Numerous movements demonstrate this exclusionary practice (i.e., Eugenics Movement, Civil Rights Movement, Disability Rights Movement, and Immigration reforms). Stiker (2002) states the main reason for excluding individuals is mostly associated with economics. The early exclusionary practices of individuals with disabilities occurred because of the societal view that this population could not meaningfully contribute to society. The monetary expense of caring for those with disabilities was considered to be too high, and as a result, extreme actions were taken to attempt to remove individuals with disabilities from society. During this time, the lack of services for those with disabilities provided at the educational level was not evident. In addition, transition from adolescence to adult life was not yet considered; therefore, planning for transition was nonexistent. Nonetheless, society held a view regarding the outcomes of those with disabilities — a view that was negative and portrayed these people as non-important.

### **Early Treatment of Individuals with Disability**

#### **The Eugenics Movement**

The earliest treatment of people with disabilities in American culture has proven to be quite horrific. Evident by exclusionary practices and compulsory sterilization legislation, disability has

historically been regarded as a negative attribute, burden to society and families, and an anomaly. During the 1900s, for example, eugenics was an emerging form of science. The Encyclopedia of Bioethics (2013) defines eugenics as a science that investigates methods to eliminate undesired genetic traits of the human race, while also fostering betterment. The Eugenics Movement was seen as a social crusade. Eugenicians, and others in society of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, considered individuals with disabilities as those who possessed undesirable traits. In fact, eugenicians tended to group all people considered deviant or undesirable into a single category. These scientists grouped together criminals, people from low socio-economic backgrounds, and people with disabilities as individuals who should be eliminated from society (Smart, 2009). Supporters of the Eugenics Movement attempted to eliminate disability from society.

By 1924, approximately 3,000 people had been involuntarily sterilized in America with the majority being from California (Adams, 1990). The Supreme Court participated in perpetuating the negative treatment of individuals with disabilities by supporting eugenicians in the decisions to uphold these practices. A significant Supreme Court case that supported the eugenics movement, while also being exclusionary, was the unforgettable *Buck v. Bell* case of 1924. At the conclusion of *Buck v. Bell*, Justice Holmes ruled in favor of the school's superintendent stating, "three generations of imbeciles were enough" (1927). This illustration was one of the first landmark cases that allowed justification for excluding individuals with disabilities from reproducing. *Buck v. Bell* also set the precedent for the eventual sterilization of approximately 8,300 Virginians. Eventually, over 64,000 Americans were sterilized without their consent under eugenics laws.

Exclusion of people with disabilities was seen in the research practices of 1927, just a few short years after thousands of individuals had been involuntarily sterilized. One of the most well-known laboratories was the Cold Springs Harbor Laboratory. The Eugenics Records Office, based at the Cold Springs Laboratory in Long Island, New York, released a statement, stating that their goal was to improve the natural, physical, mental, and temperamental qualities of the human family (Cold Springs Harbor Laboratory, 1927). During this time, researchers were not only trying to determine a scientific cause to justify compulsory sterilization laws, others were advocating for institutionalization. If society could not eliminate disability, society would attempt to eliminate the potential interaction with disability.

### **Institutionalization**

While legislation was underway to provide services, and supports for injured World War I veterans, legislation for those who were born with disabilities was still being perpetuated by the concept of exclusion in the form of institutionalization. Institutionalization laws made forced sterilizations easier to implement and caused individuals with disabilities to be separated from their family and society. By 1914, there were over 30 states that passed laws mandating institutionalization (Stroman, 2003). According to Stroman (2003), institutions were large buildings resembling dormitories that housed individuals with disabilities, including those with the mildest to the most significant disabilities. Individuals who lived in these institutions were mistreated, abused, and neglected (Stroman, 2003). Such treatments of individuals with disabilities further perpetuated the idea of exclusion. Institutions were also typically severely understaffed (Stroman, 2003). Halpern (1980) stated that institutions lacked structure, daily routines, and opportunities for personal growth. While the principles of eugenics were no longer practiced in the 1940s, positive reforms for individuals with disabilities placed in institutions

were not evident until the 1960s and 1970s. The eugenics movement and institutionalization were methods employed by society to exclude individuals who possessed undesirable traits – specifically, traits that were possessed by individuals in state institutions.

### **Advancements in Society**

Advances of the 1930s through early 2000s have brought about increased ethical treatment for individuals with disabilities. This section will discuss reforms made for individuals with disabilities from a societal context. The past eighty years demonstrate a shifting view of disability from exclusionary practices to inclusionary practices. A review of reforms made from a societal context will help justify the need for increased job and career preparation programs for individuals with disabilities while in high school.

#### **Early Reforms**

During 1935, economic relief for the United States was underway with President Roosevelt's New Deal. In response to the Great Depression, Congress established a program that provided federally funded benefits for individuals in their old age as well assistance for individuals who were blind or had other disabilities (Jaeger & Bowman, 2005). This new reform was called the Social Security Act. This Act allowed for funding to be provided in an effort to extend existing vocational rehabilitation programs to individuals who were born with disabilities. In the late 1950s, the Social Security Act was reauthorized to include the Social Security Disability Insurance Program through which financial benefits were extended to the children of parents with disabilities. The 1935 New Deal was enacted on the brink of World War II, a time when disability awareness was rising due to an increase in returning war veterans acquiring disabilities.

#### **Legislation during the 1940s**

During the 1940s, war veterans began pressuring the government to increase services for those who acquired a disability while fighting for their country (Test, Aspel, & Everson, 2006). During this time, social and political awareness of disability increased. United States citizens were grateful for all that was done during World War II, consequently, citizens were forced to address the welfare and long-term needs for these soldiers. Legislation during this time reflected the nation's view on rehabilitating injured veterans.

Two pieces of legislation passed during the 1940s provided incremental progress towards reformation of rights for people with disabilities. The Barden-LaFollette Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1943 and the Hill-Burton Act of 1946 were both passed in response to increased advocacy to help benefit returning war veterans, marking an increase in financial and public service benefits for people with disabilities. The increase in financial and public service benefits occurred during a time when individuals with disabilities were continuing to be marginalized. The Barden-LaFollette Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1943 added physical rehabilitation as a goal of vocational rehabilitation programs that received federal funding. This Act also provided services to individuals with mental illness or a disability. The Hill-Burton Act authorized a series of grants, which helped fund construction of public health centers, rehabilitation facilities, and hospitals geared towards helping individuals with disabilities (Browning, 1998). These two major pieces of rehabilitation legislation helped pave the way for services offered to individuals with disabilities in the educational setting. While this legislation was progress in the right direction, individuals with disabilities were still not receiving the services they needed to best contribute to society (Test, Aspel, & Everson, 2006).

Meanwhile, in addition to advancements in legislation, other areas of social reform were progressing. During the late 1940s, the establishment of the National Mental Health Foundation,

founded by attendants from state institutions, exposed the abusive conditions at state run facilities (e.g., institutions), which housed individuals with various disabilities. During the late 1940s, President Truman's National Employ the Physically Handicapped [sic] Week and the 1947 development of the Paralyzed Veterans of America, both assisted in the role of increased advocacy for disability rights. Later in the 1950s and 1960s, the exposure of the abusive conditions coupled with increased media attention, prompted the deinstitutionalization of vast quantities of individuals with disabilities who lived in sickening conditions (Shorter, 2000).

According to Browning (1998), despite initial advancements in legislation and services for veterans who acquired disabilities, independence and self-reliance was still a concern for all people with disabilities. During this time, individuals with disabilities did not have equal access to public transportation, telephones, bathrooms and stores. Worksites, entrances to buildings, and public areas were also not accessible for people with disabilities (Browning, 1998). While employment was recognized as an indicator of a higher quality of life (Halpern, 1992), individuals with disabilities were not perceived well by employers; therefore, employment was rarely an option for these individuals. Meaningful work was lacking and consequently, the quality of life of individuals was diminished. National attention on the treatment of individuals with disabilities continued to increase into the next decade.

### **The 1950s**

In 1954, The Vocational Rehabilitation Amendments, P.L. 83-565, was passed. This legislation provided federal funding to help develop pilot programs in the areas of work-study and job placement services. These services were not made available to all individuals with disabilities, but helped many. The Rehabilitation Amendments of 1954 helped pave the way for local and state rehabilitation programs.

Parental advocacy groups of the 1950s also incrementally aided in progress and reforms for people with disabilities. With an increase in parents advocating for civil rights of minorities, a seminal court case laid the foundation for change in educational services for all individuals, including those with disabilities. The 1954 Supreme Court Case, *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* ruled that segregation in schools was unconstitutional, marking the beginning of the Civil Rights Movement. Simultaneously, while rehabilitation services were assembling advances for people with disabilities, the Civil Rights movement was rising. “Federal laws in the 1960s are ultimately what laid the solid foundation for the needs of individuals with disabilities to be met” (Flexer & Baer, 2013, p 24).

### **1960s Cooperative Work Study Movement**

The goal of the 1960s Civil Rights movement was to ensure that all citizens were treated equally and be afforded the enumerated rights granted to them according to the United States Constitution. With segregation laws being enforced in all 50 states, an increase in public awareness, law suits being brought to the Supreme Court regarding access to education and equitable treatment according to those enumerated rights, African Americans began a journey to see a change in the American people and the widely accepted discriminatory practices. These discriminatory practices were also demonstrated towards individuals with disabilities. During this time, disability advocates took the opportunity to join alongside other minority groups to demand equal access to opportunities and treatment for people with disabilities.

In 1962, President John F. Kennedy called for deinstitutionalization of individuals with disabilities, along with an increase in services offered by communities (Shorter, 2000). In 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act into law, further advancing the Civil Rights and Disability Rights Movements. In addition, in the 1960s, Medicare and Medicaid were

established through the 1965 amendments of the Social Security Act, which provided subsidized health care to elderly Americans and individuals with disabilities who were previously covered under the established Social Security program of the 1950s. In the late 1960s, the Vocational Rehabilitation Amendments authorized funding for rehabilitation centers to be constructed in an effort to increase rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities. In 1968, the Architectural Barriers Act was passed and prohibited any federally owned or leased building from including architectural barriers that limited or denied access for people with disabilities (Browning, 1998).

During the 1960s, national attention was also brought to areas such as mental health awareness and training preparation programs for people with developmental disabilities. This attention resulted in several foundational laws that helped define disability and articulate the types of services required to increase work-training opportunities (Flexer & Baer, 2013). The 1960s later became known as the Cooperative Work Study Movement (Halpern, 1991). The Cooperative Work Study Movement had several components that lead to an increase in services for people with disabilities. The first of these being that some students with disabilities were participating in new programs that offered services specifically for individuals with disabilities (Halpern, 1991). However, the second was that most services were not made available to all individuals with disabilities (Halpern, 1991). This focus left many individuals without legislation to support career-focused training. Research also indicated that the primary outcome goal for these individuals was employment (Browning, 1998; Halpern, 1993). While some curricula were available, the focus was mainly on academic and vocational skills (Browning, 1998). There were stakeholders involved with program planning for individuals with disabilities, but stakeholders were limited to only teachers or counselors, which restricted the types of services one could receive (Browning, 1998).

During 1963, the Vocational Education Act was passed (P.L. 88-210) which afforded the development of vocational education programs for individuals with disabilities. This law encouraged educational systems and vocational rehabilitation to partner together in an effort to integrate careers and educational experiences for individuals with disabilities while they were still in a secondary educational setting (Test et al., 2006). Funding was provided to school systems to develop vocational programs for students with disabilities. One year later, in 1964, another passage of a major law not only helped all individuals, but also added to the solutions needed for equitable treatment of people with disabilities. In 1964, The Civil Rights Act was signed into legislation. This Act made discrimination based on race, gender, color or national origin illegal. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 also prohibited discrimination in work places. While individuals with disabilities were not specifically mentioned in the law, this Act banned discrimination in public areas.

Through the Elementary and Secondary Education Act Amendments (ESEA), or P.L.89-750, support was provided for state special education programs. Shortly thereafter, the development of work-study programs for individuals with disabilities was underway. In 1967, ESEA was once again amended (P.L.90-99) to add to the possible solutions for equitable treatment for people with disabilities. The ESEA (1967) provided financial means to increase research, rehabilitation and training projects to help better prepare individuals with disabilities for employment. One year later, progress for individuals with disabilities continued in Congress.

During 1968, funding was set aside for services to be provided to individuals with disabilities through the Vocational Rehabilitation Act Amendments (P.L. 90-576). Under the amendments of this Act, 10% of federal funds allocated to vocational rehabilitation were set aside to provide vocational services for school-age students with disabilities. Students who were

economically disadvantaged also received 15% of the funds. By setting aside funds for specific populations, an increase in services and preparation programs were provided to help improve post-school outcomes for people with disabilities. Although much progress was made in federal initiatives during the 1960s, the Cooperative Work Study Movement came to an end at the conclusion of this decade.

The Cooperative Work Study Movement ended for two main reasons. First, according to Halpern (1991) the Cooperative Work Study Movement concluded because of issues between vocational rehabilitation and special education. Although funding for work preparation programs increased, challenges between special education and rehabilitation also increased. Federal initiatives, which set aside funding for preparation programs, did not clearly designate which governmental agency was responsible for the supervision of these services and how the money should be spent. The second reason the movement concluded was related to problems associated with whether special education or vocational rehabilitation was responsible for providing funding, specifically for career preparation services (Halpern, 1991). While the Cooperative Work Study Movement ended in the 1960s, the 1970s was a decade that expanded upon the components outlined in the 1960s through federal initiatives for individuals with disabilities through the Career Education Movement. The 1970s was also a time in which disability reforms were widely seen through additional legislation that directly addressed disability.

### **1970s The Career Education Movement**

The 1970s differed from the 1960s in many ways. During the 1970s, awareness for disability was on the rise. Those with disabilities were now identified as recipients of services; however, not equitable services (Browning, 1998; Halpern, 1991). In comparison to the sixties, the 1970s was a time period when post-school outcome goals shifted to focus on life-centered

activities, rather than just employment (Browning, 1998). This time period was known as the Career Education Movement (Browning; 1998, Halpern, 1991). The 1970s received this designation because the direction of services for all people (those with and without disabilities) moved towards a career-oriented outcome; evidenced by legislation passed during this time. The Career Education Movement focused on teaching students with disabilities a wide array of skills that encompassed a more holistic approach (Clark, 1979; Halpern, 1991). Curriculum, training, and work placement programs were developed and involved several stakeholder groups. Stakeholders for those with disabilities expanded from teachers and counselors to also including parents in the planning process (EAHCA, 1975; Browning, 1998). Curriculum taught during this time period focused on teaching individuals with disabilities, not only career and job preparation skills, but also daily living and interpersonal skills (Clark, 1979). Fueled by federal initiatives, and backed by societal reforms, the 1970s marked the biggest advancement for educational reforms for people with disabilities (Halpern, 1991).

The 1970s began with the passage of the Urban Mass Transportation Act, which required all newly purchased mass transportation vehicles to include wheel chair ramps. This Act was impactful because lack of transportation was a significant barrier for individuals with disabilities gaining employment. The passage of the Urban Mass Transportation Act signified progress for individuals with disabilities. Public transportation met a need and provided a means for people with disabilities to access employment. However, this progress towards improvement was halted for almost twenty years due to a lack of funding, until the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Lack of access to employment left several individuals with disabilities without jobs. Consequently, these individuals continued to live in poverty, which had a negative impact on their quality of life.

As a response to the horrific living conditions of individuals with disabilities residing in institutions, The Developmental Disabilities (DD) Services and Facilities Construction Amendments Act of 1990 was passed; marking the first time a legal definition for developmental disabilities (DD) was provided. These amendments also authorized funding for the formation of state DD councils, as well as grants to help fund construction of centers that would aid in the rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities. Since a formal definition of developmental disabilities had been identified, services could be tailored to meet the specific needs of individuals. Establishing a criterion for DD set the foundation for determining eligibility of services. Following the DD Act, the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 was amended. This amendment intended to provide increased access to employment services for individuals with disabilities by outlining that all people with disabilities are included in the option to be placed into the sheltered workshop system. Sheltered workshops originally were intended only for individuals who were blind. Although sheltered workshops are not considered inclusive in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, during the 1970s, this major reform and reauthorization of the Fair Labor Standards Act, helped individuals with disabilities take incremental steps that no longer kept them excluded from employment opportunities. Not only was providing access to jobs and careers a focus of the 1970s, providing access to independent living for people with disabilities also emerged.

Independent living centers were established to address the barriers and gaps in services available to help individuals with disabilities access housing. Advocates, like Ed Roberts, at the University of California in Berkeley in the 1960s brought independent living barriers to the public's attention. Ed Roberts was a student at Berkeley who was discriminated against for having a disability. He used a wheelchair, utilized an iron lung and was unable to access the same housing opportunities as students without disabilities (Test et al., 2006). Ed Roberts, and

other advocates helped influence legislation that established independent living centers by founding the Physically Disabled Students Program (PDSP). Increased media attention on the PDSP helped spark a national movement against the discrimination of individuals with disabilities.

In 1973, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act was passed. This was the first piece of legislation, in history, that specifically addressed the rights of people with disabilities at the federal level. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act guaranteed individuals with disabilities protection from discrimination whereas section 705(20) stated that individuals with disabilities could not be excluded from or denied participation in any activity receiving federal financial assistance (29 U.S.C. 794).

According to Barnett and Scotch (2001), in the 1970s, disability rights activists marched in New York, New York and Washington D.C. to seek certain rights yielding in unbiased language for people with disabilities being written into the 1973 Rehabilitation Act. The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) provided equal opportunity for employment within the federal government and in federally funded programs, prohibiting discrimination on the basis of either physical or mental disability (P.L.93-112). Also under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board was established to help ensure equal access to public services, such as public housing and public transportation services. Also, people with disabilities benefited from an increase in the federal allocation of vocational training funding (Browning, 1998). Section 504 applied to all persons with disabilities, including those with mild, moderate or severe disabilities. This Act also held accountable all agencies receiving funding from the federal government.

During this time, individuals with disabilities in the educational setting were still not receiving adequate services. As a result of the passage of Section 504, and increased media and social attention on people with disabilities, individuals with disabilities were further protected two years later by the passage of legislation that applied to local school systems (Barnett & Scotch, 2001). First, services had to be addressed nationally before they would reach local educational settings.

Direct services in the educational setting for students with disabilities were addressed for the first time with the passage of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act or P.L.94-142, (EAHCA) of 1975 (Test, Aspel, & Emerson, 2006). Similarly, to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, EAHCA required all schools receiving public funds to provide equal access to education to all students with disabilities. Under PL-94-142, the educational system was also responsible for evaluating those with disabilities and creating an individualized plan that emulated an educational program of general education peers.

In 1975, EAHCA guaranteed equal access to public education for children with disabilities. EAHCA specified that every student had a right to an education, and mandated that students with disabilities receive access to the general education curriculum in their least restrictive environment. Students with disabilities now had the right to receive special education services in integrated settings, which provided those with disabilities access to environments with their peers without disabilities. For those with significant disabilities, a separate school or environment could only occur when the nature or severity of the disability was such that instructional goals could not be achieved in a general education classroom. The EAHCA also mandated that all Individualized Education Programs (IEP) include career and vocational

objectives. This piece of legislation helped establish the process for preparing students with disabilities for work after they graduated or exited high school (Test, Aspel, & Everson, 2006).

Overall, the EAHCA had four major goals: (1) ensure services are available for individuals with disabilities, (2) guarantee that decisions regarding services for those with disabilities were fair and appropriate, (3) establish specific management and auditing requirements for special education programs, and (4) provide federal funding to help states educate those with disabilities. Later in 1990, EAHCA was reauthorized and renamed to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Other legislation helped to improve services for students with disabilities in the 1970s. Both the Rehabilitation Act and Education for All Handicapped Children Act were two major advancements for individuals with disabilities that have had a lasting impact on services and legislation to date.

Building on the momentum of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, in 1977, The Career Education Implementation Incentive Act (P.L. 95-207) and the Vocational Educational Amendments (P.L. 94-482) enhanced existing career education programs. Flexer et al., (2008) stated that under P.L. 95-207 and 94-482, for the first time, individuals with disabilities were named as a population requiring career education services to achieve successful post-school outcomes. While the Career Education Implementation Incentive Act expired in 1992, this Act allowed states to make grants available to local educational agencies for the purpose of (a) improving career awareness, (b) developing and implementing career guidance services, (c) training of local career education coordinators and (d) establishing and operating career education resource centers (Carter, 1977).

The 1970s also expanded services offered to individuals with disabilities through several disability rights organizations, such as the National Center for Law and the Handicapped and the

American Disabled for Public Transit (ADAPT) (Barnett & Scotch, 2001). The ADAPT members are responsible for launching a national campaign that advocated for increased services for people with disabilities, which include access to housing. The ADAPT is still active and continues to work on behalf of individuals with disabilities in today's society. Activists from disability rights advocacy groups also were responsible for staging sit-ins at several federal buildings as a means to persuade the federal government to issue regulations for Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. These reform services also helped with identifying the 1970s as the Career Education Movement.

From the early 1900s to the 1960s, societal practices and legislation allowed individuals with disabilities to be mistreated and excluded from society. The 1970s proved to be an active decade in disability rights history and is credited with the advancement of educational and social services for individuals with disabilities. Reviewing the history of disability from the 1900s until the end of the 1960s reminds citizens of the horrific treatment and practices implemented to those with disabilities and established the need for reforms of programs and services offered to those with disabilities. The 1970s is marked by federal initiatives to improve independent living and educational opportunities for individuals with disabilities that have shaped current legislation. An increase in services for people with disabilities at the educational level brought to light the grim post-school outcomes for all individuals with disabilities. For example, according to Wehman (2011), individuals with significant disabilities will achieve less than desirable outcomes as compared to those with mild disabilities and those without disabilities, thus making transition in education a priority during the 1980s and 1990s.

## **The Transition Movement**

During the 1980s and 1990s, many researchers began reporting the post-school outcomes trends associated with students with disabilities (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996; Wehman, Targett, & Young, 2007). After students with disabilities completed high school, where they were going and what they were going to do next was unknown. Nationally, researchers began to examine post-school outcomes of individuals with disabilities who received special education services as outlined by the EAHCA while in high school; thus, the Transition Movement was born.

### **What is Transition?**

The Council for Exceptional Children's Division on Career Development and Transition defines transition as "a change in status from behaving primarily as a student to assuming emergent adult roles in the community" (1994). In an article describing quality of life for individuals with disabilities, Halpern expresses that transitioning from adolescence into adulthood will be difficult, regardless of whether a person has a disability or not, and that life is full of possibilities: college, career, marriage, children, even unemployment. However, each individual going through a transition may not be aware of how the possibilities in life can be improved with adequate preparation (Halpern, 1993). Wehman (2007) explains roles that require transitioning from adolescence to adulthood include; maintaining a home, gaining employment, actively becoming involved in one's community, and experiencing satisfactory interpersonal relationships. While the foundations of transition should be laid in elementary school (Pianta & Walsh, 1996; Ramey & Ramay, 1994; Wehman, Targett, & Young, 2007), guided with effective transition practices, transition planning should begin no later than age 14, with students being as involved as possible, in the planning process (Wehman & Kregel, 1994).

## **Transition Policy Emerges**

Current transition policy and practices are a result of decades of advocacy, awareness, educational reform, litigation, and legislation. Before a legal definition of transition emerged, as it relates to special education, a shift in societal and political views was taking place in the United States through several social justice movements. Social and political frameworks were changing because of actions taken by advocates who wanted to end societal and racial segregation towards injured veterans, African Americans, and individuals with disabilities (Browning, 1998). Fair and equitable treatment for people with disabilities has been an on-going cause fought by advocates, policy makers, and politicians since the early 1900s (Browning, 1998). This next section discusses transition-related legislation from the 1980s through the early 2000s and sets the foundation for the need of increased preparation programs for individuals with disabilities to help improve poor post-school outcomes.

## **1980s Transition Evolving**

During the 1980s, great strides were made for people and students with disabilities. Attention towards services and lack of services for individuals with disabilities became evident through the actions of lobbyists and disability activists, who were seeking to consolidate various portions of seminal legislation under one comprehensive act (Browning, 1998). Policy, legislation, and practices in transition education for students with disabilities increased over this decade (Flexer et al., 2008). Many programs began during this time as legislation passed aimed to promote improved transition programs for people with disabilities.

Through legislation, changes in services were evident during the 1960s and 1970s. A shift that took place in the 1980s, directed attention towards curriculum for people with disabilities to place a focus on functional, vocational, social, and independent living areas, rather

than just placing the instructional emphasis on employment. During this time, post-school outcomes for students with disabilities varied and included supported employment, competitive employment, and community work-based programs (Browning, 1998). Stakeholders who were involved in the transition planning process nearly tripled from the 1970s to the 1980s.

Legislation enacted programs, rights, and mandated services that needed teachers and counselors, and also job coaches, employers, local transition teams, and other agencies (Browning, 1998).

Important legislation during this time enacted several changes that were beneficial to people with disabilities, which aimed to promote improved transition educational programs.

The 1980s built on the momentum of the 1970s by officially establishing the term transition, thus drawing national attention to this growing field of study and movement. The efforts of advocates continued to increase reforms for individuals with disabilities in the 1980s when transition finally became a priority in America.

In 1982, the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) was passed. The JTPA was enacted as a response to the growing population of unskilled adults entering into the work force. The JTPA established programs as a means to prepare unskilled adults and youth, upon graduation or exiting from high school, for entry into the work environment. The JTPA also provided job training to the economically disadvantaged and other individuals facing serious barriers to employment. While this Act did not specifically address the needs of individuals with disabilities, because these individuals experienced serious barriers to gaining employment; they could receive services under the JTPA. Next, the 1983 Amendments to the Education for All Handicapped Children Act called for more funding in transition education (Kohler & Field, 2003).

The 1983 Amendments to the Education for all Handicapped Children Act included education for those with disabilities and introduced research-based services as they relate to special education (Kohler & Field, 2003). While this Act did not require transition services be addressed, the components of transition were introduced. Halloran (1993) stated that critical components of transition planning include a wide range of services that prepare students to participate in employment, community, independent living, and other adult activities. Rusch and Phelps (1986) reported that with the passage of the 1983 amendments to P.L.94-142, legislation and secondary services for students with disabilities were now more aligned with one another. For example, the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services (OSERS) now authorized additional funding to improve transition services.

During the 1990s, the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services was authorized to spend \$6.6 million dollars annually on contracts to improve programs and services for students with disabilities and improve post-school outcomes. Alabama was a recipient of a grant from this funding (i.e., the Alabama Transition Initiative Systems Change Grant). Alabama's program was one of several funded across the United States. The systems change grant offered individuals in Alabama, and in other states across the nation's schools, the opportunity to receive coordinated services to help increase students' skills and abilities, to increase successful post-school outcomes, while achieving a desired quality of life (Rabren, 2002). Programs like Alabama's System Change Grant impacted thousands of students and the influences of those changes are still evident today. Throughout the eighties, vocational educational services were also improving.

The Carl D. Perkins Vocational Educational Act of 1984 (P.L. 98-582) was passed to ensure that students with disabilities have equal access to vocational education programs while in

school (Flexer et al., 2008). While this Act addressed the vocational education needs of individuals with disabilities, those with significant needs were not yet a focus of such services. For the first time in history, P.L. 98-582 extended legislation and rights to students with disabilities after exiting or completing high school. Also in 1984, another piece of legislation was passed in an effort to improve services for individuals with developmental disabilities.

The Developmental Disabilities Amendments Act, or P.L. 98-527, was authorized in 1984. This Act required that people with developmental disabilities receive services to achieve their best outcomes through living and working in the community. During the 1980s, individuals with developmental disabilities were enrolled in schools, but were not receiving the direct services needed to help increase positive post-school outcomes. The Developmental Disabilities Amendments Act gave rights to a group of individuals that were not the focus of services for too long. Two years later, vocational rehabilitation and the educational system followed suit with the reauthorization of the Rehabilitation Act and Education for all Handicapped Children Act.

In 1986, amendments to the Rehabilitation Act and Education for all Handicapped Children Act increased funding for individuals with disabilities. Both pieces of legislation provided funding for services and activities that were to help improve special education post-school outcomes. Schloss, Smith, and Schloss (1990) summarized the 1986 amendments of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, and stated that funds provided increased special education services and related services for those individuals needing transition services that eventually helped individuals transition to postsecondary, vocational, and independent living environments, successfully. The 1986 amendments to the Rehabilitation Act included definitions and funding for supported employment, a practice through which individuals with disabilities were able to transition to employment, as a new objective for vocational rehabilitation (Browning, 1998;

Halpern, 1991; Flexer et al., 2008;). Amendments made during this time increased awareness for individuals with disabilities within the employment sector. Since the 1983 and 1986 amendments to PL 94-142, federally funded projects played a major role in national transition efforts for individuals with disabilities. During the 1980s, a total of 237 federally funded projects aimed at improving transition services were awarded (Gonzalez, Carren, & Lai, 1990; Rugg, 1989). During the fiscal years of 1987 through 1989, \$6.6 million dollars were awarded. Halloran (1993) described the impacts of these initiatives as proof that

*“Public education can assist youth with a variety of disabilities and levels of impairments in making the adjustment to adult life in their communities. They set in place interagency cooperation between school and adult programs. They also provided instructional support systems to ensure that individuals with disabilities could succeed in real work settings” (p. 211).*

In 1984, Madeline Will, Assistant Secretary of the United States Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services (OSERS), presented a position paper, which emphasized a need for outcome-oriented transition services and presented a model that that focused on the outcome of employment (Halpern, 1985; Halpern, 1991; Will, 1984). In this position paper, transition services were defined as “... an outcome-oriented process encompassing a broad array of services and experiences that lead to employment” (p.1). Within Will’s and OSERS position paper, a model was presented to guide educators on how to reach the desired transition from school to the adult life outcome of employment. This model, referred to as the Bridges Model (Will, 1984), was one of three models (e.g., 1985 Halpern’s Community Adjustment Model and 1987 Ianacone and Stodden Life Span Transition Model) presented during the eighties that

conceptualized transition services for individuals with disabilities. An in-depth discussion of the models from the 1980s is provided in the next section.

### **Transition Models of the 1980s**

**1984 OSERS and Will's Bridges Model.** With legislation providing states with funding for special education and vocational rehabilitation services, Will and OSERS (1984) presented a paper on the conceptual framework on how to bridge special education and vocational rehabilitation services for an outcome-oriented transition for students with disabilities. This paper highlighted the concepts and policies that were outlined in legislation to initially guide OSERS in its efforts to improve transition from high school to post-school life for *all people with disabilities* (Wehman, Moon, Everson, & Barcus, 1988). According to Will (1984),

*“Transition from school to working life is an outcome-oriented process encompassing a broad array of services and experiences that lead to employment. Transition includes movement from high school at the point of graduation, [where one can pursue] additional postsecondary education or adult services, and [engage in] the initial years of employment”* (Will, 1984, p. 30).

Will's model provided a visual representation of three different types of services that established transition activities for people with disabilities. This model, also known as the Bridges Model (1984) illustrates one pillar (high school) with three possible bridges (a) no special services, (b) ongoing services, and (c) time-limited services, which is the most intensive level of the three bridges. All three bridges lead to the second pillar, employment (Will, 1984). Each bridge focused on the services an individual might need to obtain his or her desired employment outcome. Employment was made the central focus for this definition because it provided a measure of success. Looking back, Will's definition mirrored the primary mission of

the 1960s, work-study movement. Later, Halpern (1991) referred to transition as “Old Wine in New Bottles.” This reference to old wine in new bottles was made because while the term, *transition* as it relates to services was new, the concept of preparing individuals while in school for life after high school was not. In 1985, an alternative to Will’s model was presented.

**1985 Halpern’s Community Adjustment Model.** In response to Will’s and OSERS’s narrow definition of the post-school outcome of employment, Halpern presented another transition model in 1985. Halpern’s definition somewhat adopted the broader career education movement’s definition from the seventies, stating that the primary focus of transition services should be living successfully in the community, not just successfully obtaining a job after high school (Halpern, 1985). Halpern’s Community Adjustment model included employment as a desired outcome for an individual with a disability, and that “the ultimate goal of transition, [was actually] *successful community adjustment*, must then be concerned not only with employment, but also with residential environments and the quality of social and interpersonal networks” (Halpern, 1985, p. 486).

Halpern’s broader definition for transition, successful community adjustment, was supported by research findings that suggested an individual does not necessarily achieve success by solely obtaining employment. Halpern (1985) also stated that data did not demonstrate that success in employment would positively correlate with success in residential environments or social and interpersonal networks. Halpern’s model kept Will’s bridges in his depiction of transition services, but altered some of the Bridges Model wording, and changed the outcome from employment to community adjustment (Halpern, 1985). While the Bridge’s concept is incorporated, Halpern expanded his model to include three pillars: (a) employment, (b) residential environments, and (c) social and interpersonal networks, which represented the areas

of transition services that should be addressed in order for individuals with disabilities to transition from high school and successfully assimilate to the community. Following Halpern's Community Adjustment Model, in 1987, Ianacone and Stodden presented another model on a transition.

**1987 Ianacone and Stodden Life Span Transition Model.** Following Will's and OSER's Bridges Model and Halpern's Community Adjustment Model, Ianacone and Stodden presented a longitudinal model that could be used as a guide for providing transition education services to people with disabilities. Ianacone and Stodden's Life Span Model depicted levels of preparation needed across an individual's lifetime that were linked together across environments as to where these specific phases should take place from home, to school, to adult environments (Ianacone & Stodden, 1987). The Life Span Model listed outcomes that accompanied each level and phase of an individual's transition and described what the transition growth development process should involve over time. The four areas the Life Span Model addresses are: (a) increasing participation, (b) contribution, (c) satisfaction, and (d) independence (Ianacone & Stodden, 1987).

With a broadened scope of transition services presented in the 1980s, the concept for transition services for individuals with disabilities made significant gains during this decade. Because of the successes of the 1980s, the 1990s proved to be a time of major growth for transition services (Bates, 1990; Halpern, 1985) and the nineties was referred to as the transition-focused education movement (Kohler & Field, 2003) where transition services were no longer viewed as an add-on activity, but as a holistic approach to ensuring success after high school.

### **1990s The Transition-Focused Education Movement**

The 1990s began and ended with two acts that were passed to improve the quality of vocational services for individuals with disabilities and provided funding to people who were considered at risk. The Carl D. Perkins Act Amendments of 1990 and 1998 shifted from using the term vocational education to career and technical education (CTE), which was intended by Congress to prepare students for careers, once they graduated from secondary education. The 1990 amendments eliminated the 10% funding that was set aside for student's education belonging to special populations and in 1998 moved to a broader definition of career preparation as opposed to focusing on one specific occupation. The Carl D. Perkins Act of 1998 supported technical-preparation be at the center of career preparation programs and also brought secondary and postsecondary programs together through the 2 + 2 model. In this model, students receiving high school credit for two career technical education courses in high school and credit for two courses in college resulted in a person being equipped with skills that were specific to a concentration area in the technical world (Test, Aspel, & Everson, 2006). Part C of the Carl D. Perkins Act specifically addresses vocational services to individuals with disabilities. The Perkins Act addresses rights and protections for students who are members of *special populations*. According to the Carl D. Perkins Act, *special populations* include individuals with disabilities. Institutions such as community colleges and local education agencies receiving funding under the Carl D. Perkins Act are required to provide equal access to any activity or service funded by this Act to those falling under the category of *special populations*.

The 1990s was a time of reform in the lives of individuals with disabilities (Flexer et al., 2008). The 1990s began with two landmark laws, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1990 (IDEA). These two laws were instrumental in bringing about change for individuals with disabilities in both the

educational and public sectors as well as provided the first legal definition for transition services. The ADA of 1990 and IDEA of 1990 marked a shift from transition services being seen as a charitable effort for individuals with disabilities to integration in the world of employment and education (Flexer et al., 2008). The 1990s ended with a taxonomy for transition planning that would help stakeholders tailor transition planning on an individual basis (Kohler, 1998). The first major act passed in the 1990s, and considered a civil rights act for individuals with disabilities, was the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 made discrimination of people with disabilities illegal in the work place. The second, and arguably the most impactful for transition in education, was the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

The passage of the ADA was the comprehensive act that advocates of the 1960s and 1970s were seeking to protect the rights and liberties of all individuals with disabilities. While the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibited discrimination on the basis of race, religion, national origin, or gender, individuals with disabilities were not included and afforded the same protections guaranteed by that law. After several years of advocacy from lobbyists and activists, the ADA (P.L. 101-336) was authorized into law. The ADA was a major landmark piece of legislation in the United States, ensuring equal access and equal treatment of people with disabilities in the areas of employment and public accommodations. One of the major components of the ADA was to prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability in: (a) employment, (b) services rendered by state and local governments, (c) places of public accommodation, (d) transportation, and (e) telecommunications services. This monumental piece of legislation mandated businesses provide reasonable accommodations to people with disabilities who were otherwise qualified for the job they were seeking. People with disabilities

could no longer be denied public transportation, public accommodations, and telecommunications (Burke & McFadden, 1993). This piece of legislation identified the legal rights people with disabilities had by receiving full participation, inclusion and integration across all levels of society (Wehman, 1992). The passage of ADA helped aid in the societal shift and frame of thought Americans had towards those with disabilities.

Meanwhile, during 1990, the Education of All Handicapped Children Act was reauthorized, and also renamed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). This piece of legislation marked the first time in history that transition services for individuals with disabilities was defined by law and called for person-first language be used when describing an individual with a disability. According to IDEA, 1990, transition is defined as:

*A coordinated set of activities for a student designed within an outcome-oriented process, which promotes movement from school to post-school activities, including postsecondary education, vocational training, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation. The coordinated set of activities shall be based upon the individual student's needs, taking into account the student's preferences and interests, and shall include instruction, community experiences, the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives, and when appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and vocational evaluation [IDEA, PL 101-476, 20 U.S.C. Chapter 33, Section 1401(a)(91)]*

The 1990 transition definition of IDEA combines research from the United States Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services, and Halpern's 1993 quality of life indicators as well as his Community Adjustment Model of 1986 as

a way to protect individuals with disabilities holistically and not just protecting the area of employment (Johnson & Rusch, 1993). With a clear definition of transition services outlined in IDEA, transition-age individuals (14-21) now had a prescriptive set of activities that were required to be a part of their annual IEPs (Halloran, 1993). IDEA's definition of transition services indicated specific areas of transition to include: (a) instruction, (b) community experiences, (c) development of employment objectives, (d) development of daily living objectives, and (e) functional vocational evaluations. Also under IDEA of 1990, transition goals and objectives were required to be written into IEPs by age 16 and revised annually [20 U.S.C. Chapter 33, Section 1401(a) (91)]. This was also the first time parent consent and interagency participation, had been mandated by law (Browning, 1998), and the first time students were required to help establish their own future goals based on their needs and preferences (Flexer et al., 2008).

How transition services are defined, how they help students with disabilities, and how these services are funded has been unfolding for the past thirty-five years. At the time of the 1990 passage of IDEA, Brolin (1995) stated that the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act of 1984 (P.L. 98-524) was also amended, and called the 1990 Carl D. Perkins Act (P.L. 101-392). The goal of this reauthorization was to improve vocational education programs by helping to fund some of the transition services requirements of IDEA for students with disabilities. The Carl D. Perkins Act of 1990 used the term *special populations* as an assurance that individuals with disabilities received proper funding (Browning, 1998). In 1992, the Rehabilitation Act was once again amended.

### **Transition Programs and Services through Non-Educational Legislation**

The 1992 Rehabilitation Act amendments (P.L 102-569), in order to be in compliance with federally mandated services for individuals with disabilities, shifted its focus primarily to the inclusion of people with disabilities in employment and independent living settings, as a result of the passage of the ADA. The 1992 Rehabilitation Act amendments were passed in part, to respond to the reauthorization of IDEA of 1990. Thus, all individuals with disabilities were now presumed capable of employment, and therefore, presumed eligible for vocational rehabilitation services to aide in the transition from school to employment (West, 1995). With the passage of the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1992 clients were more empowered to be a part of the services and decisions made when seeking employment for the life of the individual with a disability (Wehmeyer & West, 1995).

The School-to-Work Opportunities Act (P.L. 103-239) was passed in 1994. This initiative was a result of transition services being defined in 1990. This Act was intended to last for four years and made suggestions that included all students, not just students with disabilities engage in transition planning (Fuchs & Baer, 2013). Browning, (1998) states that the School-to-Work Opportunities Act was a way to jump start quality transition programs by providing initial funding which was provided by the Department of Education and Department of Labor. The collaborative efforts of the Departments of Education and Labor was a way to ensure all students were being prepared to enter the world of work, while aligning the current legislation with the terminology used in IDEA of 1990 (Test et al., 2006). The School-to-Work Opportunities Act stressed the importance of transition education for all students with and without disabilities. Under this Act, states were required to assess their current transition programs and services offered before implementing new services.

The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) (P.L. 105-220) replaced the Job Training Partnership Act of 1982 in 1998. The WIA was passed because policy makers and advocates believed that youth in schools deserved the right to training in the area of career skills (Test et al., 2006). This Act is where one-stop career centers were created as a means for a universal career development system that directed individuals to a variety of career development programs. This Act focused on finding basic assistance for employment, and provides special education teachers and vocational teachers with a federally funded program to recommend to students and consumers who may or may not qualify for transition services. According to Hoff (2002), the WIA services were designed to help those who were ages 14 to 21 and had one of six barriers to employment; (a) deficiencies in basic skills; (b) dropped out of high school; (c) homeless, runaway, or foster care; (d) teen pregnancy or teen parent; (e) be an offender; or (f) required additional assistance to gain or maintain employment. These services were provided on a one-to-one basis and closely resemble the services individuals received under vocational rehabilitation services, which benefit students with disabilities (Hoff, 2002).

The Ticket to Work and Work Incentive Improvement Act (TTWWIIA) of 1999 (P.L.106-170) was also a strategy implemented by lawmakers to help people with disabilities gain employment. The TTWWIIA was designed to ensure individuals with disabilities who were receiving Medicare and Medicaid were able to keep their benefits once gainful employment was achieved. The option provided by this Act, for individuals with disabilities to retain medical coverage, served as an incentive for those who wanted to pursue employment, but also needed to maintain insurance (Wehman, 2013). For individuals with disabilities, there may be health concerns preventing them from receiving insurance due to preexisting conditions. The TTWWIIA allowed these individuals to receive insurance and pursue employment.

In 1997, the IDEA was reauthorized. These amendments, among other things, were intended to strengthen transition services and how they were implemented, (Flexer, Simmons, Luft, & Baer, 2001). This 1997 reauthorization expanded transition services to include related services for individuals with disabilities. Several other direct and indirect changes resulted from the reauthorization of IDEA. The 1997 amendments extended the least restrictive environment (LRE) to make sure that all students with disabilities had access to the general education curriculum. The 1997 amendments also provided assistive technology devices and services for a child at home and in other settings that the student needed in order to access their free appropriate public education (FAPE). In addition, mobility services were added as a potential related service. The definition of transition services remained the same with this reauthorization.

IDEA of 1997 also required that the IEP for each student include a statement of how the student's disability affects his or her involvement in general education curriculum. Also required, was a statement regarding which services would be in place to help promote the student's involvement in the general education curriculum. Under this reauthorization, the extent to which a student will not be involved in the general education class must also be included in the child's IEP.

The 1990s resulted in significant changes for individuals with disabilities concerning policy, legislation, services, and funding for services (Test et al., 2006). According to Whetstone and Browning (2002)

*“The 1997 Reauthorization of the IDEA mandated initiation of transition planning by no later than age 14 and required integration of transition services into other aspects of the student's program (Section 614). Therefore, from a legislative standpoint, transition now*

*requires looking at the entire period of education from age 14 (middle school) to graduation, postsecondary education, and employment” (p. 3).*

The change in legislative wording regarding transition services might best be illustrated in a transition taxonomy published during the 1990s. Paula Kohler’s transition taxonomy from 1998 is discussed below.

### **Transition Model of the 1990s**

**Kohler’s Taxonomy for Transition Programming of 1996.** Kohler’s Taxonomy for transition programming combined research, recent changes in legislation, and transition practices into a comprehensive taxonomy for transition planning to help increase post-school outcomes for individuals with disabilities (Kohler, 2003). Kohler’s (2003) model, which is empirically supported, is an “organization of practices through which transition-focused education and services [for people with disabilities] should be developed and delivered” (p. 176). Flexer et al., (2008) states that the Taxonomy for Transition Programming allows service providers to focus on transition being more individualized and outcome-oriented. Kohler’s Taxonomy is broken into five categories: (a) student-focused planning, (b) student development, (c) interagency collaboration, (d) program structure, and (e) family involvement. Each of the five categories of Kohler’s Taxonomy for transition planning includes a list of elements needed in order to optimize the student’s achievement in respect to the category title. While great strides were made to improve the quality of services provided to individuals with disabilities in the 1990s, a new millennium for transition was on the horizon with the 2000s.

### **2000s Transition is a Time of Change**

Current policies and practices today are a reflection of the monumental legislation from the 1940s through the 1990s. During the 2000s, transition education was a popular topic that was

infused in every facet of education (Cimera, 2009). The 2000s was a time period of reform and reauthorization of legislation that improved services for people with disabilities. The Disability Rights Movement continued to move forward with effective services to help improve and/or enhance individuals with disabilities' quality of life. Reforms of the 2000s focused on increasing accountability and monitoring the progress of the transition process and the outcomes of students with disabilities during the transition years. The 2000s proved to be a "time of change" for individuals with disabilities (Cimera, 2009, p. 3). The first major change to take place in the early 2000s was the authorization of No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

In 2001, President George Bush signed into law the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) (P.L. 107-110). The NCLB Act reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965 (P.L. 89-10). To date, NCLB Act is the largest investment made by the federal government for educational reform (Wehman, 2013). The NCLB Act requires educational systems to genuinely make progress in closing the achievement gaps for the students who may be economically disadvantaged or have disabilities. According to Flexer and Baer (2013), NCLB increased accountability for schools in regards to education and set the parameters for all public school systems to assess students in similar methods. Wehman (2011) noted that NCLB intended for assessment systems to be valid and accessible for all students being served under IDEA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. In order for some students to gain access to the same assessments that were administered to general education peers, students with disabilities were allowed accommodations. Browder and Spooner (2003) defined accommodations according to NCLB as changes in testing material or procedures that ensure an assessment measures the student's knowledge and skills rather than the disability. With accommodations in place, learning in general education classes is promoted. Parameters of NCLB left special educators,

teachers, and administrators concerned that life skills instruction would no longer be a priority. When educating students with disabilities, Browder and Spooner (2003) suggest combining life skills and academics across curricula and that academic skills often are better retained when taught in real-world contexts.

The Every Child Succeeds Act (ECSA) of 2015 also requires educators to implement scientifically-based teaching programs and strategies in the classroom setting. Scientifically-based programs go through a process of “rigorous, systematic, and objective procedures to ensure reliability in teaching effectiveness” (Test et al., 2009, p. 115). With the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, (now named the, Every Child Succeeds Act of 2015) a reauthorization of IDEA was necessary.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997 was reauthorized and renamed in 2004 as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (P.L.108-446). Test, Aspel, and Everson (2006) discuss the updates of IDEA in regards to transition by identifying the provisions that changed from IDEA 1997 to IDEA 2004. These authors explain that IDEA’s new definition of *transition services* changed to include wording that transition services are designed to be within a results-oriented process instead of an outcome-oriented process. Updates in IDEA (2004) also included the need for transition practitioners to focus on improving the academic and functional achievement of all students with disabilities. Overall updates to IDEA 2004 included provisions that focused on considering students’ interests, preferences, and strengths when planning for transition and the future. Taking the student’s needs into account was still a requirement when planning for transition of the IDEA of 2004. Students with disabilities were now being provided federal protection for transition planning to

take place on a more individualized level while helping to improve post-school outcomes for students with disabilities under the reauthorization of IDEA.

The IDEA of 2004 required that transition services be in effect for a student with a disability by their 16th birthday, and that postsecondary or long term goals be included as part of the planning process. The intent of IDEA of 2004 was to ensure that a student's free appropriate public education (FAPE) included preparation for postsecondary education, career, and independent living. IDEA 2004, now required that when a student with a disability exits school, the student should receive a Summary of Performance (SOP). NCLB and IDEA suggest the need for planning for the individual to be prepared for employment either through college or high school preparation programs. Three other pieces of legislation also affected students in transition: (1) The Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education and Improvement Act, (2) The Higher Education Opportunities Act, and (3) The Workforce Innovative Opportunities Act (2013).

The Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act of 2006 (P.L. 109-207) provided more funding to career technical education programs that would benefit individuals with disabilities. This Act also maintained that individuals with disabilities should have equal access to career and technical education (CTE) courses.

The Higher Education Opportunities Act (P.L. 220-315) changed how a student with a disability qualified for services. The 1998 Workforce Investment Act (WIA) (P.L. 105-220), which was the first major reform to the nation's job training system since 1982 (Wehman, 2013), was reauthorized in 2013. The 2014 reauthorization of the WIA, now named The Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) absorbed Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and set guidelines for funding of rehabilitation services to include pre-employment transition

services for individuals with disabilities who may qualify for vocational rehabilitation services. An emphasis on increased scientifically-based preparation programs for individuals with disabilities, as a means to improve post-school outcomes is evident through legislation like NCLB, 2001, IDEA, 2004, and the WIOA of 2014. The Workforce Innovation Opportunities Act (2014) amends the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and was passed with the goal of assisting youth in high school by improving post-school outcomes for students with disabilities in the area of employment.

The WIOA (2014) is the primary funding source for vocational rehabilitation. With the reauthorization of this workforce law, pre-employment transition services were mandated to be in place for students who were or would potentially be eligible for vocational rehabilitation services in the educational setting. Vocational rehabilitation must spend 15% of the funds received on pre-employment services for potentially eligible consumers and must address the following five areas: (1) job exploration counseling; (2) work-based learning experiences; (3) counseling on opportunities for enrollment in postsecondary education; (4) work place readiness; and (5) instruction in self-advocacy. Pre-employment transition services further emphasize the need for preparing individuals with disabilities for successful transitions to employment after exiting high school. This next section will link policy to practices to emphasize the importance of preparing individuals with disabilities for a successful transition to employment.

### **Linking Policy and Practice to Help Improve Outcomes for Students with Disabilities**

#### **Overview**

Legislation helps set the foundation for the services made available to students with disabilities. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, the Individuals with Disabilities Education

Improvement Act of 2004, and the Workforce Innovation Opportunities Act of 2014, all include provisions for providing students with disabilities preparation programs to help facilitate the movement from school to post-school activities. Specifically, these Acts call for services to be results-oriented (IDEA, 2004), based on scientific research (NCLB, 2001), and be evidence-based and data driven (WIOA, 2014). Prior to the most recent federal mandates, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1990 required that transition planning and activities coordinated for students with disabilities be outcome-oriented (Kohler, 1993). Together, the NCLB Act, the IDEA, and the WIOA federally mandate evidence-based practices as a means to increase positive post-school outcomes for students with disabilities. However, research and an examination of outcomes for individuals with disabilities, both past and present, in the areas such as employment, independent living, and community integration from the 1980s through the 2000s indicate that individuals with disabilities have experienced poor post-school outcomes (Hodell, 1985; Schalock et al., 1986; Blackorby & Wagner, 1996; Wagner, Newman, Cameto, Garza, & Levine, 2005) despite transition services being mandated in 1990. Furthermore, recent research reveals that in comparison to individuals without disabilities, students with disabilities experience poorer post-school outcomes (Test & Cease-Cook, 2012). In order to understand why preparation for individuals with disabilities in transition is needed, examining and analyzing post-school outcomes data are necessary.

### **Post-School Outcomes**

Results presented in studies and reports reveal that a discrepancy exists in the post-school outcomes of those with and without disabilities (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996; Wagner, Newman, Cameto, Garza, & Levine, 2005; Brault, 2012). The United States Department of Labor's, Annual Disability Statistics Compendium, and the United States Census Bureau all paint a rather grim

picture of the post-school outcomes for students with disabilities. As compared to individuals without disabilities, individuals with disabilities are less likely to graduate from high school (Brault, 2012), less likely to participate in meaningful activities after completion of high school, (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996), and less likely to engage in full-time employment (U.S Census, 2014).

Post-school outcomes can be improved, even for those with disabilities. For example, Carter, Austin and Trainor (2011) found that high school graduation has proven to be an indicator for improved post-school outcomes for students with disabilities (Carter, Austin, & Trainor, 2011). In addition, these researchers also found that individuals with disabilities proved to have outcomes that are more successful if they received employment preparation training while in high school and prior to referral for vocational rehabilitation services. High school employment preparation programs for students with disabilities can serve as a bridge to help these students be better prepared to engage in vocational rehabilitation.

**Vocational rehabilitation.** Vocational rehabilitation is a federally funded program under The Rehabilitation Amendments Act of 1992 that helps people who have a physical or mental disability, gain or maintain employment. While vocational rehabilitation serves a broad range of individuals, a large portion of their caseload includes transition-age youth. In addition, supported employment, a service offered through vocational rehabilitation, assists individuals with disabilities in gaining and maintaining competitive employment through the assistance of a job coach. Examining graduation rates and demographics of individuals with disabilities helps practitioners understand the importance of preparing students with and without disabilities for life after high school.

**United States Demographics.** According to the 2014 United States Census Bureau, there are approximately 318,857, 056 people living in the United States. Of those, 77% are Caucasian, 13.2 % are African American, and 17% are Hispanic or Latino. In addition, approximately 56.7 million people (19%) of the population have a disability. With an increase in a diverse population, research reveals that now, more than ever, there is a greater awareness of the academic, economic, and social needs of America's diverse population, which includes individuals with disabilities (Cartledge & Kourea, 2008).

**Demographics of individuals with disabilities.** Narrowing the U.S. population to focus specifically on individuals with disabilities who are also of transition-age is challenging. The United States Census Bureau attempts to identify persons with disabilities through a series of households agreeing to participate in multiple monthly surveys over the course of a year. This survey is called the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP). The purpose of the SIPP is to measure the number of individuals who require assistance with activities of daily living as well as activities of instrumental daily living which can help with identifying the number of individuals with high needs or disabilities. While this survey helps to identify the number of individuals with disabilities, there is not a technique that allows differentiation of the age groups in which these individuals belong.

According to the 2013 data, approximately 12.3 million people are living with a disability in America, ages 6 and older. This broad age range makes it difficult to identify the number of transition age students with disabilities. Data from the 2013 and 2014 Census reports indicates the subgroup of people with disabilities is now the largest minority in the United States. Educators and public service stakeholders have the opportunity to help individuals with disabilities from diverse backgrounds prepare for more successful transitions by providing

education and training activities focused on preparing them for life after high school, which includes employment.

**Graduation rates.** According to the Annual Disability Statistics Compendium (Kraus, 2015), during the fall of 2014, a total of 67,529,839 students ages 6-21 were enrolled in public schools across the United States. Of these, 8.4% ( $n = 67, 529,839$ ) were students who received special education services under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004. Of those students receiving services under Part B, 42% were ages 12-17, and 5.6% ages 18-27. Of those, 17.4% were ages 14-21. Data revealed that 247,596 students received a high school diploma in 2012 and 19.7% were counted as high school dropouts (Kraus, 2015). Individuals counted as dropouts can include a majority of those with disabilities.

The National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) is the primary federal inquiry source that collects, analyzes, and reports data related to education in the United States. In 2010, the NCES reported that 90.1% of all high school students graduated in 2009 whereas, individuals with disabilities had an 80% high school completion rate. Data collected from the Current Population Survey revealed that individuals without disabilities had a 7.8% chance of dropping out of high school as compared to individuals with disabilities who were nearly twice as likely to dropout (15.5%). Overall, females, including those with and without disabilities had a 91.2% graduation rate, as compared to males who had an 88.3% graduation rate. These data reveal that individuals, who have disabilities and are also male, are less likely to graduate than those who have disabilities and are female. This could be due to their typically being a higher representation of males receiving special education services. Providing students with disabilities employment preparation programs that are meaningful and relate to postsecondary goals could help increase

the graduation rate of students with disabilities, especially those who are at the greatest risk of not graduating and having poor post-school outcomes.

Three post-school outcome areas mandated under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act suggests a need for transition preparation and services in specific areas: (1) employment, (2) postsecondary education, and (3) independent living. The National Longitudinal Transition Study 2 results indicate that individuals with disabilities are not performing at the same level as those without disabilities in the areas of employment, independent living and enrollment in postsecondary education (Wagner, Newman, Cameto, Garza, & Levine, 2005). Furthermore, additional data reveal that people with disabilities are not being as successful in independent living, post-school outcomes, and job retention as those without disabilities (Test & Cease-Cook, 2012). The next section of this chapter will examine the employment demographics of individuals with disabilities, to further support the need for increased job training programs while students with disabilities are in high school.

**Employment of individuals with disabilities.** According to the United States Department of Labor, workers with a disability are more likely to be employed part-time, as compared to full-time, than those without a disability. More specifically, individuals with a disability are twice as likely to be employed part-time (33%) as compared to 18% of workers without disabilities. A slightly larger proportion of workers with disabilities work part time for economic reasons as compared to those without a disability (7% compared with 5%). Most people were working part-time, not by choice, but due to a reduction in work hours or because they were unable to gain full-time employment. As compared to those without disabilities, individuals with disabilities who were employed at the time of the survey, the type of job in which they were employed was more likely to be in manual labor areas, such as production jobs,

transportation, and material moving occupations (15% compared with 12%). Workers with a disability were also less likely to work in management and professional occupations as compared to those without a disability (31% compared with 39%) (Department of Labor, 2015). While individuals with disabilities are gaining employment, the types of jobs they hold may not be their job of choice. However, those who were employed and surveyed reported that having a job was better than not have a job at all (United States Department of Labor, 2015).

Among those with disabilities, people with disabilities have the lowest rates of employment and higher rates of unemployment. The National Longitudinal Transition Study 2 (NLTS2) reported that in 2003 there was a 39% employment rate for individuals with disabilities. More recent data revealed that only 27.5% of adults aged 21 to 64 with severe disabilities were employed as compared to 41.1% of all individuals with disabilities (Brault, 2012).

**Unemployment of individuals with disabilities.** According to the Department of Labor, the current unemployment rate in America is 5.6%, whereas the unemployment rate for individuals with disabilities is double that amount at 11.2% (Department of Labor, 2015). The unemployment rate is determined by those who did not have a job, were available for work, and who report that they are actively seeking employment; therefore, these numbers could actually be far greater. Over the past 10 years, the employment rate of people with disabilities has dropped five percentage points, to a total of 34% including those with disabilities. A potential reason for not having greater improvements during a 10-year span could be attributed to the 2008 recession, where unemployment rates reached record highs for people without disabilities as well. Persons who are not actively seeking employment and are not employed are considered to not be in the labor force.

**Labor force.** A large number of individuals with disabilities are included in the population who are no longer considered to be included in the labor force. A large proportion of people with disabilities: 8 out of 10 (80%) were considered to not be in the labor force during 2014, as compared with 3 in 10 (30%) of those without disabilities. In part, this reflects the fact that many of those with a disability were more likely to be out of the labor force than those without a disability (Department of Labor, 2015). Lack of employment and lack of access to full-time employment can create barriers to independent living and quality of life. Increasing available employment preparation programs while students with disabilities are in high school can help improve post-school outcomes.

Students with disabilities are continuing to experience poor post-school outcomes, more so than those without disabilities (Test & Cease-Cook, 2012). Living in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, inadequate preparation could be the reason people with disabilities are still two times less likely to gain or maintain employment post high school. The United States of America is ever changing. Students in schools are representing a montage of cultures and ethnicities as evident by current demographic changes that include the enlargement of an increasingly diverse population (Cartledge & Kourea, 2008). Individuals with disabilities are the largest minority group in America (Brault, 2012). Therefore, individuals with disabilities represent a vast portion of the diverse population in schools.

### **Improving Post-School Outcomes**

For students with disabilities who graduate from high school, some young adults may utilize the services of vocational rehabilitation and begin a career in an entry level job, start out gainfully employed in a position that will present opportunities for progressing up the corporate ladder, enter into postsecondary education, or enter into technical training. Some students who

graduate will choose a period of self-discovery to find themselves or experiment with different choices that may even be life threatening, such as drug and/or alcohol use. Halpern 1993, stated that

*“Unfortunately, some may drift into less adaptive endeavors, such as a period of ‘purposeless unengagement’ or, even worse, a period of self-denigrating or antisocial behavior that can include such unhappy consequences as drug or alcohol abuse, criminal behaviors, and possibly eventual incarceration (p. 486).”*

Transition at its best or at its worst can still result in a period of stumbling as individuals attempt to sort through life (Halpern, 1993). For this reason, transition planning is needed to help assist students with the discovery process in order to increase successful post-school outcomes.

Baer and Flexer (2013) state that transition planning “is where middle school and high school teachers plan for the next steps after individuals graduate from high school in order to help improve post-school outcomes” (p 2). In addition to all of the transitions life will bring, people with disabilities can have a more complex transition; not only are the odds of success not in their favor, the involvement with several programs and services, such as special education and related services, can add additional complexities to the individual’s life once these services fade away. Successful outcomes for people with disabilities can include an increase in self-confidence as an awareness of one’s own work, personal social, and daily living skills (Benz, Lindstrom, Yovanoff, 2000).

According to research, providing students with disabilities secondary transition services may improve post-school outcomes (Test et al., 2009). Rusch and Phelps (1987) also stated that an effective method for increasing success for students with disabilities after graduation is to plan ahead for life after high school. This is where preparation helps individuals when they are

confronted with opportunities for success. Preparation for each person will be unique and individualized, as individuals possess a variety of qualities, skills, functioning levels, interests, preferences, and needs. This next section will discuss foundational laws and the evolution of legislation pertaining to special education transition services and how each relates to the field of transition, definitions for transition and transition services. Conceptual frameworks for transition will be explained through transition models and program structures, and conclude with aligning legislation and services for students with disabilities through a description of evidence-based practices (EBPs) in transition and how transition stakeholders can successfully implement practices. Specifically, a discussion of community-based instruction will be provided to describe how this practice can help increase positive post-school outcomes for students with disabilities.

### **Aligning Transition Legislation, Models, and Evidence-based Practices to Prepare Students with Disabilities for Transition**

According to research, providing students with disabilities secondary transition services can increase post-school outcomes in a positive way (Test et al., 2009). Rusch and Phelps (1987) also stated that an effective method for increasing success for students with disabilities after graduation is to plan ahead for life after high school and incorporate preparation activities while in high school. Adequately planning for secondary transition services contains multiple components. Good planning should include the use of strategies and practices proven effective for individuals with disabilities. This section addresses preparation for transition in special education by reviewing evidence-based practices, how evidence-based practices are used as a means for transition planning, and finally, this section focuses on one specific evidence-based practice, community-based vocational instruction, as a means for improving post-school

outcomes for students with disabilities. One way to improve post-school outcomes for individuals with disabilities is to prepare students for transition during high school.

### **Preparation**

At the conclusion of the 1980s, before research validated specific practices on how to better prepare students for successful transitions after high school, Rusch and DeStephano (1989), co-directors of the National Institute on Transition, published emerging patterns of ten preparation characteristics associated with successful transitions after high school. According to Kohler (1993) and Rusch and Phelps (1987), transition planning and services are an effective way of improving the post-school outcomes of youth with disabilities (Kohler, 1993). The list of ten preparation characteristics was a result of an analysis of over 200 transition model programs (Rusch & DeStephano, 1989). Later in the early 1990s, Paula Kohler incorporated suggestions from researchers like Rusch and DeStephano and recommended best practices for transition substantiated by empirical evidence (Kohler, 1993).

Rusch and DeStephano (1989) suggested the following preparation activities in order to help increase positive post-school outcomes for students with disabilities (later research will confirm some of the suggestions as either a best practice or evidenced-based practice).

Preparation techniques suggested by researchers included the following, but is not limited to: (a) planning in advance for transition as early as seventh grade; (b) identifying a transition team that collaborates in order to plan and implement services; (c) developing an individualized transition plan, (d) specifically teaching skills that are relevant to community integration; (e) teaching job and independent living skills in real employment, residential, and community settings; (f) placing students in real jobs that could potentially provide opportunities for advancement; and (g) implementing on-going evaluations (Rusch & DeStephano, 1989). While suggestions were

available on how to improve post-school outcomes, persistent problems with unsuccessful post-school outcomes would “call for more effective transition services to individuals with disabilities prior to exiting high school” to be in place (Landmark et al., 2010, p. 32). Legislation helped this idea come to fruition.

With the passage of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1990, the first time transition services were federally mandated for students receiving special education services, funding for research also increased (Landmark et al., 2010). During the 1990s, researchers like Kohler, Johnson, and Guy participated in work that identified transition practices proven to be effective in improving positive post-school outcomes for students with disabilities.

In 1993, Kohler published research that produced transition practices identified as “best-practices” as a means for transition practitioners to choose from when developing individualized transition programs. The suggestions Kohler made were supported in literature she reviewed and were also associated with positive post-school outcomes for individuals with disabilities. According to the review of literature conducted by Kohler in the early 1990s, more than half of the literature cited “vocational training, parent involvement, interagency collaboration and service delivery” (Kohler, 1993, p. 113) as a means for increasing positive post-school outcomes, which confirmed suggestions previously made by Rusch and DeStephano (1989) on how to better prepare students for transition. Later in 2010, Landmark, Ju, and Zhang examined suggestions made by Kohler and confirmed that while some of the practices were more “implied rather than empirically substantiated,” they were considered substantiated as effective for improving post-school outcomes for student with disabilities. The review also included vocational training practices to improve employment skills for students with disabilities (Landmark et al., 2010, p. 166). Kohler states that for students to be successful after high school

transition programs should be designed with a solid foundation (Kohler, 1993). In 1996, Kohler published what can be used to establish a solid foundation when planning and providing transition services for individuals with disabilities, a Taxonomy for Transition Programming. Kohler's taxonomy is for transition practitioners to use as a guide on how to effectively plan for successful transitions for individuals with disabilities for life after exiting high school. Kohler's taxonomy for transition programming is discussed below.

**Kohler's 1996 Taxonomy for Transition Programming.** Kohler organized transition planning into five categories. Those five categories include: (a) student-focused planning, (b) student development, (c) interagency collaboration, (d) program structure, and (e) family involvement. Each of the five categories of Kohler's Taxonomy for transition programming is explained below:

- Student-focused planning is the process for developing a student's IEP using a student-centered approach.
- Student development is the core of the educational program that helps the student develop the skills necessary to facilitate a successful transition from school to post-school activities.
- Interagency collaboration is the process of identifying and meeting the student's needs through the use of multiple agencies.
- Family involvement is the extent to which a family is or is not involved in the planning process as a means to facilitate the transition planning process.
- Program structures are the infrastructure and programs available to a student that facilitates implementation of effective transition education and services.

(Kohler, 1996)

One way to plan for secondary transition services is to use the practices and guidelines identified by Paula Kohler's taxonomy for transition programming (1996) as a means for transition planning. This taxonomy identified effective practices to plan for transition services with suggestions on how to implement these services. Effective practices that are associated with positive post-school outcomes are called *evidence-based practices*, depending on the amount of research that substantiates the practice. Before examining practices that are proven effective, guided by the taxonomy for transition planning to help improve outcomes for students with disabilities, an examination of the definition of evidence-based practices is necessary. The following section will provide a definition of evidence-based practices, an explanation of what makes a practice evidence-based, and identify the rationale for implementing evidence-based practices supported through legislation and research to individuals with disabilities.

### **Evidence-Based Practices**

Since the publication of the Bridges Model, in which the outcome of special education services was geared towards employment (Will, 1984), educators have been faced with challenges surrounding the *how to* develop and implement effective transition programs for students with disabilities (Test et al, 2009). One of the biggest challenges for a special education teacher is the responsibility to determine which practices will lead to positive post-school outcomes for students with disabilities and differentiate between which practices to use (Test et al., 2009). One way transition practitioners can reduce stress associated with deciding on which practices to choose is to implement those proven to increase positive post-school outcomes for individuals with disabilities by researchers in the field of special education. These proven practices are known as evidence-based practices.

Evidence-based practices are practices that have been identified by scientifically-based research and are proven effective at increasing positive post-school outcomes for students with disabilities (Test et al., 2009). Scientifically based research was called for with the passage of the NCLB Act of 2001. No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 defines scientifically-based research as “research that involves the application of rigorous, systematic and objective procedures to obtain reliable and valid knowledge relevant to education activities and programs” (NCLB, 20 U.S.C 7801 § 9101 [37]). The IDEA of 2004 also used the same definition of scientifically-based research to require special education teachers and related services providers to use services that are evidence-based in developing and implementing Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) (Test, Fowler et al., 2009). Over the past several years, many practices have emerged as a means to increase positive post-school outcomes.

**What Works Clearing House.** As a result of legislative mandates calling for evidence-based practices coupled with the task of identifying and determining exactly which practices are evidence-based or not, the Institute of Education Services (IES) established the What Works Clearing House (WWC) (Test, Fowler, et al., 2009). With the establishment of the WWC, systematic reviews of literature, including interventions, are made available to the public on-line in several areas that address students with disabilities needs (Test et al., 2009). Although efforts have been made to help identify evidence-based practices in special education, there still remains a good deal of work needed to help identify evidence-based practices that are specifically related to secondary transition and are proven to help increase positive post-school outcomes for students with disabilities (Test et al., 2009). As a result of the continued need to address secondary transition practices, the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), “federally funded [a] technical assistance and dissemination center, the

National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center (NSTTAC)” (Test, Fowler, & Kohler, 2010, p.2).

**The National Technical Assistance Center (NTACT) formally known as the National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center on Transition (NSTTACT).** In 2006, the federally funded establishment of the National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center (NSTTAC), was founded as a primary resource in identifying evidence-based practices (EBPs) in secondary transition that could be used to help students with disabilities, including those with disabilities, better prepare for life after high school (Test, Fowler, & Kohler, 2010; Mazzotti, Rowe, & Test, 2013). As of 2015, NSTTAC is now known as the National Technical Assistance Center on Transition (NTACT). Most of the work referred to in this chapter was conducted during the time this center was called NSTTAC. This chapter will refer to NSTTAC, but know that they are one in the same.

One of the tasks of NSTTAC was to identify evidence-based practices specifically in the area of secondary transition (Test, Fowler, & Kohler, 2010). In order to do this, NSTTAC needed to conduct an extensive literature review. Like the WWC, NSTTAC also used a rigorous process to review literature and examine “group experimental and single-subject research studies to identify EBPs in secondary transition” (Mazzotti, Rowe, & Test, 2013, p. 162). NSTTAC used quality indicators developed by researchers Gersten et al. (2005) and Horner et al. (2005). These quality indicators helped NSTTAC establish four definitions of evidence-based practices. The four evidence-based practices terms identified by NSTTAC (2001) can be used by teachers to determine which practices to implement when planning for transition services for individuals with disabilities. The four terms identified by NSTTAC are: evidence-based practices, promising

practices, research-based practices, and emerging practices (NSTTAC, 2011). The definitions of the four terms are listed below and are posted on the NSTTAC /NTACT website.

*Evidence-based practices: are based on rigorous research designs, have demonstrated a record of success for improving student outcomes, and have undergone a systematic review process using quality indicators to evaluate level of evidence.*

*Promising practices: are based on rigorous research designs and have demonstrated a record of improving student outcomes. Promising practices have not undergone a systematic review process.*

*Research-based practices: are based on research, have demonstrated limited success, and used a 'weak' research design.*

*Emerging practices: are not based on research, have no data to support effectiveness, and are based on anecdotal evidence and/or professional judgment. (NSTTAC, 2010)*

The NSTTAC expanded its efforts to identify secondary transition practices after the initial literature review revealed that the experimental literature did not include correlational research that demonstrated that EBPs are associated with improved post-school outcomes in the areas of employment, education, and/or independent living (Test, Mazzotti, Mustain, Fowler, Kortering, & Kohler, 2009). Test et al., (2009), examined transition practices in the literature and found 32 practices that were related to positive post-school outcomes when planning for transition services (2009). The next section will address evidence-based practices identified by Test, Fowler et al., (2009), Landmark, Ju, and Zhang (2010), and NSTTAC 2011 using Kohler's Taxonomy for Transition Planning (1996) as a means to help organize the practices identified.

**Evidence-based transition practices (organized by Kohler's taxonomy for transition planning).** Prior to organizing the evidence-based practices identified by Test et al., (2009) using

Kohler's taxonomy for transition planning, NSTTAC began organizing the practices by the identifying the intervention being implemented (Test, Fowler & Kohler, 2010). With Test and colleague's (2009) identification of 32 EBPs, NSTTAC's "restructuring, combined with annual updates to the literature review" a total of 64 EBPs were identified by the year 2010 (Test, Fowler, & Kohler, 2010, p. 2). These 64 EBPs offer a way for practitioners to teach over 20 different skills to individuals with disabilities. Since then, these 64 practices have now been categorized using Kohler's Taxonomy for Transition Programming. Within the five areas of the Taxonomy for Transition Programming, the 64 practices (32 from Test et al., 2009 and 32 from NSTTAC, 2010) were categorized in the following manner: six were placed in the area of Student-Focused Planning, 57 are in the Student Development area, one in the Family Involvement area, and three in the Program Structure area. No practices were identified in the area of Interagency Collaboration (Test et al., 2009; Test, Fowler, & Kohler, 2010). As an educator or transition practitioner, deciding which practice to implement for students with disabilities can be a challenge. The next section addresses how teachers and practitioners can choose the best evidence-based practice to implement for students with disabilities.

**How to choose the best evidence-based practice for students with disabilities.** One of the many challenges facing high school teachers today is determining what secondary educational opportunities are available that will keep youth with disabilities in school while preparing students for life after high school (Rowe et al., 2015). According to Cook, Tankersly, and Lindstrom (2009), teachers continue to use strategies that are ineffective, and are not proven to increase positive post-school outcomes, despite the fact that over 64 evidence-based practices have been identified. Determining which evidence-based practices are applicable for individual students can be a challenge.

Mazzotti, Rowe, and Test (2013) published an article that helps teachers of secondary students with disabilities navigate the evidence-based practices maze. These authors explain that teachers and transition practitioners must enact a decision-making process. The decision-making process should be an informed process and use the following four sources: (a) a framework related to the guided principle (i.e., evidence-based special education) (b) the best available research evidence, (c) professional judgment, and (d) student needs and values (Cook et al., 2008; Detrich et al., 2009; Mazzotti, Rowe, & Test, 2013). Teachers also need to understand the definitions used to describe the evidence-based practices and how to implement the practice. The NSTTAC provides a list of all 64 EBPs along with a description of each and the skills addressed by the EBP. Selecting the most appropriate EBP can aide in making the most effective decision for the individual with a disability and can take place when teachers use the resources available and their professional judgment. Teachers should ask three questions when trying to identify which practice they should use. Those three questions are: (1) Did the practice undergo a systematic review using quality indicators? (2) Is the practice based on research that used rigorous research design? and (3) Does the practice have a demonstrated record of success for improving student outcomes? (Mazzotti, Rowe, & Test, 2013).

By using these three questions, coupled with professional judgment, teachers can determine if the selected practice “will be effective for a particular group of students, relates to the principles of secondary transition as stated in the taxonomy for transition programming, and can be individualized and/or adapted to meet the needs of a particular group of students” (Mazzotti, Rowe, & Test, 2013, p. 161). Determining which evidence-based practices will be effective for students with disabilities can also be done using the aforementioned selection criteria. This next section will focus on one particular portion of Kohler’s Taxonomy for

Transition Planning, program structure, which is specifically proven to address multiple areas of need for students with disabilities and then identify one evidence-based practice that can help increase positive post-school outcomes.

### **Evidence-Based Practices for Students with Disabilities**

Individuals with disabilities have received progressive special education services since the passage of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, when students with disabilities were first guaranteed a free appropriate public education (Bowder, Wood, Thompson, & Ribuff, 2014). Prior to the 1970s, services for students with disabilities were not mandated. More recently, legislation has called for increased accountability for all students to make adequate yearly progress (NCLB, 2001).

Effective strategies and practices for teaching students with disabilities should be made readily available to special education teachers and transition practitioners (Bowder et al., 2014). The What Works Clearing House (WWC) and the National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center (NSTTAC) have been established through federally funded grants, making evidence-based practices and lesson plans readily available to teachers, including teachers of students with disabilities. Effective practices for students with disabilities have evolved since the passage of the 1975 Education for All Handicapped Children Act. Researchers since the late 1980s have suggested that implementing vocational education, employment preparation, and community experiences as a part of a student with a disability's individualized educational program (IEP) increases positive post-school outcomes (Rusch & DesStephano, 1989; Kohler, 1990; Kohler, 1993; Test et al., 2009; Landmark, Ju, & Zhang, 2010, Browder, Wood, Thompson, & Ribuffo, 2014; Rowe et al., 2014).

As previously mentioned, Test and colleagues examined transition practices found in the literature and revealed 32 best practices that were related to positive-post school outcomes when planning for transition services (2009). Test and colleagues (2009) also organized these practices using Kohler's Taxonomy for Transition Planning. Under the area of *program structure*, Test et al., (2009) identified three evidence-based practices supported by literature. Community-based instruction was one of the identified evidence-based practices under program structure that has been proven to help students with disabilities acquire vocational skills.

### **Community-based Instruction**

Test et al., (2009) found eight studies substantiating community-based instruction (CBI) as an evidence-based practice. The NSTTAC on-line list of secondary transition evidence-based practices and predictors of post-school success also identifies community-based instruction as an effective practice for students with disabilities. Community-based instruction is defined as teaching functional skills that take place in the community to target skills where they naturally occur (Browning et al., 1983). Community-based instruction can be used to teach a myriad of skills such as: banking skills, grocery shopping, safety skills, communication skills, community integration, and employment skills. With the continuing low employment rate of individuals with disabilities, vocational instruction can be used as a means to help better prepare students for employment or utilize employment agencies (like vocational rehabilitation) after high school.

**Community-based instruction: A guidebook for teachers.** Beakley, Yoder, and West (2003) provide practitioners with a practical guidebook for implementing community-based instruction (CBI). Law requires students to participate in community experiences to assist with acquiring daily living skills (IDEA, 2004). Beakley, Yoder, and West (2003), provide practitioners with a set of guiding principles and practices that will facilitate a program to

provide community experiences for students with disabilities to teach job skills. This practical guidebook provides teachers with recommended steps needed to develop a quality CBI program.

A review of literature revealed that a comprehensive set of guidelines and recommendations were not available for practitioners to access in a central location that directs teachers on how to plan for and implement CBI. Teaching employment skills in the community is referred to as community-based vocational instruction (CBVI). Planning for both CBI and CBVI reveals that both programs share similarities; such as: (a) gaining approval, (b) funding, (c) arranging for personnel, and (d) planning for safe outings. Therefore, guidelines on how to effectively implement CBI provided by Beakley, Yoder, and West (2003), can also provide a foundation for an effective CBVI program. Although each local education agency may have specific requirements outlined by board policies, Beakley and colleagues provide practitioners with a collection of suggestions, ideas, steps, and activities that can be altered to meet individual student's and district's needs (2003).

The CBI guidebook opens with an orientation to CBI. The orientation explains why CBI is important, who should participate, which stakeholders are involved, and identifies CBI as a best practice for students with disabilities in secondary settings. Next, the authors further expand on CBI by discussing that all students are expected to transition into adult roles after high school, which includes employment. Additionally, the authors elaborate on suggestions stating that a CBI program will provide students with opportunities to improve post-school outcomes upon exiting high school. According to Beakley, Yoder, and West (2003) providing students with CBI allows the individual exposure to opportunities that may (a) increase independence, (b) promote generalization of skills, (c) encourage job exploration, and (d) facilitate the development of interpersonal relationships (Beakley et al., 2003). With employment being an ultimate end goal

for most people, rather it be after high school or additional postsecondary training, teaching students job skills during high school through CBVI could also help students achieve those goals while learning a specific job skill. Beakley and colleagues provide practitioners with lesson plans, assessments, forms, and data collection tools that will benefit a teacher who wishes to initiate a CBVI program or improve the quality of an existing CBI program.

### **Using CBI to Teach Transferable Job Skills**

Employment and vocational training should begin as early as possible for individuals with disabilities (Browder et al, 2014). As compared to students who did not participate in employment preparation programs, the implementation of employment preparation programs during high school lead to better employment outcomes for students with disabilities (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996; Colley & Jamison, 1998; Luecking & Fabian, 2000). Research reviewed, expressed the importance of incorporating real-work experiences as a key factor for improving employment outcome goals for individuals with disabilities (Certo et al., 2011; Kohler & Field, 2003). Community-based instruction (CBI), an evidence-based practice for teaching students skills in natural settings can include vocational instruction. This next section reviews the eight studies substantiating CBI as an EBP.

**CBI as a secondary transition evidence-based practice.** Test et al., (2009) identified community-based instruction as an evidence-based program structure that was substantiated by eight studies. Although the studies taught different skills, all of them implemented interventions, seven using various forms of single-subject design, and one using a group design, to teach skills to students with mild to moderate disabilities. The eight studies used to substantiate CBI as an evidence-based practice are explained below in alphabetical order of first authors' last names.

**CBI to teach banking skills.** Alberto, Cihak, and Gama, (2005) used an alternating treatment design across eight students with intellectual disabilities who had an IQ between 40 and 55, and had no sensory deficits, no prior training with a debit card and automatic teller machines (ATM), and parental permission. The authors collected baseline data in a natural community setting then simulated instruction in the classroom by using static picture prompts and video modeling to teach the steps in withdrawing money from an ATM at a local grocery store during CBI experiences. The intervention implemented by Alberto et al., utilized the least to most hierarchy of prompting until students performed the desired tasks without assistance. The data revealed that students from this study benefited more from static pictures in the community, rather than video modeling in the classroom. All eight students withdrew \$20 from an ATM by the end of this study. Although this study did not teach a job skill, the act of teaching a skill in a real-life setting proved to help students acquire a valuable daily living skill.

**CBI to purchase items.** A study conducted by Ayres, Langone, Boon, and Norman (2006) implemented a multiple probe across students design to teach eight students who had intelligent quotients (IQs) between 50 and 65 and participated in some activities with general education peers. This intervention taught participants how to make purchases in the community using the dollar plus purchasing strategy. The dollar-plus purchasing strategy is described as students are taught to examine the dollar amount required for a purchase and adding one additional dollar to the total to be sure the individual has enough money to cover the cost of a purchase (i.e., if the total for a drink and a snack is \$5.45, the student gives the cashier \$6.00 to cover the purchase. The student does not need to know how to make change in order to shop, but needs to make sure they have enough money to cover the items being purchased.) Four students were instructed on how to pay for purchases in the community using the dollar more than

strategy through the use of computer-based instruction. Four students were instructed on how to pay for purchases in the community using the dollar more strategy during community-based instruction. Three out of the four students benefited from the computer-based instruction, and were able to generalize the skill in the community, whereas all four students benefited from being taught the dollar more than strategy in a community setting and generalized the skill to other community-based locations.

**CBI to teach functional skills.** Bates, Cuvo, Miner, and Korabek (2001) implemented a multi-factor mixed design with two repeated measures to 20 young adults with moderate to significant disabilities (e.g., mean IQ of 68) and 20 young adults with mild disabilities. Students were taught four functional skills using both community-based instruction only or simulated instruction and community-based instruction. The four skills were: grocery shopping, laundry, restaurant skills, and janitorial skills to participants of this study. Furthermore, the two groups of 20 were each split into two separate groups of 10 so that one group of 10 could receive instruction from simulation and community-based instruction, and the other group of 10 could receive community-based instruction only. This study found numerous results that can be applied to teaching students with disabilities today. While all students showed an increase in skills learned from a pre-test to post-test, participants with mild disabilities appeared to benefit from simulated instruction as compared to those with significant disabilities who better acquired the daily living skills being taught through community-based instruction. Bates et al., found that 3-D simulations were more beneficial for students with significant disabilities than those with mild disabilities, but community-based instruction proved to be beneficial across all students involved in this study (2001).

**CBI to teach clerical task.** Cihak, Alberto, Kessler, and Taber (2004) conducted a multiple probe across students design in an effort to teach the skills of copying and collating papers during community-based instruction to five students who were functioning within the moderate range of intellectual disability (e.g., mean IQ of 47). Prior to participating in this study, students had no prior engagement in similar training opportunities that included exposure to working with a fax machine, using a debit card, or accessing money from an automatic teller machine (ATM). Results from this study revealed that all five students benefitted from instruction during CBI and completed the tasks of making copies and collating a stack of five papers with 100% accuracy. The researchers also stated that no additional training was needed when the researchers returned to check for maintenance of skills taught during CBI.

**CBI to teach communication.** Heller, Allgood, Ware, and Castelle (1996) conducted a multiple probe design and a reversal single subject design across five students who participated in vocational training four times a week, were 16 to 21 years old, and were functioning within the mild to severe mental intellectual disability range (e.g., mean IQ of 65). Participants had hearing and visual impairments and were taught how to communicate with those without disabilities in community settings using a communication board. The researchers used a single and double communication board for students who had visual and hearing impairments to train personnel in the community while working at job sites. The researchers found that the dual communication board was more effective for students who had visual and hearing impairments when communicating with those without visual and hearing impairments was needed in community settings. A follow-up maintenance phase was completed and revealed that all students retained the skills they learned using the dual communication board.

**CBI to teach watering plants and delivering mail.** Mechling and Ortega-Hurndon (2007) conducted a multiple probe design across three job tasks with three participants. Participants were individuals who “received CBVT (community-based vocational training), as part of their high school instruction” (p. 247). Participants also had moderate hearing loss and were functioning within the mild to moderate intellectual disability range (e.g., mean IQ of 70). The researchers used constant time delay and computer-based video instruction to teach watering plants and delivering mail in community settings. The researchers organized simulations of job tasks through video modeling to initially introduce the targeted skills of watering plants and delivering mail. They found video modeling effective for introducing the new skills being taught to students with significant disabilities. The authors of this study then used CBI as a means to check for generalization of the newly acquired skills of the three participants with significant disabilities through the implementation of video modeling. They also found that all three students who learned two job tasks through video modeling were able to generalize the skills to community settings during CBI.

**CBI to teach functional sight words.** Schloss et al. (1995) was the final study used to substantiate CBI as an evidence-based practice. This study was conducted by Scholss and colleagues and used a parallel treatment multiple baseline design paired with an alternating treatment design to teach three students with mild to moderate mental retardation [sic], students who had an IQ between 55 (significant cognitive disability) and 70, functional sight words during community-based instruction. The researchers used direct instruction to teach sight words in various community environments and then checked for skill acquisition through the implementation of a word scavenger hunt in various community settings. All three students

mastered the words being taught, evidenced by completion at 100% accuracy during community-based scavenger hunts.

As previously mentioned and evidenced by the eight studies examined by Test and his colleagues, community-based instruction is an effective method to teach a wide array of skills. Such skills include but are not limited to daily living, functional reading, and communication. Community-based instruction (CBI), a substantiated evidence-based practice for teaching students skills in natural settings (Test et al., 2009) can also be a means to teach vocational instruction to students with disabilities. While community-based instruction is substantiated as an evidence-based practice, educators are also compelled to arrange vocational learning opportunities in community settings. A method for teaching vocational instruction and employment preparation skills to students with disabilities is the implementation of community-based vocational instruction (CBVI) (Kim & Dymond, 2010).

### **Community-Based Vocational Instruction**

According to Kim and Dymond (2010), community-based vocational instruction is instruction “provided in integrated community settings” (p. 314). This means that students with disabilities are taught job skills in environments where the specific targeted job skill naturally occur. CBVI allows students to participate in various job settings that can help to increase their awareness of available jobs, skills needed to complete those jobs, and allow for the students to narrow down the type of job they wish to pursue after graduation or upon enrollment in vocational rehabilitation (Renzaglia, Hutchins, Dymond, & Sheldon, 2008; Kim & Dymond, 2010). Community-based vocational instruction consists of non-paid work experiences such as: job shadowing, volunteering, internships, and apprenticeships (Test et al., 2006). Teaching

vocational skills to individuals with disabilities can be achieved through the implementation of high-quality CBVI (Inge & Dymond, 1994; Cook, 2002; Kim & Dymond, 2010).

According to Luecking and Fabian (2000), students with moderate to significant disabilities should be trained in real work environments because these individuals typically have difficulty with generalizing skills learned in the classroom. Exposing students to various job sites can also help a student transfer job readiness skills from one environment to the next. As opportunities for CBVI increase, students are able to build a repertoire of appropriate work behaviors that might not otherwise be learned in a classroom. According to Wehman (2006), students need opportunities to learn general and specific job skills in community settings where the skills will actually be used.

In addition to the support found in research that students with disabilities should receive instruction in community settings (Kim & Dymond, 2010; Luecking & Fabien, 2000; Wehman, 2006), the rationale for providing instruction in community settings also can be found in legislation. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (2004) mandates community-based vocational instruction. This law dictates that transition services be provided to students with disabilities in integrated settings.

Community-based vocational instruction in integrated businesses can allow for special education teachers and practitioners to expose students with disabilities to various vocational environments. Community-based vocational instruction is also an example of an integrated service. Integrated services provide students opportunities to engage in vocational training while in natural work environments among people without disabilities. Job skills are taught in the natural environment under the supervision and support of school personnel and cooperating job

site supervisors. Teaching students while participating in an integrated setting can help not only provide the student with a valuable job skill, but also teach the student appropriate social skills.

Multiple studies have been conducted that examine the critical link between integrating students in community settings and competitive employment outcomes; however, these studies do not specifically address students with disabilities (Benz, Lindstrom, & Yovanoff, 2000; Inge & Dymond, 1994; Inge, Wehman, & Dymond, 2005; Dunn, Rabren & Chambers, 2002). An examination of these studies reveals that students, who participated in work experiences while in high school or were employed during high school, were more likely to be employed after high school. Research also shows that students, who participated in CBVI internships during high school, were more likely to be competitively employed six months after graduation, than those with disabilities who did not participate in CBVI (Kim & Dymond, 2010). Community-based vocational instruction is important to individuals with disabilities, as well as future employers, and can be a factor to increasing positive post-school outcomes.

Community-based vocational instruction has been proven effective for teaching students with disabilities valuable work skills. The importance of providing CBVI to students with disabilities is reflected in studies that report students with disabilities experience lower rates of employment upon graduation as compared to their non-disabled peers (Newman et al., 2011). Not only does CBVI provide practical volunteer work experiences in community businesses (Fox, Schiffer, & Rabren, 2013), CBVI increases the employer's awareness of individuals with disabilities and the contributions they can make to their community through employment and opportunities for students with disabilities to gain employment (Graham, Inge, Wehman, Muphy, Revell, & West, 2013; Inge & Wehman, 2006). In addition, students with disabilities who receive vocational training in integrated settings (i.e., CBVI) are more likely to learn job skills in

community settings rather than in traditional simulated settings or classroom environments used to teach students job skills (Walker, Uphold, Richter, & Test, 2010). When employers and teachers teach job skills to individuals with disabilities in real-life settings, students are better able to learn and transfer those skills to various environments (Hamman, 2012).

There are several complexities involved in providing students with disabilities adequate CBVI programs, especially considering various medical, behavior, and physical limitations that may be associated with students with more significant disabilities. In spite of the challenges, successful CBVI programs can be implemented to mitigate the various issues students with disabilities face when attempting to gain meaningful employment. However, CBVI demands effective communication, highly qualified personnel, careful planning, and complex logistics for it to be carried out successfully (Kim & Dymond, 2010). A successful CBVI program begins with effective personnel. There is also a great deal of research that supports the necessity of adequate support personnel, including support from administration, in secondary special education employment preparation programs (Certo et al., 2008; Foley et al., 1999; Snell & Brown, 2006).

**CBVI personnel.** As depicted in Illustration 1, the CBVI Personnel Model provides a visual representation of the individuals CBVI requires in order to make the CBVI experience beneficial to all of those involved in the process. CBVI requires the cooperation of the job site supervisor, school personnel, and the student. Schiffer and Rabren (2015) developed this model as a visual representation of the collaborative, on-going efforts required of the various individuals needed in order to make CBVI successful. While several individuals are needed, there are processes that help break down the complex logistics of CBVI for practitioners. These

models offer a guide to practitioners who wish to implement CBVI in their schools to individuals with disabilities.

Illustration 1: CBVI Personnel Model

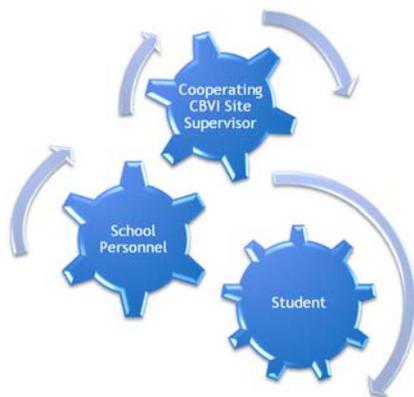


Illustration 1. This graphic represents the collaborative cyclical relationship between stakeholders involved in preparing and maintaining effective CBVI jobsites.

The CBVI Personnel Model (Schiffer & Rabren, 2015) depicts the involvement and collaboration between the student, school personnel, and cooperating site supervisors suggested for CBVI to be successful. This model also represents that collaboration for CBVI is an on-going process rather than a one-time event. Each participant in the CBVI process provides valuable input and support throughout CBVI. According to a study conducted in 2013, respondents were asked to make suggestions as to how work preparation programs in schools could improve, the most common theme and advice from 48 special education teachers were related to collaboration among students, school personnel, and the community (Moon, 2013). The CBVI support personnel model supports the finding of Moon's study. Knowing who is a part of the implementation of CBVI is important for practitioners, but knowing the process for implementing CBVI is also needed to begin a CBVI program.

**Processes for implementation of CBVI.** Schiffer and Rabren (2015) developed two models to help guide practitioners on the process of implementing CBVI in their special

education programs to students with disabilities. These CBVI implementation models were presented at the 2015 Division on Career Development and Transition Conference in Portland, Oregon. Community-based vocational instruction has several navigating components that are necessary to address in order to have an effective program. Effective CBVI programs benefit students with disabilities in preparing for transition. Illustration 2 depicts the *before, during, and after* stages of implementing CBVI at a programmatic level. The programmatic model for CBVI provides teachers and practitioners a framework for employing an effective CBVI program. This preliminary programmatic model for implementing CBVI was developed through an initial review of literature (NSTTAC, 2013; Test, Aspel, & Everson, 2011; Wehman, 2011; Beakley, Yonder, & West, 2003). Research on the validity of the initial CBVI Programmatic model is needed to determine how effective it is in preparing practitioners for the implementation of CBVI. The programmatic model was developed by reviewing literature and putting into action each step at a local high school in southeast Alabama.

The Programmatic Model of CBVI provides practitioners with an easy to follow implementation guide to facilitate the process of CBVI (see Illustration 2). This model outlines the steps needed at the programmatic level, *before, during, and after* CBVI can be implemented. Illustration 2 also provides the on-going steps required *before, during* and *after* implementing CBVI. This illustration is organized in a manner that suggests the process for planning for CBVI is continuous, yet sequential. Prior to completing steps recommended during CBVI, the CBVI practitioner must first plan for the activity. Prior to engaging students in CBVI, special education teachers need to complete several planning steps. A review of literature reveals that researchers suggest several steps take place before students engage in community-experiences where they will be taught valuable job skills. These suggestions are outlined in the *before* section of

Illustration 2 (NSTTAC, 2013; Test, Aspel, & Everson, 2011; Wehman, 2011; Beakley, Yonder, & West, 2003). Illustration 2 provides an illustration of the initial model Schiffer and Rabren (2015) developed as a catalyst for examining the steps practitioners should take when planning to implement effective CBVI programs. This model, though vague, provided the foundation for further research to take place in order to examine the recommended steps practitioners should implement to establish effective CBVI programs.

Illustration 2: Programmatic Model of CBVI

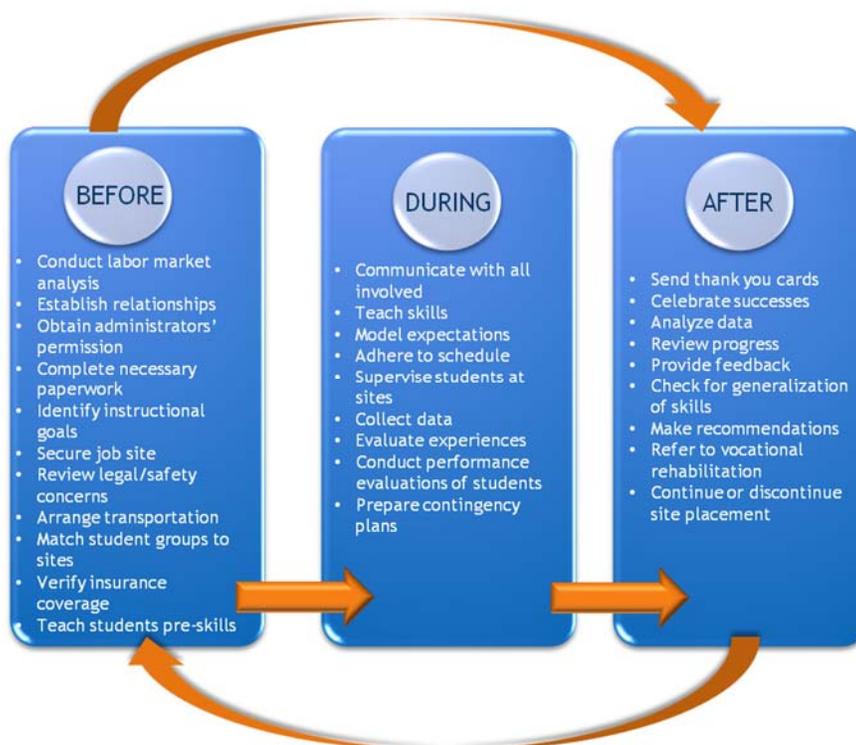


Illustration 2. This graphic represents the recommended steps practitioners should take when planning to implement effective CBVI jobsites. This model was developed through analyzing the following documents: NSTTAC, 2013; Test, Aspel, & Everson, 2011; Wehman, 2011; Beakley, Yonder, & West, 2003.

In order to expand upon the components needed to implement an effective CBVI program, a secondary literature review was conducted. The secondary literature review yielded 9 additional documents providing practitioners guidance on how to develop and implement

effective CBVI programs. A comprehensive model for CBVI was not available in the literature. Therefore, the need for additional research is further discussed later in this review. Prior to research being conducted, benefits and challenges of CBVI were examined.

### **Benefits of CBVI**

The steps outlined by the Programmatic Model of community-based vocational instruction contain components that are supported by researchers to be beneficial for students with disabilities. Community-based vocational instruction provides instruction in an environment where students would be expected to respond to real-life stimuli. When students respond to real-life stimuli, problems associated with the transfer of stimulus control from simulated conditions, like the classroom, are mitigated (Bates, Cuvo, Miner, & Korabeck, 2001). Through CBVI, students are able to gain first-hand knowledge and skill development while still in school that can directly help students with disabilities be better prepared to transition from school to the community (Fox, Schiffer, & Rabren, 2013). Students with disabilities who participate in CBVI programs while in high school can be better prepared for employment, and also be better prepared to participate in interpersonal relationships, have access to increased job opportunities, apply real job skills in real job settings in a structured and nurturing environment, and gain increased independence.

### **Challenges of CBVI**

While CBVI has many documented benefits, there are challenges that may arise during community outings. Challenges may also need to be addressed before CBVI is implemented. Arranging for and securing partnerships with job sites can be difficult. Oftentimes, once a job site is secured there may be instances when a job site may not cooperate with the students or teachers. Organizing the logistics of traveling to and from a job can be a cumbersome task for

practitioners when trying to implement a highly effective CBVI program. For example, special education teachers have reported that access to reliable transportation is a challenge associated with implementing CBVI (Wehman, 2006). Unexpected challenges like inclement weather arising (i.e. thunderstorms), adequate adult supervision, and the need for managing student behavior, to name a few, can hinder the success of a CBVI program. However, the benefits of CBVI far outweigh the challenges.

As previously discussed, Test et al., (2009) reviewed literature that substantiated community-based instruction as an evidence-based practice proven to increase employment outcomes after high school for students with disabilities. Kim and Dymond (2010) further elaborated on the implementation of CBI by isolating the vocational component of community-based instruction. Possible reasons why teachers might not be engaging in effective CBVI programs, even though research supports teaching job skills in real-life environments, is revealed through identifying barriers to CBVI in a study conducted by Kim and Dymond (2010). These researchers reveal barriers teachers experience when implementing effective CBVI programs.

### **Additional Research to Support Community-based Vocational Instruction**

There are eight studies that substantiate community-based instruction as an evidence-based practice for teaching students with disabilities valuable skills, however, none of the studies focus only on teaching vocational skills in the community. An in-depth search for research articles and program models to support community-based vocational instruction resulted in scarce findings on the topic. Three studies and one literature review were located to support the need for CBVI for students with disabilities. The four documents that specifically support CBVI are: (a) Walker, Uphold, Richter and Test's (2010) literature review on CBI; (b) Kim and Dymond's (2010) study that examined the benefits, barriers, and components of CBVI in

Illinois; (c) Moon's 2013 study on employment preparation for high school students with disabilities in Alabama and Georgia; and (d) Gripentrog's 2015 study, which examined barriers and facilitators of community-based vocational instruction in Utah, Oklahoma, South Carolina, and Colorado. This next section will examine these four documents and how they support the need for implementing CBVI programs to students with disabilities.

**Walker, Uphold, Richter, and Test (2010) CBI literature review.** In 2010, researchers examined transition intervention programs that were implemented following the passage of the 1990 reauthorization of IDEA when transition services were first mandated. The literature review examined programs across grade levels from 1990 through 2007. This literature review revealed 23 intervention studies that were published in peer-reviewed journals, all using CBI to teach a wide array of skills such as vocational, community, daily living, and recreation using community-based instruction. The studies included participants from elementary school through high school who received CBI in the aforementioned areas. These 23 studies included 161 students with disabilities receiving CBI to learn valuable life skills. Participants had various disabilities. The following disabilities were represented across the 161 students: autism (87%), multiple disabilities (17.4%), and all other disability categories (8.7%).

Like the studies Test et al., (2009) examined and used to substantiate CBI as an evidence-based practice, most of the studies were single-subject research designs. Single-subject research is a type of research design that is idiocentric and typically used to examine the impact of an intervention on a targeted dependent measure when a researcher has a small sample size. Single-subject research is used when a researcher does not have access to a large sample size, typically because researchers have difficulty identifying a homogenous group of participants with

disabilities due to the fact that there are fewer students with disabilities than without disabilities (Kennedy, 2010).

The results of the literature review demonstrated positive results for all 161 participants receiving instruction in community settings. All students demonstrated positive skill acquisition through instruction taking place in the community, and more than 80% of the studies reported that students were able to generalize the skills they were taught during CBI to other environments.

The Walker et al., (2010) study emphasizes the impact of CBI on teaching students with disabilities job skills. This means that Walker and colleagues (2010) have empirical evidence that substantiates CBI to teach vocational skills to students with disabilities. This literature review also emphasized the importance of CBI being a component of students with disabilities' transition programs. The majority of the studies included in this literature review demonstrated positive results for all participants. More than half of the participants included students in grades 9-12. In addition, not only did CBI prove to be beneficial to teaching students with disabilities daily living and community skills during community experiences, findings also suggested that students were able to generalize skills acquired to other environments. Follow up visits revealed that those students were also able to maintain skills learned after completion of the study. Walker et al., (2010) also stressed that while these studies primarily examined the impact of CBI to increase daily living and community skills, more research on the impact of CBI to successfully teach vocational skills to students with disabilities was needed. The researchers also recognized that special education teachers face challenges to successfully implementing CBVI, which supports the need for programmatic and student models that outline components of CBVI programs which are aimed at helping teachers implement successful CBVI programs. The

findings of Walker et al., (2010) suggest the need for practitioners to use evidence-based strategies in the community across grade levels to teach vocational skills.

**Kim and Dymond (2010) study.** This study investigated special education teacher's perceptions of the barriers, benefits, and components of CBVI. This study surveyed 68 special education teachers from randomly selected high schools in the Illinois area. Data were collected through the use of a paper survey, delivered to one teacher per high school in a sealed envelope by the high school principal. The high school principal delivered the sealed envelope containing the survey to a special education teacher identified by him/her as having the most experience with teaching vocational instruction to students with disabilities. The survey provided all the participants with the following definition of CBVI: "CBVI is one method advocated for advancing the preparation of students with disabilities for post-school employment. With CBVI students with disabilities receive repeated instruction on vocational and other job-related skills in community settings" (p. 316).

The survey consisted of four parts. Part 1 collected information regarding participant demographics. Part 2 measured the beliefs about the importance of CBVI by the participants. Part 3 assessed the beliefs of the participants regarding CBVI, and Part 4 assessed the perceptions and barriers of CBVI held by the participants. Participants rated their beliefs regarding the importance of CBVI components using a six-point Likert scale. Most of the participants revealed that they implemented CBVI in their transition programs and majority of them had between 11-20 years of experience.

The results of the study revealed that teachers in Illinois believe that implementing CBVI to students with disabilities is highly beneficial (mean responses= 5.27 on a 6 point scale). Results of this survey also revealed that teachers who taught students with disabilities rated

CBVI has highly beneficial to teaching students vocational skills. However, the study also identified several barriers, as perceived by special education teachers when trying to implement a successful CBVI program. A significant mean difference existed in teachers' beliefs regarding the overall barriers to implementing CBVI. Specifically, teachers with six to 10 years of experience reported more barriers to CBVI than teachers who had five years or less experience. The barriers reported by teachers when implementing CBVI are as follows: (a) successful CBVI program requires additional personnel that schools may not have access to, (b) lack of funding available to provide additional supports, (c) access to transportation, and (d) more preparation time (Kim & Dymond, 2010).

Teachers, in the Kim and Dymond (2010) study also reported that legislation (i.e., NCLB, 2002; IDEA, 2004) requiring high stakes testing served as a barrier to the implementation of CBVI programs. While CBVI is perceived as being beneficial for students with disabilities by special education teachers, and also documented by research reporting successful post-school outcomes, CBVI is still not being widely practiced and implemented as evidenced by: (a) lack of interventions available by high-quality researchers that support CBVI, (b) a lack of protocol for implementing CBVI, and (c) a lack of understanding how legislation (i.e., NCLB, 2002; IDEA, 2004; WIOA, 2013) calls for evidence-based practices (i.e. CBVI) to be implemented when serving students with disabilities. Special education teachers from the Kim and Dymond (2010) study revealed that their perceptions were that CBVI was more beneficial for students with significant disabilities than those with mild disabilities. Components of a successful CBVI program were also identified. Respondents reported that the top two components that were ranked the most important of CBVI programs were providing participants opportunities to

interact in business settings with people without disabilities and providing students with disabilities opportunities for CBVI more than twice a week.

The Kim and Dymond (2010) study and Walker, Uphold, Richter, and Test (2010) literature review serve as a catalyst for increasing research on the components and implementation of CBVI as a means to prepare students with disabilities for life after high school. Community-based Vocational Instructional has several benefits for students with disabilities. The Walker, Uphold, Richter, and Test (2010) literature review examined, does not use the term community-based vocational instruction but examines the extent to which students with disabilities are receiving work experiences while they are in high school.

**Moon (2013) study.** This study examined the role Alabama and Georgia high school special education teachers played in exposing students with disabilities to employment experiences on and off the school campus. This study found that in Alabama and Georgia, 48 special education teachers were providing students with disabilities job preparation experiences within the classroom and in community settings. Moon's study examined the extent to which students with disabilities were involved in paid versus non-paid work experiences while in high school and found that fewer students were involved in paid work experiences than non-paid work experiences. This study also found that the variables associated with increased likelihood of student participation in community work programs were high levels of support from personnel and the amount of teaching experience held by the special education teacher (e.g., more teaching experience correlated to increased student participation in community-based work programs). Additionally, open-ended questions provided data that revealed common barriers for implementing work preparation programs, such as transportation and access to jobsites. Moon (2013) sought input as to how experiences could be improved for the implementation of

employment preparation programs. Respondents suggested that improving students' social skills and increased collaboration to help with improving existing job preparation programs for students with disabilities. The next study examined, expanded on Kim and Dymond's 2010 study by examining barriers and facilitators to CBVI.

**Gripentrog's 2015 study.** A graduate student at Utah State University conducted a study on examining the barriers and facilitators to CBVI for students with disabilities. Gripentrog's study is also the most recent piece of research located through a literature review that examines the topic of CBVI for students with disabilities. This study examined high school and transition special education teacher's perceptions on barriers and facilitators of CBVI from four states including Utah, Oklahoma, South Carolina, and Colorado. One hundred thirty-five teachers responded to this survey, more than double Kim and Dymond (2010) and Moon's (2013) studies.

Gripentrog (2015) revealed that 75.4 % of students with disabilities across Utah, Oklahoma, South Carolina and Colorado are engaged in CBVI and 54.7% of students were participating in CBVI more than 1 hour per week. Furthermore, this study indicated that students with significant disabilities were engaged in CBVI at higher rates (33.3%) than students with mild disabilities (24.0%), and were engaged for longer periods of time throughout the week (> 2 hours/week). This study also found that practitioners believed that CBVI was beneficial for all students with disabilities, which is consistent with other researchers who surveyed practitioners who implement CBVI (Kim & Dymond 2010; Moon, 2013).

This survey also expanded upon asking teachers to report the amount of experience they had teaching students with disabilities, and also asked teachers to report the highest degree they held in special education. This was used to help determine if the level of education held by CBVI practitioners acted as a facilitator for CBVI. Almost one-third of the respondents held a

bachelor's degree and the other two-thirds held a master's degree. The level of education did not present as being a barrier nor facilitator to CBVI, but having adequate and knowledgeable information on CBVI did prove to be a facilitator for CBVI. This suggests that teacher training is needed to effectively implement CBVI. Schiffer and Rabren's (2015) personnel, programmatic and student models for CBVI, serve as a guide for teaches on how to implement the various components of CBVI to students with disabilities.

The majority of respondents were high school and transition special education teachers. The respondents had a wide range of teaching experience (e.g., 11-20 years of teaching experience). The survey data identified similar barriers and facilitators of CBVI identified by Kim and Dymond (2010). The results demonstrate that major barriers reported by respondents were adequate staffing and transportation concerns, which was also reported in Moon's (2013) study. Major facilitators to CBVI included: adequate and knowledgeable staff, transportation, and established community-based vocational training sites. In addition, findings indicated transition programs serving students over 18 years of age were implementing CBVI at higher rates (73.6%) as compared to CBVI programs for students with disabilities under the age of 18 (24.3%). These findings were also consistent with Kim and Dymond's (2010) results.

**Planning for community-based vocational instruction.** Before community-based vocational instruction can be implemented, the program coordinator, typically the special education teacher, must plan. Research has identified that community-based vocational instruction can address the lack of meaningful employment opportunities for students with disabilities after high school (Dymond, 2012; Test et al., 2009). In order for students to participate in an effective and meaningful community-based experience, practitioners must develop quality transition program structures. In other words, prior to students engaging in

meaningful community-based vocational experiences, the program coordinator must complete several steps, tasks and activities. Beginning with the initial Programmatic Model of CBVI developed by Schiffer and Rabren (2015) (see Illustration 2), an additional thorough review and synthesis of literature was conducted. The secondary literature review yielded a total of 13 documents (e.g., eight articles, four school district documents, and one handbook) that offered guidance and recommended steps for practitioners to follow when establishing CBVI programs for students with disabilities. Through a thematic analysis of the literature review, a total of 29 planning statements were derived from those 13 documents. Furthermore, synthesizing those 29 planning statements revealed that there are five overarching themes to consider when developing quality community-based vocational instruction programs. These five themes include: (a) gaining approval (see Table 1); (b) planning for liability and safety (see Table 2); (c) arranging for appropriate personnel (see Table 3), (d) developing job sites (see Table 4); and (e) developing students (see Table 5). The five tables below provide a list of the literature that supports each of the five themes and identifies subcategories (i.e., planning statements derived from literature) under each of the five themes to demonstrate what preparation steps and/or activities teachers should complete prior to implementing community-based vocational instruction to students with disabilities. The horizontal axes of Tables 1 through 5 were derived from individual statements from literature. The vertical axis of Tables 1 through 5 lists the citations for where each item can be located and supported by literature.

## Recommended planning practices of CBVI

**Approval.** See Table 1 for a review of individual statements derived from literature and corresponding support from various documents to substantiate the need for gaining *approval* prior to implementing an effective CBVI program. The special education teacher or CBVI program coordinator should gain approval from the following, prior to implementing CBVI:

- *school board approval* (e.g., the governing body of a school district);
- *administrative approval* (e.g., principal and/or special education coordinator);
- *job site approval* (e.g., approval from a person who has the authority to authorize the location as a volunteer site);
- *parental approval*;
- *transportation approval* (i.e., secure district school bus or public transportation services); and
- *approval for funding* (i.e., to access transportation or additional support staff)

Table 1

*Approval for Community-Based Vocational Instruction*

<b>Author</b>	<b>Board Approval</b>	<b>Administrative Approval</b>	<b>Job Site Approval</b>	<b>Parental Approval</b>	<b>Transportation</b>	<b>Funding</b>
Adams, J., 2005						
Austin City Schools, n.d.		•	•	•	•	
Baltimore County Public Schools, 2005	•			•		•
Beakley, B.A., Yoder, S.L., & West, L.L., 2003	•	•	•	•	•	•
Browder et al., 2014			•	•	•	
Graham et al., 2013						
Hamman, C., 2012	•		•			
Heller, K. W., Allgood, M. H., Ware, S. P., & Castelle, M. D., 1996		•	•			
Inge, K.J., & Wehman, P., 2006		•	•			
Los Angeles Unified School District Division of Special Education, 2008	•	•	•	•	•	•
Special School District of St. Louis County, 2012		•				•
Test, D.W., Aspel, N.P., & Everson, J.M., 2006		•	•	•	•	
Test et al., 2009		•	•	•	•	

**Liability and Safety.** See Table 2 for a review of individual statements derived from literature and corresponding support from various documents to substantiate the need for planning for *liability and safety* prior to implementing an effective CBVI program. The special education teacher or CBVI program coordinator should complete the following, prior to implementing CBVI:

- verify *students have health insurance* to identify a means for medical coverage in the event of an emergency;
- establish *emergency plans* in the event of a fire, severe weather, or intruder;
- develop *evacuation procedures*;
- develop an *emergency notebook* (i.e., a compilation of important documents to consult in the event of an emergency or to provide to a substitute);
- establish *liability coverage* from the school board of education in the event a student or school employee damages the job site's property; and
- *permission forms* remain on file.

Table 2

*Liability and Safety for Community-Based Vocational Instruction*

<b>Liability and Safety</b>	<b>Liability Coverage</b>	<b>Verification of Student Insurance</b>	<b>Emergency Procedures/Plan</b>	<b>Evacuation Procedures</b>	<b>Emergency Notebook</b>	<b>Permission Forms</b>
Adams, J., 2005	•	•	•	•		
Austin City Schools, n.d.			•	•	•	•
Baltimore County Public Schools, 2005						•
Beakley, B.A., Yoder, S.L., & West, L.L., 2003			•	•	•	
Browder et al., 2014	•		•			•
Graham et al., 2013						
Hamman, C., 2012						
Heller, K. W., Allgood, M. H., Ware, S. P., & Castelle, M. D., 1996			•	•		
Inge, K.J., & Wehman, P., 2006		•		•		
Los Angeles Unified School District Division of Special Education, 2008	•		•	•		•
Special School District of St. Louis County, 2012			•	•		
Test, D.W., Aspel, N.P., & Everson, J.M., 2006	•	•	•	•	•	•
Test et al., 2009	•	•	•	•	•	•

**Personnel.** See Table 3 for a review of individual statements derived from literature and corresponding support from various documents to substantiate the need for planning for *personnel* prior to implementing an effective CBVI program. The special education teacher or CBVI program coordinator should organize the following, prior to implementing CBVI:

- *peer assistance* to model appropriate behaviors;
- *job coaches* to explicitly teach vocational skills one-on-one to participants,
- *train staff and support staff* to implement CBVI with efficacy,
- *a special education teacher* to specially design instruction;
- *paraprofessionals* (i.e., support staff to help with supervision and assist in remediating skills taught by the teacher or job coach) and
- *A school nurse* to assist with unique medical needs of students or to assist in the event of a medical emergency.

Table 3

*Personnel for Community-Based Vocational Instruction*

<b>Personnel</b>	<b>Peer Assistance</b>	<b>Job Coach</b>	<b>Staff Support/Training</b>	<b>SPED Teacher</b>	<b>Paraprofessionals</b>	<b>School Nurse</b>
Adams, J., 2005						
Austin City Schools, n.d.			•	•	•	
Baltimore County Public Schools, 2005		•	•	•	•	
Beakley, B.A., Yoder, S.L., & West, L.L., 2003			•	•	•	•
Browder et al., 2014	•			•	•	
Graham et al., 2013						
Hamman, C., 2012				•	•	
Heller, K. W., Allgood, M. H., Ware, S. P., & Castelle, M. D., 1996						
Inge, K.J., & Wehman, P., 2006			•	•	•	
Los Angeles Unified School District Division of Special Education, 2008	•			•	•	•
Special School District of St. Louis County, 2012				•	•	•
Test, D.W., Aspel, N.P., & Everson, J.M., 2006		•	•	•	•	
Test et al., 2009		•		•		

**Job Site Development.** See Table 4 for a review of individual statements derived from literature and corresponding support from various documents to substantiate the need for planning for *developing job sites* prior to implementing an effective CBVI program. The special education teacher or CBVI program coordinator should organize the following, prior to implementing CBVI:

- conduct a *labor market analysis* to determine job availability for student;
- *establish relationships* with job site supervisors;
- *visit job sites* prior to bringing students to learn routines, evacuation procedures, and skills needed for the site;
- secure a *job site agreement* for students to attend;
- *develop task analyses* (e.g., step by step guides used to explicitly teach job skills to students; and
- *conduct an orientation* with the job site supervisor prior to introducing students to a new jobsite.

Table 4

*Job Site Development for Community-Based Vocational Instruction*

<b>Job Site Development</b>	<b>Labor Market Analysis</b>	<b>Establish Relationships</b>	<b>Site Visit</b>	<b>Secure Site/Agreement</b>	<b>Develop Task Analysis</b>	<b>Conduct Orientation</b>
Adams, J., 2005	•	•	•	•	•	
Austin City Schools, n.d.	•		•		•	•
Baltimore County Public Schools, 2005		•	•		•	
Beakley, B.A., Yoder, S.L., & West, L.L., 2003	•	•	•	•	•	•
Browder et al., 2014		•	•		•	
Graham et al., 2013					•	
Hamman, C., 2012					•	
Heller, K. W., Allgood, M. H., Ware, S. P., & Castelle, M. D., 1996	•	•				
Inge, K.J., & Wehman, P., 2006			•			
Los Angeles Unified School District Division of Special Education, 2008		•	•	•		
Special School District of St. Louis County, 2012	•		•	•	•	
Test, D.W., Aspel, N.P., & Everson, J.M., 2006	•	•	•	•	•	•
Test et al., 2009	•	•	•		•	•

**Student Development.** See Table 5 for a review of individual statements derived from literature and corresponding support from various documents to substantiate the need for planning for *student development* prior to implementing an effective CBVI program. The special education teacher or CBVI program coordinator should initiate the following, prior to implementing CBVI:

- *conduct transition assessments* to determine baseline data, current functioning levels, strengths, needs, interest, and preferences;
- *develop appropriate IEP goals* so progress can be monitored and measured;
- *establish CBVI as a special education service* (e.g., the IEP team should discuss the need for the service and incorporate into the IEP);
- *conduct interest surveys* to place students in appropriate community experiences;
- *teach pre-skills* needed for to participate at job sites; and
- *determine appropriate post-school outcome goals* for individual students in which CBVI can assist in attaining those goals.

Table 5

*Student Development for Community-Based Vocational Instruction*

<b>Student Development</b>	<b>Assessments</b>	<b>IEP Goals</b>	<b>IEP Services</b>	<b>Teach Pre-Skills</b>	<b>Interest Survey</b>	<b>Post-School Outcome Goals</b>
Adams, J., 2005	•	•		•	•	
Austin City Schools, n.d.	•	•		•		
Baltimore County Public Schools, 2005		•				
Beakley, B.A., Yoder, S.L., & West, L.L., 2003	•	•	•	•	•	•
Browder et al., 2014		•		•	•	
Graham et al., 2013	•				•	
Hamman, C., 2012						
Heller, K. W., Allgood, M. H., Ware, S. P., & Castelle, M. D., 1996		•		•		
Inge, K.J., & Wehman, P., 2006	•	•		•		
Los Angeles Unified School District Division of Special Education, 2008		•		•	•	
Special School District of St. Louis County, 2012	•	•		•	•	•
Test, D.W., Aspel, N.P., & Everson, J.M., 2006					•	
Test et al., 2009	•	•	•		•	

## **Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research**

**Limitations.** The results from the four documents previously discussed provided support for the implementation of CBVI to students with disabilities (i.e. Kim & Dymond, 2010; Walker, Uphold, Richter, & Test, 2010; Moon, 2013; Gripentrog, 2015). Each of the three studies and one literature review revealed that special education teachers view CBVI as beneficial for students with disabilities. Each study also revealed that special education teachers feel that proper training and adequate personnel were critical to the success of CBVI programs. Several limitations to those studies should be considered to help guide researchers as to how they can expand research on CBVI. First, each study had a small sample size, which can limit the generalizations of the results when analyzed individually. However, since similar findings were revealed across seven states, researchers can more confidently generalize that barriers and facilitators to CBVI are somewhat consistent. Second, these studies did not evaluate the extent to which special education teachers were implementing necessary components and steps as outlined in Schiffer and Rabren's (2015) research and tables one through five which provide a description of the preparation steps needed before implementing CBVI.

Taking into consideration that all of these studies identified barriers and facilitators to the implementation of CBVI in one way or another, the results are beneficial for students with disabilities, special education teachers, administrators, transition specialists, and researchers implementing or improving CBVI. Results from these studies can assist in the planning and prioritizing of CBVI for all stakeholders' through additional research. Additional research should analyze the extent to which components of CBVI are being implemented and which steps are being taken before, during and after implementation. In doing so, researchers can offer solutions to the common barriers revealed by special education teachers when implementing CBVI to

students with disabilities identified through four studies. Each of the four studies reflected the need to provide more training on CBVI, increase staff supports, create transportation solutions, and develop more community jobsite for students with disabilities.

**Recommendations for future research.** Future research should focus on examining components of successful CBVI programs in other states. In addition, research should also focus on evaluating current CBVI programs in place to help determine areas of need that should be addressed to improve post-school employment outcomes for students with disabilities. Research also should examine how schools can invest in additional human resource and training of instructional teams. Additionally, further research is needed to evaluate transition teacher's perceived characteristics of successful CBVI programs. Furthermore, research should explore the extent to which teachers are being trained on the implementation of CBVI as well as explore the extent in which preservice and in-service training on CBVI is occurring. Finally, future longitudinal research is needed to examine if CBVI is correlated to improved post-school employment outcomes for students with disabilities.

### **Conclusion of Review of Literature**

This chapter began by providing a detailed historical background of disability in American culture. Evidenced by the implementation of the Eugenics Movement and Institutionalization, early treatment of individuals with disabilities in the United States was horrific and exclusionary (Smart, 2009). Compulsory Eugenics laws legally allowed people to sterilize individuals who had disabilities or possessed characteristics of deviance. Soon after institutionalization was widely practiced, injured World War I veterans began to shed light on the concept of rehabilitation services for people with disabilities (Flexer & Baer, 2013).

Advancements in society and early reforms began to shape legislation beginning in the 1940s that began the journey to end discrimination against individuals with disabilities (i.e. Barden-LaFollette Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1943 and the Hill-Burton Act of 1946) (Test, Aspel, & Everson, 2006). The 1960s brought about the Cooperative Work Study movement and the passage of the Civil Rights Act, followed by the Career Education Movement, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (1973), and the Education of All Handicapped Children Act (1975). Soon after the Education of All Handicapped Children in 1975, the transition movement was on the rise. Policies focusing specifically on transition emerged and the 1980s saw transition services evolve.

Transition models (i.e., Bridges Model, Community Adjustment Model, and the Life Span Model) provided educators with a big picture, outcome-oriented, goal to use when planning for the future lives of students with disabilities (Will, 1984; Halpern, 1985; Ianacone & Stodden, 1987). When the transition-focused education movement emerged, non-educational transition-focused programs emerged because of legislation geared towards improving the lives of individuals with disabilities. Kohler (1996) released *Taxonomy for Transition Programming*. The *Taxonomy for Transition Programming* outlined key areas educators should focus on when developing individualized transition programs for students with disabilities.

With the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the 2000s marked a time of change for transition services and practices. Policy and practices were becoming more aligned with each other, which helped improve post-school outcomes for students with disabilities (Benz, Lindstrom, Yovanoff, 2000; Carter, Austin, & Trainor, 2011). Post-school outcome data revealed that life after high-school for students with disabilities is undesirable (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996; Wagner, Newman, Cameto, Garza, & Levine, 2005; Brault, 2012). While individuals with disabilities were

gaining employment after exiting high school, the access to quality employment for individuals with disabilities was not equal to the access of quality of employment those without disabilities. Since employment trends began being analyzed, unemployment rates of individuals with disabilities have consistently been twice as high as those without disabilities (Department of Labor, 2015, retrieved March 10, 2015). More individuals with disabilities have removed themselves from the labor market altogether by no longer searching or applying for jobs. Even though outcomes have been less than ideal for individuals with disabilities, research reveals that post-school outcomes can be altered.

Practitioners aligning the spirit of transition related legislation to transition models and the implementation of evidence-based practices could improve post-school outcomes. Evidence-based practices are mandated by several pieces of legislation (IDEA of 2004, NCLB of 2002, &WIOA of 2013) and have proven to be beneficial when preparing students with disabilities for transition. This chapter provided guidelines on how to choose which evidence-based practice to implement when trying to address a need identified by an individual student.

Kohler's Taxonomy for Transition Programming identified program structures as an area to focus on when planning for successful transitions and provided three evidence-based practices available to address service at the programmatic level. The structure of a transition program can be valuable to the success of a student with a disability. Test and colleagues (2009) reviewed eight studies that implemented community-based interventions to students with disabilities. These eight studies were used to substantiate community-based instruction as an evidence-based practice for secondary students with disabilities.

This chapter also expanded on community-based instruction by focusing on teaching students vocational skills while in community settings to help better prepare students with

disabilities for transitioning to employment. Community-based vocational instruction (CBVI) describes teaching job related skills to students in real-life community environments (Kim & Dymond, 2010). Next, practitioners were provided with a process for implementing community-based vocational instruction at the programmatic level and student level. The benefits and challenges of CBVI were examined. Although there are challenges to implementing highly effective CBVI job preparation programs, the benefits, improved lives of individuals with disabilities, outweigh the challenges. Bates et al., found that CBVI benefited students with disabilities and that community-based instruction proved to be beneficial all students involved in the program (2001).

This chapter further examined CBVI elaborating on seven studies that substantiate community-based instruction as an evidence-based practice for teaching students with disabilities valuable skills. While none of the studies focused only on teaching vocational skills in the community, vocational skills were taught in community settings. An in-depth discussion on literature that supports community-based vocational instruction resulted in the identification of four studies that supported CBVI for students with disabilities. This chapter concluded with implications and further recommendations for research for CBVI.

### CHAPTER III. METHODS

The post-school outcomes of students with disabilities continue to be a focus of special education literature (Carter, Austin, & Trainor, 2011; Certo, Luecking, Murphy, Brown, Courey, & Belanger, 2008; Test et al., 2009). Additionally, current legislation calls for implementing evidence-based practices to help students better succeed in life after high school (i.e., Every Student Succeeds Act, 2015; the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act, 2014; and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act, 2004). Evidence-based practices are proven to be effective through rigorous and systematic research and are substantiated by high quality designs (Test et al., 2006). Research results and federal legislation suggest students with disabilities need increasingly meaningful post-school outcomes, including the attainment of gainful employment. To help address this need, this study helps identify the quality and quantity of employment preparation programs for individuals with disabilities during high school.

Implementing employment preparation programs, such as community-based vocational instruction (CBVI) can be used to effectively prepare students for employment after high school (Kim & Dymond, 2012). This study was conceived and designed to methodically collect and analyze information to examine actions taken by Alabama special education teachers as they planned for community-based vocational instruction *before* it was provided to students with disabilities. A non-experimental, mixed methods research design was used to determine the extent to which secondary special education teachers of students with disabilities were planning *before* implementing CBVI. Descriptive statistical analyses were conducted including: (a)

means, (b) frequencies, (c) standard deviations, (d) analysis of variances (ANOVAs), (e) linear regressions, (f) two-sample t-test and (g) cross tabulations.

This study evaluate the employment preparation program, community-based vocational instruction, as a method to teach transferable job skills to students with disabilities. The research questions for this study aimed to improve services for students with disabilities (including mild to significant) by evaluating the planning component for CBVI. The research questions determined the methodology for this study, which was to conduct an evaluation of the steps practiced by special education teachers prior to implementing CBVI throughout the state of Alabama. The information gleaned from this statewide evaluation provides a summary of the planning practices secondary special education teachers engage in prior to implementing CBVI. In addition, this study helps identify what training teachers may need to implement CBVI adequately with students with disabilities.

An original survey developed by the researcher was created through a content analysis and was used to collect data on the practices of special education teachers as they prepared to implement CBVI (e.g., *An Evaluation of the Steps Practiced Before Implementing Community-Based Vocational Instruction* survey; see Appendix A). The survey is further described in the instrumentation section of this chapter. Quantitative and qualitative data on the preparation practices of special education teachers prior to implementing CBVI were also obtained from an open-ended item in the online survey and were analyzed through a thematic analysis. This chapter begins with a (a) list of research questions used to guide the study, (b) description of the research design used in this study, (c) description of the instrument that was used for this study, and, (d) description of the statistical analysis was used to answer the research questions for this study.

## Research Questions

The study investigated the following questions:

1. To what extent are Alabama teachers of students with disabilities planning for community-based vocational instruction (CBVI) before implementing the program?
  - a. To what extent are secondary special education teachers of students with disabilities seeking approval for CBVI before implementing the program?
  - b. To what extent are secondary special education teachers of students with disabilities planning for safety before they implement CBVI?
  - c. To what extent are secondary special education teachers of students with disabilities arranging for personnel before they implement CBVI?
  - d. To what extent are secondary special education teachers of students with disabilities developing job sites before they implement CBVI?
  - e. To what extent are secondary special education teachers of students with disabilities preparing students before they implement CBVI?
2. To what extent are special education teachers trained prior to implementing CBVI? To what extent are special education teachers willing to participate in professional development training on implementing CBVI?
3. Is there a relationship between the types of training special education teachers have received and their planning practices prior to implementing CBVI?
4.
  - a. What recommendations do teachers currently implementing CBVI programs or who previously implemented CBVI programs suggest for teachers to consider before implementing CBVI?
  - b. What barriers do teachers who are currently implementing CBVI programs or who

previously implemented CBVI programs report for teachers to consider before implementing CBVI?

### **Design**

The research design used in this study was a non-experimental, descriptive program component evaluation. The evaluation included administering a survey developed by the researcher to describe the current planning practices of secondary special education teachers for CBVI. This descriptive program component evaluation design answered the questions: what is taking place when planning for CBVI and whether or not the program is being implemented with efficacy across Alabama secondary education programs (Fitzpatrick, Sanders, & Worthen, 2004). This study systematically gathered and analyzed information regarding the extent to which special education teachers are planning before implementing community-based vocational instruction with high school students with disabilities. Surveying those who implement CBVI was the strategy employed to determine the steps special education teachers were practicing prior to implementing CBVI. The next section will discuss the methods employed to recruit the sample population of participants needed for this study, as well provide a description of the participants.

### **Participants**

#### **Sampling Procedures**

Before participants were recruited, a sampling frame was determined. The target population for this study and participant criteria included those who: (a) held the position of high school special education teacher; (b) were currently employed, at the time of the study, in one of the 137 school districts in Alabama; (c) were implementing or would implement CBVI; (d) were in a district that implemented CBVI to students with mild to significant disabilities, and (e) were

willing to participate in this study. The researcher attempted to recruit a highly representative sample population of secondary special education teachers so that the results could be generalized to the larger population of special education teachers in Alabama. In order to determine the representative sample needed, the demographics of the targeted population were examined.

On average there are approximately 982 special education teachers in the state of Alabama who teach students with disabilities, aged 16-21. This estimated population size was determined by reviewing Child Count (2015) data to determine a total number of students with disabilities and by reviewing the Alabama Administrative Code (2016) to determine the average special education case teacher's caseload size (290-8-9.11). These data were located on the Alabama State Department of Education's website, available to the public, in a file that contained a summary of all 137 school districts with special education populations for the 2015 Child Count.

Survey respondents reported the type of caseload they primarily served as case manager (e.g., alternate achievement pathway: students with significant disabilities; essential skills pathway: students with moderate to mild disabilities; or the regular diploma pathway: students with mild disabilities). To compare this study's sample to the possible population available, the total number of high school special education teachers and the possible caseloads by disability level was estimated using data from the Child Count 2015 and Alabama Administrative Code 290-8-9.11. The estimated total number of teachers who teach students with significant disabilities, as determined by the number of students on the alternate achievement pathway is 200. The estimated number of teachers who teach students with mild disabilities is 782.

Understanding the potential targeted population for this study helped in identifying the response rate for this study. Next, the researcher recruited participants for this study.

## **Recruitment**

The researcher attempted to survey all of the secondary special education teachers in Alabama who implement, have implemented in the past year, or plan to implement in the next year, community-based vocational instruction. Therefore, to ensure that only secondary teachers of students with disabilities participated in the study, two methods were employed to recruit participants. The first method included contacting 137 special education coordinators via email (see Appendix F).

Special education coordinators had the option of approving this study by forwarding an electronic survey to special education teachers in their district who met the participant criteria to participate. After six weeks of attempting to recruit participants through this initial method, a total of 17 responses had been recorded. An additional method was employed to increase participation in this study.

The second recruitment method was to seek participants from attendees of the 27<sup>th</sup> Alabama Transition Conference held on March 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> of 2017. The researcher gained permission from the conference director to have a research table at the conference, which included six laptops for participants to take the survey onsite. Of the 739 conference participants, 49% ( $n = 360$ ) were special education teachers and eligible to participate in this study. The researcher recruited 74 of the 360 special education teachers through advertising with a poster and verbally asking people to participate. This resulted in a 21% response rate from eligible participants. Willing participants who met the participant criteria completed the online survey on site. Demographics are reported in the sample size portion of this chapter. Upon

completion of the conference, the survey remained open for two additional weeks to allow for those who may have received the survey from their special education coordinator time to complete the survey. No additional surveys were collected during those final two weeks. After a total of 8 weeks of the survey being open, the researcher disabled access to the survey.

### **Sample Size**

The survey remained open for a total of eight weeks, and a total of 108 surveys were recorded. Of the 108 surveys attempted, 17 were started, but lacked recorded responses. Of the 108 respondents, 17 were eliminated, as those surveys were not fully completed, leaving 91 completed surveys. The eliminated surveys were not considered for this study because none of those surveys included completed content items (i.e., only partial demographics or binary questions were submitted). Survey participants reported that 37% ( $n = 34$ ) of teachers primarily served students pursuing the Alternate Achievement Standards Pathway (e.g., students with significant disabilities); 17% ( $n = 16$ ) of teachers primarily served students pursuing the Essential Skills Pathway (e.g., students with moderate disabilities); and 45% ( $n = 41$ ) of teachers primarily served students pursuing the General Education Pathway (e.g., mild disabilities) (see Table 6). Table 6 reports the frequencies and percentages of respondents' caseload type reported from results of the survey.

Table 7 reports the frequencies and percentages of respondents' caseload type as compared to the estimated statewide caseload types. The 91 special education teachers, who participated in this study resulted in a 9.26% overall participation rate from the estimated total of secondary special education teachers in Alabama.

Table 6

*Frequencies and Percentages of Respondents' Caseload Type (N = 91)*

<i>Caseload Type</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
Alternate Achievement Pathway	34	17%
Essential Skills Pathway	16	17.58%
General Education Pathway	41	45.05%

Table 7

*Frequencies and Percentages of Respondents' Caseload Type Compared to Estimated Statewide Caseload Type (N = 91)*

<i>Caseload Type</i>	<i>Respondents' f</i>	<i>Respondents' %</i>	<i>State f</i>	<i>State %</i>
Moderate to Severe Caseload Type	50	54.95%	200	25%
Mild Caseload Type	41	45.05%	782	.05%
Overall Caseload Type	91	100%	982	9.26%

Note: The available data regarding caseload types in Alabama did not specify how to differentiate between moderate to severe caseloads. Therefore, those data results were combined to compare the demographics of participants' caseload types to the estimated statewide caseload type per the available caseload type information.

### **Demographics of Participants**

Of the 91 participants, 90 reported their demographics. Fifteen percent ( $n = 14$  participants) of the sample described themselves as being African American; 0% Asian; 77% percent ( $n = 70$ ) Caucasian; 2% ( $n = 2$ ) Native American; 0% being Pacific Islander; and 4% ( $n = 4$ ) as “other.” Ninety respondents reported their gender, with 88% ( $n = 79$ ) being female, and 12% ( $n = 11$ )

being male. When asked if a participant identified himself or herself as being Hispanic or non-Hispanic, 86 participants responded. Eighty-five participants (99%) identified as being non-Hispanic, while one person (1%) identified as being Hispanic (see Table 8).

Table 8

*Demographic Information of Survey Respondents (n = 90)*

<i>Demographics</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
Race	90	100%
Caucasian	70	77.78%
African American	14	15.56%
Other	4	4.44%
Native American	2	2.22%
Gender	90	100%
Female	79	87.78%
Male	11	12.22%
Ethnicity	86	100%
Non Hispanic	85	98.84%
Hispanic	1	1.16%

Each of the 91 participants reported their highest level of education (see Table 9).

Twenty-two participants (24%) reported that their highest level of education was a Bachelor of Science in Education, three participants (3%) reported that their highest level of education was a Bachelor of Science in Arts, forty-five participants (49%) reported that their highest level of education was a Master's in Education, fourteen participants (15%) reported their highest level of education was a Master's in Science, nine participants (10%) reported they held an Education

Specialist degree, and two participants (2%) reported their highest level of education was an earned Doctor of Philosophy.

Table 9

*Frequencies and Percentages of Respondents' Highest Level of Education*  
(*n* = 86)

<i>Level of Education</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
Bachelors of Science	22	24.18%
Bachelors of Arts	3	3.30%
Master's of Education	45	49.95%
Master's of Science	14	15.38%
Education Specialist	9	9.89%
Doctor of Philosophy	2	2.20%

All ninety-one participants reported their teaching experience (see Table 10). Participants ranged in length of service from one year, 11 participants (12%) to 31 years, three participants (3%). Each of the 91 participants was grouped according to a frequency count and statistical analysis revealed teacher experience in quartiles as: (a) 25% of teachers had 2 or less years of experience (b) 25% of teachers has between 3 and 7 years of experience; (c) 25% had between 8 and 15 years of experience, and (d) 25% had 16 or more years of experience.

Table 10

*Frequencies and Percentages of Teaching Experience*

<i>Teaching Experience</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
2 or < years	25	27.77%

Table 10 (Continued)

3-7 years	22	24.44%
8-15 years	22	24.44%
16 + years	21	23.33%

Table 11

*Frequencies and Percentages of Respondents' Participation in CBVI within the Past Year*  
(*n* = 90)

Participation	<i>f</i>	%
Yes	67	74.44%
No	23	25.56%

## Instrumentation

### Survey Conceptualization

The goal of this study was to generate information to help improve employment preparation programs for students with disabilities in Alabama. More specifically, the ultimate purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which the components and steps of the *before* stage of community-based vocational instruction (CBVI) are practiced by secondary special education teachers (9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade) of students with disabilities. By identifying what steps are being practiced prior to implementation of CBVI, administrators can best determine who needs training and what type of training is needed to improve the quality of CBVI programs. In addition, this information can be used in teacher preparation programs to prepare pre-service teachers in the steps needed to implement CBVI.

Both quantitative and qualitative data were examined to determine the extent to which teachers of high school students with mild to significant disabilities were preparing to implement CBVI. The data were also analyzed to glean participants' recommendations regarding how to improve CBVI as well as reported barriers they have also experienced when implementing CBVI. Research questions were developed to meet this study's purpose.

**Content development of survey.** The researcher conducted a thorough review of literature to determine what practices special education teachers should implement in order to establish an effective job preparation program. The researcher began by reviewing evidence-based practices. Test et al., (2009) published a comprehensive review of evidence-based practices in secondary transition organized according to Kohler's Taxonomy for Transition Programming (1996). Under the category, *Program Structure*, Test et al., (2009) included community-based instruction (CBI) as a means to improving post-school employment outcomes for students with disabilities. The researcher located and considered the eight studies Test et al., (2009) reviewed to substantiate community-based instruction as an evidence-based practice (Alberto, Cihak, & Gama, 2005; Ayres, Langone, Boon, & Norman, 2006; Bates, Cuvo, Miner, & Korabek, 2001; Cihak, Alberto, Kessler, & Taber, 2004; Heller, Allgood, Ware, & Castelle, 1996; Mechling & Ortega- Hurndon, 2007; Schloss et al., 1995; Taylor, Collins, Schuster, & Kleinert, 2002; Izzo, Cartledge, Miller, Growick, & Rutkowski, 2000; Sinclair, Christensen, & Thurlow, 2005).

Next, the literature review was expanded (see Chapter II) to locate information on the steps practitioners should implement in order to establish an effective community-based instruction (CBI) program. At that time, the researcher concluded that community-based instruction includes teaching students with disabilities daily living and job skills in natural

environments. The researcher condensed the broad topic of CBI and isolated the component of job skill development. Upon narrowing the topic, the term community-based vocational instruction (CBVI) emerged. Kim and Dymond (2010) define CBVI as vocational instruction “provided in integrated community settings” (Kim & Dymond, 2010, pp. 314). For the purpose of this study, CBVI includes students with disabilities who are taught job skills in environments where the specific targeted skill would naturally occur. Community-based vocational instruction consists of paid and non-paid work experiences such as job shadowing, volunteering, internships, and apprenticeships (Test et al., 2006).

The literature review continued and ultimately yielded 13 documents that collectively provided a comprehensive plan for implementing community-based vocational instruction to students with disabilities, including those with significant disabilities. The documents ranged from eight articles published in peer reviewed journals, one handbook, and four school board policies describing the planning and implementation process of CBVI (see Chapter II, page 120).

Practitioners need to develop quality transition program structures so students with disabilities can participate in effective and meaningful community-based experiences (Kohler, 1996). In other words, prior to students engaging in meaningful community-based vocational experiences, the program coordinator must complete several steps and tasks. A thorough review and synthesis of literature revealed that there are five overarching categories to consider when developing quality community-based vocational instruction programs. These five categories include: (a) *gaining approval*, (b) *planning for safety*, (c) *arranging for appropriate personnel*, (d) *developing job sites*, and (e) *developing students* (see Chapter 2, Tables, 1-5, respectively).

The five tables provided in Chapter II provide a list of the literature that supports each of the five categories and identifies subcategories under each of the five overarching categories to

demonstrate what preparation steps teachers should consider and complete prior to implementing community-based vocational instruction. This organization took place through the development of a survey blueprint. For a complete review of the five tables, see Chapter II beginning on page 120.

**Survey blueprint.** A survey blueprint guides the researcher as the purpose of the survey is considered. What questions will be asked and what will the researcher do with the answers to those questions? Developing a blueprint helps to maintain the ultimate goal of the study as the main focus for each question being asked (Fitzpatrick, Sanders, & Worthen, 2004). The primary focus of this study centered on the previously mentioned research questions and content analysis as a guide to developing the survey. The original survey used in this study was developed to examine the extent to which teachers are implementing the planning components outlined by literature on CBVI (see Tables 1-5 in Chapter II). The items of the survey were developed using the blueprint (i.e., content analysis). The survey blueprint enabled the researcher to ensure that item type and number of items were sufficient to address each of the five categories the researcher outlined in the *before* section of implementing community-based vocational instruction.

The five categories include: (a) approval, (b) safety and liability, (c) personnel (d) job site development, and (e) student development. The category of *approval*, for example, includes gaining approval from: (a) the board of education, (b) school-level administration, (c) parents, (d) job-site cooperative supervisors, (e) transportation personnel and (f) funds. Approval from all of the potential CBVI stakeholders emerged in literature as necessary components to establishing a successful community-based vocational instruction program (Carter et al., 2010; Johnson, 2004; Kohler, 1996; Test et al., 2006; Wehman, 2006). The survey blueprint also included a

section that sought participants' recommendations on how to prepare for CBVI and whether or not they would like to receive more training on how to implement CBVI. Additionally, the survey included a section that gathered participants' demographic information.

After thorough review of literature, only a few studies similar to the type of study the researcher was attempting to conduct were found. In fact, there were no studies found that measured the extent to which planning took place by secondary special education teachers of students with disabilities prior to implementing community-based vocational instruction. Consequently, there was not a survey or instrument developed on this topic for the researcher to utilize or adapt.

**Survey format.** An online survey format was used for this study. The researcher chose this format because of the ability to disseminate the survey and retrieve the responses in a convenient and methodical manner (Andres, 2012). Andres (2012) discusses common issues associated with the use of an electronic survey, such as limited sampling and respondent availability, possible cooperation problems, and lack of a trained interviewers to clarify participants' questions. The researcher addressed the common issues associated with disseminating an online survey by employing user-friendly software (i.e., Qualtrics), recruitment techniques, and recommendations from Sue and Ritter (2007). According to Sue and Ritter (2007), Internet-based instruments and online survey administering programs help increase the response rate of a survey due to the perceived level of anonymity by participants.

Dillman (2000) also provides guidelines for researchers to consider when developing an electronic format survey. Such guidelines include: (a) limiting the number of questions visible on the screen, (b) avoiding unnecessary questions, (c) sparingly using graphics, (d) considering interpretation of questions, and (e) sparingly using matrix questions. These guidelines from

Dillman (2000) were used to help the researcher develop an appropriate survey measuring the extent to which special education teachers in Alabama were planning before implementing CBVI. See Appendix A for a printed copy of the survey.

**Item description.** The survey blueprint includes the following breakdown (see Table 12) of topics, question format, and number of items regarding each topic.

Table 12

*An Evaluation of the Steps Practiced Before Implementing Community-Based Vocational Instruction Survey Items: Topic, Number, and Type*

<i>Topic</i>	<i>Number of Items</i>	<i>Type of Items</i>
Approval	7	Likert-type-6 Open-ended-1
Safety/Liability	6	Likert-type-5 Open-ended-1
Site Development	7	Likert-type-6 Open-ended-1
Student Development	7	Likert-type-6 Open-ended-1
Personnel	7	Likert-type-6 Open-ended-1
Teacher Demographics	7	Closed-ended-6 Open-ended-1
Teacher Recommendations	2	Open-ended-1
Student Demographics	2	Closed-ended-1 Open-ended-1
Additional Training or Instruction	1	Open-ended-1

**Open and closed-ended questions.** The survey developed is supported by literature and

contained eight closed-ended questions and nine open-ended questions. Seven out of the nine closed-ended items in the study's survey are related to teacher demographics. Participants in this study self-reported (a) gender, (b) race, (c) ethnicity, (d) highest level of education, (e) teacher preparation courses that addressed CBVI, and (f) interest in CBVI training. Other demographics of interest were obtained through open-ended questions, which included years of teaching experience and number of students on caseload. The survey also included one additional open-ended question that asked teachers implementing community-based vocational instruction programs to provide advice to others according to the barriers and facilitators they have experienced while implementing CBVI.

**Likert-scale type questions.** All but 12 of the 42 survey items measured the extent to which a teacher is applying recommended practices *before* implementing CBVI at a job site for high school students with disabilities. For example, survey participants were asked to rate the extent to which they planned for approval across six areas recommended by research when preparing to implement CBVI.

Participants were asked to rate the practices/behaviors that they engaged in prior to implementing a new CBVI job site by choosing from a 5-point Likert-scale (i.e., 5 = *Almost Always*; 4 = *Frequently*; 3 = *Occasionally*; 2 = *Rarely*; and 1 = *Almost Never*.) Topics included participants selecting the extent to which they planned for (a) seeking approval, (b) safety and liability, (c) arranging for personnel, (d) developing the job site, and (e) student development. The survey contained five questions asking the participants to rank their level of agreement with the five categories of the *before* activities of CBVI were important by selecting the level of importance on a five point Likert-scale (e.g., 5 = *Strongly Agree*; 4 = *Somewhat Agree*; 3 = *Neither Agree or Disagree*; 2 = *Somewhat Disagree*; and 1 = *Strongly Disagree*).

The survey also contained six questions asking participants to identify the likelihood that they would participate in additional training or professional development by selecting from a five point Likert-scale (e.g., 5= *Extremely Likely*; 4= *Somewhat Likely*; 3= *Neither Likely not Unlikely*; 2= *Somewhat Unlikely*; and 1= *Extremely Unlikely*). Next, validity of the survey instrument is discussed.

### **Validity of the Study**

Mildred Patten (2004) defines validity as the extent to which an instrument measures what it purports to measure and the instrument performs as it is designed to perform. When developing the instrument used in this study, the researcher aimed to control for validity. Before the survey was distributed to the secondary special education teachers, the researcher employed steps to ensure that the survey instrument was valid. First, the content of the survey was determined by evaluating needed information to answer the research questions outlined at the beginning of this chapter.

**Content validity.** Content validity was determined by use of a survey blueprint, content analysis, and utilizing expert review panels. As previously mentioned, the survey blueprint included a literature chart revealing survey domain topics through the reoccurrence of themes, which emerged through an extensive literature review on community-based instruction and community-based vocational instruction. The blueprint also allowed the researcher to develop survey items that aligned with the categories supported by research. The content analysis is located in tables one through five of Chapter II. Additionally, input from two expert panels (e.g., university faculty and expert transition panel of special education teachers) helped establish content validity of the survey.

Expert input helped the researcher determine appropriate survey items, the most effective method to ask participants to report demographics, and the best response options for items, such as the use of Likert scale, open-ended, or closed-ended prompts. The panels also aided the researcher in determining the correct number of items to include. The expert transition panel and university faculty panel helped the researcher ensure that the participants who completed the survey, (a) read consistent definitions, (b) took a survey that was valid and reliable, and (c) checked to ensure the survey contained consistent formatting across the instrument.

**Expert transition teacher panel.** The researcher conducted a secondary content analysis of the survey through the use of an expert transition panel. The researcher selected the expert panel by contacting former Collaborative Approach to Training Transition Specialist federal grant program graduates of Auburn University by telephone and seeking their willingness to participate. The researcher disseminated the survey electronically to three special-education teachers who were transition specialists. Each had various years of experience from states other than Alabama (i.e., Georgia, Oregon, and Tennessee). The inclusion criteria for the expert panel of teachers was that the teacher: (a) held a master's degree in special education, (b) held a graduate certificate as a transition specialist or had a concentration in the area of transition for their master's degree program, (c) had experience in implementing CBVI, and (d) and had experience teaching secondary students with disabilities. The members of the expert panel reviewed the content of the survey under similar conditions as to how the final survey was disseminated to participants. Each member received the same email to be forwarded by special education coordinators in the study. Within the email, the expert panel found a link to the Qualtrics survey. Panel members were asked to select the link and were directed to the electronic survey. All of the members of the expert panel scored each of the 42 survey items by reading

each survey item and providing feedback as to if the item should be included in the final survey. Panel members did this by denoting either a “1”, to support the item should be included in the survey, or a “2” to advise the item be excluded from the survey, on an inter-rater reliability document (see Appendix B).

After feedback was received from the expert transition panel, the researcher provided an anonymous summary of the experts’ thoughts and opinions and evaluated the feedback. Only survey items that scored an average of 80% or higher for inclusion appeared in the final survey that was disseminated statewide to potential participants. All 42 questions provided in the survey were rated and included by the expert panel. One member noted that on questions that required “selecting all that apply,” that an explanation of how to “select all” should be included. A second expert panel participant noted that on question nine, that asked study participants to report which diploma pathway the majority of their caseload was pursuing, the word *majority* should be clarified. The researcher clarified what majority meant by stating in parenthesis “(majority means 51% or more of your caseload)”. Next, a university panel reviewed the survey.

**University faculty panel.** The university faculty consisted of four professors from the departments of Special Education, Rehabilitation and Counseling, and Educational Research and Evaluation. The panel included professors who have expertise in the areas of transition, rehabilitation, special education, research design, and program evaluation. The university faculty panel was also selected as the researcher’s doctoral committee and offered expert feedback on the design of the study, development of the survey, and analysis of the data collected. Each faculty member reviewed the survey and offered the researcher feedback. Feedback included: (a) limiting the number of questions visible on the screen at one time, (b) adding “other” to the question that asked participants to report their gender, and (c) including only one open-ended

response that aimed at seeking barriers and facilitators to implementing CBVI. The researcher edited the survey to include all the suggestions from the university faculty panel.

**Construct validity.** The researcher examined internal consistency of the survey through a preliminary exploratory factor analysis (EFA). First, the researcher reported findings from the EFA. Results from the EFA determined the need to further examine internal consistency of the five themes revealed through a thematic analysis of literature. Next, the researcher reported how internal consistency was determined and reported Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients for the five categories of CBVI.

**Preliminary exploratory factor analysis.** A total of 29 survey items contained the questions that asked practitioners to reflect on their preparation practices prior to implementing CBVI. Through the content analysis, five themes emerged as to how teachers should plan for CBVI. The researcher randomly organized the questions in the survey to appear in no particular order and coded the questions as to how the researcher developed the survey (see Table 13). A preliminary exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted because studies were found during the literature review that identified the preparation steps for CBVI (Kim & Dymond, 2010).

The questions/variables were all coded prior to being entered into IBM's Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) so that the researcher could visually determine which survey items clustered together to determine factor names (see Table 13). SPSS was used to determine how the 29 questions of the survey statistically sorted themselves into factors. The 29 survey items regarding preparation steps needed for CBVI were derived from individual statements found previously in the literature review; the five themes (e.g., *approval, safety and liability, personnel, job site development, and student development*) were developed from a thematic analysis of the items. The researcher conducted the preliminary EFA using SPSS on the

29 survey items. Results from the preliminary EFA concluded that all 29-survey items loaded into one factor. The researcher then attempted to extract 5 factors. However, the results from this analysis confirmed only one factor within the survey. Although this analysis does not support five categories as outlined in the content analysis, it does confirm that there is an essential component of CBVI, which can be best described as *preparation*. Consequently, the survey used in this study has 29 survey items, which load into one *preparation* factor. Table 14 provides a brief description on how each question loaded under factor one (e.g., preparation). See Appendix A for a complete listing of the survey items. A true EFA could not be conducted due to the insufficient sample size of this study ( $N = 91$ ) and the total number of survey items ( $n = 29$ ).

**Preparation factor.** The one factor, *preparation*, determined through an EFA had an Eigenvalue of 15.22 and explained 52.48% of the variance. The second potential factor had an Eigenvalue of 1.94 and only explained an additional 6.70% of the variance. Examining the Scree plot supported that these items load into a one-factor solution (see Illustration 3). The one factor of CBVI planning clusters all five categories identified through the thematic analysis together under the factor of *preparation*.

Table 13

*SPSS Codes for Survey Items: Category, SPSS Variable Code, and Item Numbers*

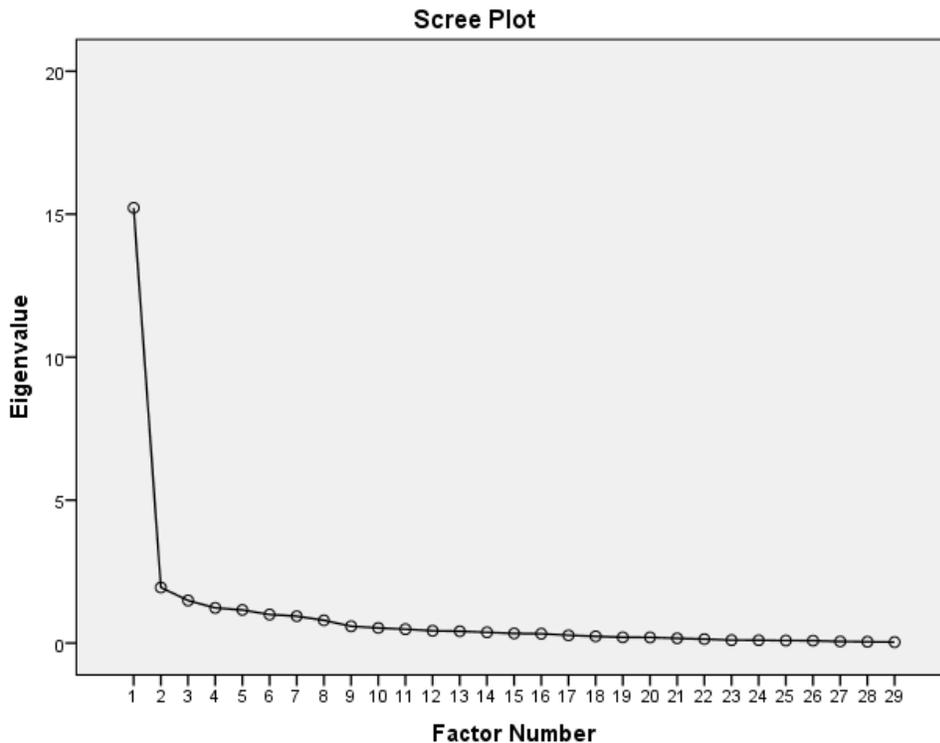
<i>Category</i>	<i>SPSS Variable Code</i>	<i>Item Numbers with code</i>
Approval	a	a1, a6, a11, a16, a19, a21
Liability/Safety	l	l2, l7, l12, l18, l22
Personnel	p	p3, p8, p13, p17, p23, p27
Site Development	si	si4, si9, si14, si24, si26, si28
Student Development	sd	sd5, sd10, sd15, sd20, sd25, sd29

Table 14

*Factor 1: Preparation for CBVI Rotated Factors' Loadings (n = 83)*

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Factor Loading</i>
a1	.575
l2	.627
p3	.518
si4	.585
st5	.741
a6	.562
l7	.692
p8	.505
si9	.893
st10	.765
a11	.840
l12	.746
p13	.600
si14	.809
st15	.713
a16	.717
p17	.532
l18	.588
a19	.755
st20	.628
a21	.846
l22	.775
p23	.758
si24	.820
st25	.869
si26	.852
p27	.653
si28	.817
si29	.760

Illustration 3: Scree Plot from EFA



**Internal consistency.** The preliminary exploratory factor analysis determined that the one essential factor to planning for CBVI was *preparation*. The content analysis revealed that under preparation, there are five areas or themes practitioners can prepare for before implementing CBVI. The researcher attempted to determine construct validity through a post hoc internal consistency analysis of the survey. This was done to determine whether or not the survey items clustered together by themes previously identified in literature and if so, were they statistically related. These results indicated internal consistency for each of the five themes identified by literature through the thematic analysis, as reported by Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients (see Table 15). Internal consistency of survey items can be measured to determine the extent to which the items or variables measure the same construct. In this case, alphas are reported to demonstrate that the items numbered in each category are all highly related. When

attempting to determine internal consistency of the survey items, reported Cronbach’s alpha Coefficients confirmed that the 29 preparation questions clustered together by themes previously identified in literature.

Table 15

*Cronbach’s Alpha Coefficients*

<i>Category Identified by Literature</i>	<i>Item Numbers</i>	<i>Cronbach’s <math>\alpha</math></i>
1. Approval	1,6,11,16, 19,21	.859
2. Safety and Liability	2,7,12,18,22	.850
3. Personnel	3,8,13,17,23,27	.774
4. Job Site Development	4,9,14,24,26,28	.918
5. Student Development	5,10,15,20,25,29	.883

**Description of Data Analysis**

**Analysis of Research Questions**

After the survey was disseminated and open for eight weeks, the researcher closed the survey. A total of 91 surveys were attempted and included partial and complete answers. Out of the 91 attempts, 85 respondents completed all 29 items that sought to determine the extent to which teachers practiced preparation steps prior to implementing CBVI. Items were scored on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*almost never*) to 5 (*almost always*). The researcher extracted the responses from the online survey stored on Qualtrics, which asked participants to report the degree to which they planned for community-based vocational instruction. The final data analysis was determined upon completion of data collection, and includes quantitative and qualitative measurement procedures. Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS software

program. Qualitative data were analyzed through a thematic analysis as the researcher reviewed open-ended questions for patterns and themes. The five themes identified were (a) *gaining approval*, (b) *planning for safety*, (c) *arranging for appropriate personnel*, (d) *developing job sites*, and (e) *developing students*. The themes best describe how the 29 survey items grouped together within the survey (see Table 15)

Descriptive statistics are provided in Chapter IV to describe which of the components participants of this study were practicing prior to implementing CBVI as compared to the type and intensity of training they received for implementing CBVI. Furthermore, the data analyzed using SPSS provides the researcher with descriptive statistics that includes means, frequencies, standard deviations, T-Test, analysis of variances (ANOVA), and post hoc tests (e.g., cross tabulations, linear regression, and least significant differences) that were needed to answer the research questions (see Table 16). Additionally, the researcher examined the data collected and analyzed the extent to which participants were implementing the five categories outlining the components needed to implement a high quality community-based vocational instruction program through descriptive statistics and cross tabulations. The frequency of CBVI components were calculated to determine which components of planning for CBVI were more widely practiced. The researcher also determined if a significant difference existed between educators who participated in training regarding CBVI and teachers who did not through an analysis of variance (ANOVA), two-Sample t-test, and linear regression. Results are reported in Chapter IV. Table 16 below, includes a list of research questions, the categories of CBVI addressed by that research question, the survey item numbers that apply to each research question and the type of analysis ran to answer each research question discussed in Chapter IV.

Table 16

*Analysis of the Research Questions*

<i>Research Question</i>	<i>Category (ies)</i>	<i>Survey Items</i>	<i>Type of Analysis</i>
To what extent are Alabama teachers of students with disabilities planning for community-based vocational instruction (CBVI) before implementing the program?	Approval Safety/Liability Personnel Job Site Development Student Development	1-29	Descriptive Statistics and Mean Comparisons
To what extent are secondary special education teachers of students with disabilities seeking approval for CBVI before implementing the program?	Approval	1,6,11,16, 19,21	Descriptive Statistics and Mean Comparisons
To what extent are secondary special education teachers of students with disabilities planning for safety before they implement CBVI?	Safety and Liability	2,7,12,18,22	Descriptive Statistics and Mean Comparisons
To what extent are secondary special education teachers of students with significant disabilities arranging for personnel before they implement CBVI?	Personnel	3, 8, 13, 17, 23, 27	Descriptive Statistics and Mean Comparisons
To what extent are secondary special education teachers of students with disabilities developing job sites before they implement CBVI?	Job site development	4,9,14,24,26,28	Descriptive Statistics and Mean Comparisons

Table 16 (Continued)

To what extent are secondary special education teachers of students with disabilities preparing students before they implement CBVI?	Student Development	5,10,15,20,25,29	Descriptive Statistics and Mean Comparisons
To what extent are special education teachers trained prior to implementing CBVI?	–	30	Descriptive statistics, ANOVAs, and cross tabulations
To what extent would special education teachers be willing to participate in professional development training on implementing CBVI?	–	32	Descriptive Statistics
Is there a relationship between the types of training special education teachers have received and their planning practices prior to implementing CBVI?	Approval Safety/Liability Personnel Site Development Student Development	1-29, and 38	Analysis of variance (ANOVA), least significant differences, two-sample t-test, and linear regression
What recommendations do teachers currently implementing CBVI programs or who previously implemented CBVI programs suggest for teachers to consider before implementing CBVI?	–	31	Thematic analysis
What barriers do teachers who are currently implementing CBVI programs or who previously implemented CBVI programs report for teachers to consider before implementing CBVI?	–	31	Thematic analysis

## **Summary**

Chapter III provided a description of the procedures used to develop this research study that aimed at addressing the essential research questions outlined in this chapter. Recruitment strategies for participants were also described, followed by descriptions of the 91 participants' demographics. This chapter also provided a description of how this study was conducted, how the survey was conceptualized, and statistical analysis used to determine internal consistency of the instrument. Finally, this chapter presented the data analyses procedures used to answer each research question. Results from analyses are further elaborated on in Chapter IV, Results.

## CHAPTER IV. RESULTS

This chapter includes findings from a survey (e.g., *An Evaluation of the Steps Practiced Before Implementing Community-Based Vocational Instruction* survey; see Appendix A) designed and administered to measure the steps special education teachers practice prior to implementing the employment preparation program, community-based vocational instruction (CBVI), to students with disabilities. Furthermore, this study examined the extent to which special education teachers were trained prior to implementing CBVI and how likely teachers were to receive additional training in this instructional method. Results from open-ended responses identifying barriers and facilitators experienced by participants when planning for CBVI are also described in this chapter. This chapter begins with a list the research questions for this study. Next, the findings of each of the research questions are presented. This chapter concludes with a summary of the findings of this study.

This study investigated the following questions:

1. To what extent are Alabama teachers of students with disabilities planning for community-based vocational instruction (CBVI) before implementing the program?
  - a. To what extent are secondary special education teachers of students with disabilities seeking approval for CBVI before implementing the program?
  - b. To what extent are secondary special education teachers of students with disabilities planning for safety before they implement CBVI?

- c. To what extent are secondary special education teachers of students with disabilities arranging for personnel before they implement CBVI?
  - d. To what extent are secondary special education teachers of students with disabilities developing job sites before they implement CBVI?
  - e. To what extent are secondary special education teachers of students with disabilities preparing students before they implement CBVI?
2. To what extent are special education teachers trained prior to implementing CBVI? To what extent are special education teachers willing to participate in professional development training on implementing CBVI?
  3. Is there a relationship between the types of training special education teachers have received and their planning practices prior to implementing CBVI?
  4. a. What recommendations do teachers currently implementing CBVI programs or who previously implemented CBVI programs suggest for teachers to consider before implementing CBVI?  
b. What barriers do teachers who are currently implementing CBVI programs or who previously implemented CBVI programs report for teachers to consider before implementing CBVI?

### **Research Question One**

***To what extent are Alabama teachers of students with disabilities planning for community-based vocational instruction (CBVI) before implementing the program?***

In response to research question one, the researcher examined participants' responses from the 29 survey items on planning for community-based vocational instruction (see Table 18). The 29 survey items regarding preparation steps needed for CBVI were derived from individual

statements found previously in the literature review. The five themes (e.g., *approval, safety and liability, personnel, student development, and site development*) were developed from a thematic analysis of literature on CBVI, which yielded the 29 survey items completed by participants regarding their planning practices prior to implementing CBVI to students with disabilities. The themes identified were also supported by a post hoc internal consistency analysis measured by Cronbach's Alpha coefficients. Participants selected the extent to which they were planning by choosing from a 5-point Likert-scale (i.e., 5 = *Almost Always*; 4 = *Frequently*; 3 = *Occasionally*; 2 = *Rarely*; and 1 = *Almost Never*.)

***a. To what extent are secondary special education teachers of students with disabilities seeking approval for CBVI before implementing the program?***

The first theme identified through a thematic analysis of literature on CBVI and an analysis on internal consistency, was *approval* and included items 1, 6, 11, 16, 19, and 21. Participants were asked to answer six questions related to planning practices requiring *approval* before practitioners implemented CBVI. Of the 91 respondents, 85 answered all six survey items regarding *approval*. The average combined score for approval tasks completed prior to implementation was 3.98 out of 5 (SD = 1.01). When analyzing the means, SDs, and variance within each of the six survey items within the category of *approval*, results indicated that within the area of *approval*, participants were most likely to seek approval from parents ( $M = 4.5$  out of 5) and were least likely to seek approval from a principal ( $M = 3.21$  out of 5) prior to implementing CBVI to students with disabilities (see Table 18). The greatest variance among participants' responses was in the area of seeking approval for funding, with an average score of 3.56 out of 5 (SD = 1.587) and a variance of 2.52.

***b. To what extent are secondary special education teachers of students with disabilities planning for safety before they implement CBVI?***

The second theme identified through a thematic analysis of literature on CBVI and an analysis on internal consistency, was *safety and liability* and included items 2, 7, 12, 18, and 22. Participants were asked to answer five items related to planning for *safety and liability* before practitioners implemented CBVI. Of the 91 respondents, 85 participants answered all five survey items regarding *safety and liability*. The average combined score for *safety and liability* tasks completed prior to implementation was 3.64 out of 5 (SD = 1.16). When analyzing the means, SDs, and variance within each of the five survey items within the category of planning for safety, results indicated that in the area of *safety and liability*, participants were most likely to develop a safety plan ( $M = 4.05$  out of 5) and least likely to develop an emergency notebook ( $M = 3.08$  out of 5) prior to implementing CBVI to students with disabilities (see Table 18). The greatest variance among participants' responses was in the area of developing an emergency notebook, with an average score of 3.08 out of 5 (SD = 1.514) and a variance of 2.29.

***c. To what extent are secondary special education teachers of students with disabilities arranging for personnel before they implement CBVI?***

The third theme identified through a thematic analysis of literature on CBVI and an analysis on internal consistency, was *personnel* and included items 3, 8, 13, 17, 23, and 27. Participants were asked to answer six items related to planning practices of CBVI regarding *personnel* before practitioners implemented CBVI. Of the 91 respondents, 84 participants answered all six survey items regarding *personnel*. The average combined score for *personnel* tasks completed prior to implementation was 3.58 out of 5 (SD = 0.87). When analyzing the means, SDs, and variance within each of the six survey items for personnel, results indicated that in the area of arranging

for personnel, participants were most likely to collaborate with school nurses (average score of 4.24 out of 5) and least likely to seek additional staff ( $M = 2.22$  out of 5) prior to implementing CBVI to students with disabilities (see Table 18). The greatest variance among participants' responses was in the area of collaborating with a job coach, with an average score of 3.45 out of 5 ( $SD = 1.476$ ) and a variance of 2.18.

***d. To what extent are secondary special education teachers of students with disabilities developing job sites before they implement CBVI?***

The fourth theme identified through a thematic analysis of literature on CBVI and an analysis on internal consistency, was *job site development* and included items 4, 9, 14, 24, 26, and 28. Participants were asked to answer six items related to planning practices of CBVI requiring *job site development* before practitioners implemented CBVI. Of the 91 respondents, 84 participants answered all six survey items regarding *job site development*. The average combined score for *job site development* tasks completed prior to implementation was 3.70 out of 5 ( $SD = 1.15$ ). When analyzing the means, SDs, and variance within each of the six survey items, results indicated that in the area of *job site development*, participants were most likely to establish a professional relationship with the job site supervisors ( $M = 4.25$  out of 5) and least likely to conduct a labor market analysis ( $M = 2.28$  out of 5) prior to implementing CBVI to students with disabilities (see Table 18). The greatest variance among participants' responses was in the area of seeking approval from community job sites, with an average score of 4.13 out of 5 ( $SD = 1.435$ ) and a variance of 2.06.

***e. To what extent are secondary special education teachers of students with disabilities preparing students before they implement CBVI?***

The fifth theme identified through a thematic analysis of literature on CBVI and an analysis

on internal consistency, was *student development* and included items 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, and 29. Participants were asked to answer six items regarding *student development* before practitioners implemented CBVI. Out of 91 respondents, 84 answered all six survey items regarding *student development*. The average combined score for *student development* tasks completed prior to implementation was 4.02 out of 5 (SD = 0.96). When analyzing the means, SDs, and variance within each of the each of the six survey items, results indicated that in the area of *student development*, participants were most likely to develop appropriate Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals ( $M = 4.58$  out of 5) and least likely to include CBVI as a special education service within the IEP ( $M = 3.21$  out of 5) prior to implementing CBVI to students with disabilities (see Table 18). The greatest variance among participants' responses was in the area of including CBVI as a special education service within a student's IEP, with an average score of 3.54 out of 5 (SD = 1.58) and a variance of 2.27.

An analysis of variance was used to determine if a statistically significant difference existed regarding the planning practices of participants within each of the five planning areas of CBVI. With a significance value of .05, results indicated that there is a significant difference in planning practices between the five planning areas (*approval, safety and liability, personnel, student development and site development*) (see Table 17). However, reviewing the means, standard deviations, and variance within the individual planning practices reveals a more in-depth understanding of exactly which planning practices participants were engaging in more frequently and which practices had greater variance within each of the five categories of planning for CBVI (see Tables 17 and 18).

Table 18 provides a brief description of the means, standard deviations, and variance within responses for special education teachers' planning practices prior to implementing CBVI by

themes and individual survey items within each of the five themes. The table is organized descending order of Cronbach Alpha Coefficient's results used in determining internal consistency of each of the five planning categories.

Table 17

*Examine Planning Practices through a Within Subjects ANOVA*

	<i>Sum of Squares</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Planning Practices	1763.938	3.512	3.78	.56.913	< .001
Error	2572.462	291.534			

Table 18

*Means, Standard Deviations, and Alphas for Special Education Teachers' Planning Practices Prior to Implementing Community-Based Vocational Instruction*

	<i>N</i>	<i>Alpha</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Var</i>
<b>Preparation Practices</b>					
<b><i>Student Development</i></b>	84	.883	4.02	.96	-
Develop appropriate IEP goals	84	-	4.58	.899	0.808
Teach pre-skills needed for a site	84	-	4.36	1.060	1.124
Conduct vocational assessments	84	-	4.1	1.089	1.186
Implement student interest surveys to match student to a job site	84	-	3.82	1.333	1.776
Align job placement with individual post-school goals	84	-	3.74	1.324	1.752
Include CBVI as a special education service	84	-	3.54	1.508	2.274*
<b><i>Approval</i></b>	85	.859	3.98	1.01	-
Seek approval from parents/guardians	85	-	4.57	1.084	1.175
Seek approval for transportation	85	-	4.45	1.171	1.372
Secure a jobsite agreement	85	-	3.79	1.492	2.227
Seek approval for funding	85	-	3.56	1.587	2.520*

Table 18 (Continued)

Seek board approval	85	-	3.24	1.503	2.260
Seek principal approval	85	-	3.21	1.035	1.072
<b><i>Job Site Development</i></b>	84	.918	3.70	1.15	-
Establish professional relationships with job site supervisors	84	-	4.25	1.226	1.502
Seek approval from a community job site	84	-	4.13	1.435	2.059*
Conduct site visits	84	-	4.07	1.345	1.809
Conduct an orientation with the job site supervisor	84	-	3.99	1.397	1.951
Develop a task analysis in collaboration with the job site supervisor	84	-	3.51	1.332	1.775
Conduct a labor market analysis	84	-	2.28	1.105	1.222
<b><i>Safety and Liability</i></b>	85	.850	3.64	1.16	-
Develop a safety plan	85	-	4.05	1.258	1.583
Develop an evacuation plan	85	-	3.79	1.421	2.019
Develop a contingency plan for inclement weather	85	-	3.79	1.466	2.150
Verify students have health insurance coverage	85	-	3.59	1.481	2.193
Develop an emergency notebook	85	-	3.08	1.514	2.293*
<b><i>Personnel</i></b>	84	.774	3.58	0.87	-
Collaborate with the school nurse(s)	84	-	4.24	1.097	1.203
Train paraprofessional(s)	84	-	3.95	1.356	1.838
Collaborate with a job coach	84	-	3.54	1.476	2.180*
Seek additional teacher unit(s)	84	-	2.55	1.407	1.980
Seek additional staff support	84	-	2.22	1.032	1.065
Total	85	-	3.78	0.93	-

## Research Question Two

### *To what extent are special education teachers trained prior to implementing CBVI?*

To answer this question, the researcher analyzed the responses from the 91 survey participants. Of the 91 respondents, 79 participants reported receiving training on how to plan and implement community-based vocational instruction (CBVI) to students with disabilities. Eleven participants reported receiving no training opportunities on CBVI prior to planning and implementing the program. Of the 79 who reported receiving training, they identified 227 training possibilities with an average of 2.5 training types per participant. Participants selected from the following training possibilities: (1) undergraduate coursework ( $n = 27$ ), (2) graduate course work ( $n = 38$ ), (3) professional development ( $n = 45$ ), (4) webinar ( $n = 22$ ), (5) conference presentation ( $n = 34$ ), (6) practicum/internship ( $n = 18$ ), (7) district training ( $n = 21$ ), and (8) individual research ( $n = 22$ ). Of the 79 participants who responded, a full range (0-8) of the available combinations of training possibilities from zero training opportunities ( $n = 11$ ) to all eight training opportunities ( $n = 16$ ) were selected (see Table 19).

Table 19

*Frequencies and Percentages of Respondent's Type of Training Received on CBVI (n = 79)*

<i>Type of Training (select all that apply)</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
Professional Development	45	56.96%
Graduate Course	38	48.10%
Conference Presentation	34	43.04%
Undergraduate Course	27	34.18%
Individual Research	22	27.85%
Webinar	22	27.85%
District Training	21	26.58%
Practicum/Internship	18	22.78%

Interpretations of descriptive statistics generated using cross tabulations revealed that approximately half of the 79 participants engaged in two or more training methods focusing on CBVI. Of those reporting multiple trainings, the average participant listed 2.5 trainings. Table 20 below reports the percentage of those who participated in one of the eight trainings. For example, of the 79 participants who reported having participated in training opportunities on CBVI, 34.11% (n = 27) participated in undergraduate courses on CBVI.

Table 20

*Frequencies and Percent of Trainings (n = 79)*

	Undergrad	Graduate	Prof. Dev	Webinar	Conference Presentation	Practicum / Internship	District Training	Individual Research	Multiple
Undergrad	27, 34.11%								
Graduate	18, 22.78%	-							
Professional Dev	17, 21.52%	30, 37.97%	-						
Webinar	11, 13.92%	19, 24.10%	20, 25.32%	-					
Conference Presentation	15, 18.99%	20, 25.31%	20, 25.31%	16, 20.25%	-				
Practicum/ Internship	14, 17.72%	17, 21.52%	14, 17.72%	10, 12.66%	13, 16.46%	-			
District Training	9, 11.39%	12, 15.19%	17, 21.52%	14, 17.72%	13, 16.46%	9, 11.39%	-		
Individual Research	9, 11.39%	12, 15.19%	14, 17.72%	12, 15.19%	13, 16.46%	7, 8.86%	10, 12.66%	-	
Multiple Trainings	22, 27.85%	34, 43.04%	36, 45.57%	21, 26.58%	27, 34.17%	18, 22.78%	17, 21.52%	16, 20.25%	

As no systemic variance was associated with any specific combination(s) of training methods, only their bivariate combinations are addressed in Table 21 below. For example, of the 27 reporting having received undergraduate courses as a method of training on CBVI, 66.67% ( $n = 18$ ) of those participants also reported training during graduate coursework; 62.96% ( $n = 17$ ) received professional development; 40.74% ( $n = 11$ ) participated in a webinar; 55.56% ( $n = 15$ ) conference presentation; 51.85% ( $n = 14$ ) an internship or practicum setting; 33.33% ( $n = 9$ ) district training; and 33.33% ( $n = 9$ ) individual research.

Table 21

*Bivariate Combinations of Trainings*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	M
Undergrad (n = 27)	-	18, 66.67%	17, 62.96%	11, 40.74%	15, 55.56%	14, 51.85%	9, 33.33%	9, 33.33%	22, 81.48%
Graduate (n = 38)	18, 47.37%	-	30, 78.95%	19, 50.00%	20, 52.63%	17, 44.74%	12, 31.58%	12, 31.58%	34, 89.47%
Professional Development (n=45)	17, 37.78%	30, 66.67%	-	20, 44.44%	20, 44.44%	14, 31.11%	17, 37.78%	14, 31.11%	36, 80.00%
Webinar (n=22)	11, 50.00%	19, 86.36%	20, 90.91%	-	16, 72.73%	10, 45.45%	14, 63.64%	12, 54.55%	21, 95.45%
Conference Presentation (n=34)	15, 44.12%	20, 58.82%	20, 58.82%	16, 47.06%	-	13, 38.24%	13, 38.24%	13, 38.24%	27, 79.41%
Practicum/ Internship (n=18)	14, 77.78%	17, 94.44%	14, 77.78%	10, 55.56%	13, 72.22%	-	9, 50.00%	7, 38.89%	18, 100%
Table 21 (Continued)									
District Training (n=21)	9, 42.86%	12, 57.14%	17, 80.95%	14, 66.67%	13, 61.90%	9, 42.86%	-	10, 47.62%	17, 80.95%
Individual Research (n=22)	9, 40.91%	12, 54.55%	14, 63.64%	12, 54.55%	13, 59.09%	7, 31.82%	10, 45.45%	-	16, 72.73%
Multiple Trainings (n=43)	22, 51.16%	34, 79.07%	36, 83.72%	21, 48.84%	27, 62.79%	18, 41.86%	17, 39.53%	16, 37.21%	-

Note: 1=Undergrad, 2=Graduate, 3=Professional Development, 4= Webinar, 5= Conference Presentation, 6= Practicum/Internship, 7= District Training, 8=Individual Research, and M= Multiple Trainings. Percentages were generated by the combined total number of each training divided by “n” listed in the first column; For example, 66.67 % of those who participated in undergraduate (n = 27) also reported graduate training. m=multiple trainings.

***To what extent would special education teachers be willing to participate in professional development training on implementing CBVI?***

In response to research question two, participants responded to the following survey item, “How likely are you to participate in training or professional development on implementing

CBVI?” Participants responded to this question by selecting from a five point Likert-scale type question regarding their willingness to participate in additional training (i.e., 1=*extremely likely*, 2=*somewhat likely*, 3= *neither likely no unlikely*, 4= *somewhat unlikely*, 5= *extremely unlikely*). Of the 84 recorded responses, 76.19% (n=64) were *extremely likely* and 14.29% (n=12) were *somewhat likely* to participate in additional training or professional development regarding CBVI. Additionally, 3.57% (n = 3) were *neither likely nor unlikely* to participate in additional training. Finally, of the 84 recorded responses, 3.57% (n = 3) and 2.38% (n = 2) were either *somewhat unlikely* or *extremely unlikely* to participate in additional training or professional development regarding CBVI, respectively (see Table 22).

Table 22

*Frequencies and Percentages of Respondents’ Willingness to Participate in Additional Training for CBVI (n = 84)*

<i>Willingness to Participate in Training</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>
Extremely Likely	64	76.19%
Somewhat Likely	12	14.29%
Neither Likely nor Unlikely	3	3.57%
Somewhat Unlikely	3	3.57%
Extremely Unlikely	2	2.38%

### **Research Question Three**

***Is there a relationship between the types of training special education teachers have received and their planning practices prior to implementing CBVI?***

In response to research question three; analysis of variance (ANOVA), correlation, and regression analysis were used to examine the relationship between the types of training special

education teachers received and their reported CBVI planning practices. Participants rated the degree to which they plan for CBVI in the five planning areas (i.e., *approval, safety and liability, personnel, student development* and *site development*) using a five point Likert- scale (i.e., 1 = *almost never* to 5 = *almost always*).

A total of 84 respondents reported planning across all 29 individual practices prior to implementing CBVI. Of the recorded responses ( $n = 1,533$ ), 65% reported that they either *frequently* or *almost always* planned in all five areas of CBVI before implementing the program ( $M = 3.929$ ). An ANOVA was used to determine if there are any significant differences in the amount of training teachers received prior to planning for CBVI. At an alpha level of .05 ( $p < .05$ ), the results indicated there is a significant difference in planning prior to implementing CBVI in the planning areas of *approval, job site development, and student development* as associated with the number of training types participants received. The results also indicated there is not a significant difference between training types and planning practices prior to implementing CBVI in the area of *safety and liability*. Additionally, with an alpha level of,  $p < .05$ , results indicated that there is need for additional analysis to determine if a significant difference exist between training and planning prior to implementing CBVI, in the area of *personnel* ( $p = .052$ ).

Furthermore, a post hoc analysis (least significant difference) revealed that there is a difference in the degree of planning before implementing CBVI between those who had no training opportunities and those with two or more training opportunities. The planning areas of *approval* and *personnel* demonstrated that a significant difference exists between those who had zero and two or more training opportunities (0-2+). There was not a significant difference between those who had between zero and one training opportunity (0-1), or between those who

had one and two or more training opportunities (1-2+). Additionally, there was not a significant difference in the planning steps practiced in the area of *safety and liability*. The most notable differences existed in the areas of *job site development* and *student development*. In these areas, significant differences existed between those with zero and two or more training opportunities (0-2+) and those with one and two or more training opportunities (1-2+). No significant differences were found between those who had zero and one training (0-1).

Overall, results from the ANOVA revealed there are significant differences in planning practices of those who have received more than two training opportunities on CBVI ( $F_{(2, 82)} = 3.93, p = .02$ ) (see Table 23). Post hoc analyses (least significant difference) interpretations revealed that the differences in planning practices prior to implementing CBVI are seen between those with zero trainings and those with two or more trainings (95% CI: .18 – 1.41) prior to implementing CBVI.

Table 23

*ANOVA Results of Special Education Teacher Training and Planning Practices Prior to Implementing CBVI*

	Number of Trainings	<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	Mdiff	CI95% Lower	CI95 Upper
Total		3.929	2,82	.023			
	0 – 1				.398	-.223	1.019
	1 – 2+				.396	-.023	.814
	0 – 2+				.794*	.180	1.41
Approval		4.034	2,82	.021			
	0 – 1				.429	-.241	1.10
	1 – 2+				.435	-.016	.886
	0 – 2+				.864*	.203	1.526
Safety/Liability		1.870	2,82	.161			
	0 – 1				.457	-.334	1.248
	1 – 2+				.280	-.252	.813
	0 – 2+				.737	-.044	1.518
Personnel		3.058	2,81	.052			
	0 – 1				.346	-.237	.928
	1 – 2+				.321	-.074	.715
	0 – 2+				.666*	.090	1.243
Site Development		3.598	2,81	.032			
	0 – 1				.330	-.438	1.099
	1 – 2+				.544*	.023	1.065
	0 – 2+				.875*	.113	1.636
		6.472	2,81	.002			
	0 – 1				.436	-.182	1.053
	1 – 2+				.548*	.192	.966
	0 – 2+				.983*	.372	1.595

Note: When preliminary ANOVA was significant ( $p < .05$ ), post hoc analyses (Least significant differences) were conducted. Significant mean differences (Mdiff) are denoted by an \*.

In addition, to answer the research question the overall means of each of the training opportunities were compared to the overall planning practices (e.g., all 29 planning statements) reported by participants. Results from a pairwise comparison using a two-sample t-test were used to compare the group means of those who participated in each of the eight training opportunities

to the group means of those who did not participate in training opportunities across all 29 planning statements. For example, the mean score of those who had undergraduate training was compared to the mean score for those who did not have undergraduate training. Of the 84 participants, 32% ( $n = 27$ ) reported receiving undergraduate courses, as a method of training on CBVI, whereas 68% ( $n = 64$ ) of the participants did not report undergraduate training on CBVI. The two means were compared to determine if a significant difference ( $p < .05$ ) in overall planning practices existed between those who received undergraduate training courses ( $M = 3.77$  out of 5) on CBVI and those who did not receive undergraduate training courses ( $M = 3.74$ ) on CBVI. Results indicated no significant difference ( $p = .851$ ) exists in the overall planning practices of participants between those who received undergraduate training on CBVI and those who did not (see Table 24). Furthermore, results indicated no significant difference exists in the overall planning practices between those who participated in a webinar ( $p = .1431$ ) than those who did not; those who attended a conference presentation ( $p = .3969$ ) and those who did not; than those who participated in a practicum or internship setting where CBVI took place ( $p = .138$ ) than those who did not (see Table 24).

However, a significance difference in planning practices was found between those who participated in graduate coursework, professional development, district training, or individual research as compared to those participants who did not participate in these training options, respectively. For example, the mean score of participants who participated in graduate coursework was compared to the mean score for those who did participate in graduate coursework regarding CBVI. Of the 84 participants, 45% ( $n = 38$ ) reported having received training during graduate coursework, as a method of training on CBVI, whereas 55% ( $n = 46$ ) of the participants did not report graduate coursework training on CBVI planning. The two means

were compared to determine if a significant difference ( $p < .05$ ) in planning practices existed between those who received graduate level training ( $M = 4.06$  out of 5) on CBVI and those who did not receive graduate level training ( $M = 3.59$  out of 5) on CBVI. Results indicated there is a significant difference ( $p = .019$ ) in the planning practices of participants between those who received graduate coursework training on CBVI, and those who did not (see Table 24).

Furthermore, results indicated there is a significant difference in the planning practices between those who participated in professional development ( $p = .002$ ), and those who did not; those who attended a district training ( $p = .006$ ), and those who did not; and those who completed individual research on planning for CBVI ( $p = .044$ ), and those who did not (see Table 24).

Table 24

*Comparing Planning Practices and Training Opportunities using a Two-Sample T-Test*

<i>Training Type</i>	<i>Mean of participants did not participate (x)</i>	<i>Mean of those who did participate (y)</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Undergraduate Coursework ( $n = 27$ )	3.786	3.744	.18944	37.989	.851
Graduate Coursework ( $n = 38$ )	3.59	4.060	-2.3979	77.24	.019*
Professional Development ( $n = 45$ )	3.483	4.088	-3.1801	75.723	.002*
Webinar ( $n = 22$ )	3.697	4.047	-1.5026	30.889	.1431
Conference Presentation ( $n = 34$ )	3.74	3.88	-.87005	79.524	.3869
Practicum and/or Internship ( $n = 18$ )	3.69	4.043	-1.6655	39.313	.138
District Training ( $n = 21$ )	3.6429	4.196	-2.9	47.236	.006*
Individual Research ( $n = 22$ )	3.66	4.07	-2.0617	50.589	.044*

Note: When t-test was significant ( $p < .05$ ), post hoc analysis (linear regressions) was conducted. Significant differences are denoted by an \*.

Results of the two-sample t-test indicated that when comparing the planning practices to those who received trainings and those who did not, the groups who received training in graduate course work, on average, reported more planning practices than those who did not receive training on CBVI during graduate coursework. Additionally, overall planning took place at a higher degree between those who participated in professional development than those who did not; those who participated in a district training, than those who did not; and those who completed individual research than those who did not.

Moreover, to examine the relationship between training types and planning practices within the five planning areas (e.g., *approval, liability and safety, personnel, job site development, and student development*), a bivariate Pearson correlation was used to examine the relationship between the total amounts of training methods on CBVI special teachers had prior to their reported planning practices. Results from bivariate Pearson correlations indicated in the areas of *student development, job site development, and personnel*, more training opportunities are associated with more planning practices prior to implementing CBVI. These results are summarized in the table below (see Table 25).

Table 25

*Pearson Correlation Results for Amount of Training Opportunities Prior to Implementing CBVI*

Correlation with Amount of Training	
<i>Planning Practice</i>	<i>Pearson r.</i>
Student Development	.376**
Approval	.161
Job Site Development	.301**
Safety and Liability	.198
Personnel	.307**

Note: \*p < .05, \*\*p < .01, \*\*\*p < .001

To further examine the types of training methods received in relation to planning practices, regression analysis was used for each of the five planning themes to determine which types of training opportunities predicted increased planning practices within each of the five planning areas of CBVI. More specifically, a backward elimination regression was used to determine the specific subsets of training methods associated with each of the five planning themes. These results are summarized in Tables 26 through 30.

Table 26

*Regression Findings – Backward Regression – Planning – Approval*

Type of Training	R <sup>2</sup>	S.E	Estimate		
			Beta	r	Semi- partial
<b>Full Model</b>	.150	6.447			
Undergraduate Course			-.245	-.096	-.201
Graduate Course			.191	.2176	.143
Professional Dev.			.200	.229	.165
Webinar			-.277	.068	-.178
Conference			-.025	.030	-.022
Practicum/Internship			.090	.094	.060
District Training			.155	.157	.123
Individual Research			.214	.2160	.184
<b>Restricted Model</b>	.052*	6.515			
Professional Dev.			.229*	.229	.229

Note: \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

Regression # 1: *Approval*- Overall, the full model, consisting of all eight types of training, shared 15.0% with *approval* practices and was not statistically significant ( $F_{(8,76)} = 1.680, p = .117$ ). In this full model, the variable of professional development was statistically significant. When examining the final results of the backwards elimination regression, seven variables were removed, leaving the predictor variable of professional development. The final, restricted model was able to explain 5.2% of *approval* practices and was statistically significant ( $F_{(1,83)} = 4.579, p = .035$ ).

Table 27

*Regression Findings – Backward Regression – Planning – Site Development*

Type of Training	R <sup>2</sup>	S.E	Estimate		
			Beta	r	Semi- partial
<b>Full Model</b>	.213*	6.616			
Undergraduate Course			-.208	-.030	-.174
Graduate Course			.209	.273	.158
Professional Dev.			.239	.336	.199
Webinar			-.192	.197	-.126
Conference			-.019	.085	.017
Practicum/Internship			.091	.190	.062
District Training			.218	.279	.175
Individual Research			.170	.183	.148
<b>Restricted Model</b>	.143**	6.642			
Professional Dev.			.273*	.336	.256
District Training			.186	.279	.175

Note: \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

Regression #2: *Site Development* – Overall, the full model, consisting of all eight types of training, shared 21.3% with *site development* and was statistically significant ( $F_{(8,75)}=2.539, p = .017$ ). In this full model, none of the variables were statistically significant. When examining the final results of the backwards elimination regression, six variables were removed, leaving the predictors of professional development and district training. The final, restricted model was able to explain 14.3% of *site development* and was also statistically significant ( $F_{(2,81)}= 6.784, p = .002$ ).

Table 28

*Regression Findings – Backward Regression – Planning – Liability and Safety*

Type of Training	R <sup>2</sup>	S.E	Estimate		
			Beta	r	Semi- partial
<b>Full Model</b>	.214*	5.707			
Undergraduate Course			-.274*	-.127	-.225
Graduate Course			.238	.221	.178
Professional Dev.			.179	.269	.148
Webinar			-.160	.164	-.103
Conference			-.121	-.024	-.103
Practicum/Internship			.023	.079	.015
District Training			.253	.261	.200
Individual Research			.195	.176	.168
<b>Restricted Model</b>	.154*	5.737			
Undergraduate			-.262*	-.127	-.243
Graduate			.255*	.221	.234
District Training			.246*	.261	.238

Note: \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

Regression #3: *Liability and Safety* – Overall, the full model, consisting of all eight types of training, shared 21.4% with *liability and safety* planning and was statistically significant ( $F_{(8,76)} = 2.593, p = .015$ ). In this full model, the variable of undergraduate coursework was statistically significant. When examining the final results of the backwards elimination regression, five variables were removed, leaving the predictors of graduate coursework and district training to increase planning practices. Undergraduate course work was significant in having a negative effect on CBVI planning practices in the area of *liability and safety*. The final,

restricted model was able to explain 15.4% of *liability and safety* planning practices and was also statistically significant ( $F_{(3,81)} = 4.916, p = .003$ ).

Table 29

*Regression Findings – Backward Regression – Planning – Personnel*

Type of Training	R <sup>2</sup>	S.E	Estimate		
			Beta	r	Semi-partial
<b>Full Model</b>	.182*	5.313			
Undergraduate Course			-.107	.076	-.089
Graduate Course			.154	.259	.116
Professional Dev.			.243	.322	.202
Webinar			-.219	.162	-.144
Conference			-.057	.068	-.050
Practicum/Internship			.173	.245	.118
District Training			.127	.209	.102
Individual Research			.210	.204	.183
<b>Restricted Model</b>	.104**	5.320			
Professional Dev.			.322*	.332	.332

Note: \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

Regression #4: *Personnel* – Overall, the full model, consisting of all eight types of training, shared 18.2% with *personnel* planning practices and was statistically significant ( $F_{(8,75)} = 2.090, p = .047$ ). In this full model, the variable of professional development was statistically significant. When examining the final results of the backwards elimination regression, seven variables were removed, leaving the predictor of professional development. The final, restricted model was able to explain 10.4% of *personnel* planning practices and was also statistically significant ( $F_{(1,82)} = 9.474, p = .003$ ).

Table 30

*Regression Findings – Backward Regression – Planning – Student Development*

Type of Training	R <sup>2</sup>	S.E	Estimate		
			Beta	r	Semi- partial
<b>Full Model</b>	.276*	5.471			
Undergraduate Course			-.230	-.011	-.192
Graduate Course			.128	.284	.097
Professional Dev.			.346*	.426	.288
Webinar			-.164	.248	-.107
Conference			.004	.131	-.003
Practicum/Internship			.164	.254	.112
District Training			.181	.305	.145
Individual Research			.162	.204	.141
<b>Restricted Model</b>	.233**	5.454			
Undergraduate Course			-.231	-.011	-.194
Professional Dev.			.394***	.426	.370
Practicum/Internship			.245*	.254	.199

Note: \*p < .05, \*\*p < .01, \*\*\*p < .001

Regression #5: *Student Development* – Overall, the full model, consisting of all eight types of training, shared 27.6% with *student development* planning practices and was statistically significant ( $F_{(8,75)}=3.580$   $p=.001$ ). In this full model, the variable of professional development was statistically significant. When examining the final results of the backwards elimination regression, five variables were removed, leaving the predictors of undergraduate coursework, professional development, and practicum/internship. The final, restricted model was able to

explain 23.3% of *student development* planning practices and was also statistically significant ( $F_{(3,80)} = 240.654, p < .001$ ).

#### **Research Question Four**

***What recommendations do teachers currently implementing CBVI programs or who previously implemented CBVI programs suggest for teachers to consider before implementing CBVI?***

Survey participants were asked to reflect on how their community-based vocational instruction (CBVI) preparation programs were established and to provide advice as to how to facilitate CBVI by responding to an open-ended survey item. Overall, there were 138 responses to the open-ended question; 77% ( $n = 92$ ) of the comments reported advice on how to facilitate implementing CBVI. The researcher exported the data into an Excel file. The responses were coded by theme and tallied using a frequency count (Creswell, 2012). An exhaustive list of all advice provided is found in Appendix C. Table 31 provides a summary of the three most commonly cited facilitators, as reported by special education teachers, and organized by the five themes for planning for an effective CBVI program (e.g., approval, personnel, liability/safety, site development, and student development).

***What barriers do teachers who are currently implementing CBVI programs or who previously implemented CBVI programs report for teachers to consider before implementing CBVI?***

Survey participants were asked to reflect on how their CBVI programs were established and what barriers they faced when planning their programs by responding to an open-ended survey item. Overall, there were 138 responses to the open-ended question; 33% ( $n = 46$ ) of the comments reported barriers to implementing CBVI. The researcher exported the data into an

Excel file. The responses were coded by theme and tallied using a frequency count (Creswell, 2012). An exhaustive list of all the barriers reported is provided in Appendix C. Table 32 provides a summary of the five most commonly cited barriers as reported by special education teachers.

Table 31

Facilitators of CBVI ( $n = 92$ )

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*Advice for Facilitating Implementation of CBVI*

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*Approval*

1. Gain administrative approval before attending job sites ( $n = 3$ )
2. Seek board approval for additional funding prior to implementing CBVI ( $n = 3$ )
3. Locate multiple jobsites for permission to attend ( $n = 2$ )

*Safety/Liability*

1. Develop a contingency plan to be prepared for all possible scenarios that may go wrong ( $n = 3$ )
2. Develop and teach behavior plans to help students participate in multiple job sites ( $n = 2$ )
3. Plan for all emergencies that could arise ( $n = 2$ )

*Personnel*

1. Train all professionals prior to participating in CBVI ( $n = 8$ )
2. Communicate plans and expectations to everyone ( $n = 6$ )
3. Make sure to have alternate personnel support in case of an absence ( $n = 2$ )

*Site Development*

1. Develop appropriate job sites ( $n = 3$ )
2. Communicate with job site supervisors frequently ( $n = 3$ )
3. Provide training to all job site supervisors ( $n = 2$ )

*Student Development*

1. Assess student needs, interest, and preferences ( $n = 7$ )
  2. Pre-teach job skills to students ( $n = 4$ )
  3. Train students and provide clear expectations ( $n = 3$ )
- 

Note: This is not an exhaustive list of advice provided. Please see Appendix C for a complete list of suggested facilitators for implementing CBVI.

Table 32

*Barriers to Implementing Community-based Vocational Instruction (n = 46)*

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1. Having adequate personnel ( $n = 8$ )
  2. Lack of available resources on how to implement ( $n = 8$ )
  3. Availability of jobsites/access to jobsite ( $n = 6$ )
  4. Adequate time for planning/amount of time needed ( $n = 4$ )
  5. Transportation to and from jobsites ( $n = 4$ )
- 

**Summary**

This research study evaluated the responses of 91 special education teachers who implemented community-based vocational instruction (CBVI) in Alabama. Furthermore, this study examined the extent to which special education teachers are planning prior to implementing CBVI. Participants were asked to report (a) their demographics, (b) descriptive characteristics about the students on their caseload, (c) extent to which they were trained in CBVI, and (d) extent to which they planned for CBVI. Based on the data collected in the survey, the majority of the participants are planning at a higher degree in the areas of *student development, approval, and job site development* ( $M > 3.60$ ) for CBVI prior to implementation than in the areas of *safety and liability* and *personnel* ( $M < 3.60$ ). Additionally, it was found that the extent to which a participant was trained in CVBI made a significant difference in the extent to which a participant planned for CBVI in the areas of *approval, site development, and student development*. However, no combinations of trainings were determined for optimal planning. Furthermore, there was no significant difference in the planning practices of participants in the areas of *safety and liability* and *personnel*. Participants reported facilitators and barriers experienced when implementing CBVI. Finally, participants reported that even though they were

already trained in CBVI prior to implementing the program, they wished to receive additional training on how to better implement CBVI.

## CHAPTER V. DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the extent to which secondary special education teachers of students with disabilities were planning prior to implementing the evidence-based practice of community-based vocational instruction (CBVI). The researcher examined the extent to which teachers in Alabama plan across five areas (e.g., *approval, liability and safety, personnel, job site development and student development*). Additionally, a second purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which participants were trained prior to implementing CBVI and to determine if training has any impact on the planning practices implemented by participants. This information was used to determine if training made a significant difference in the planning practices of CBVI practitioners. Moreover, the researcher sought to determine how likely each participant was to receive additional training in the area of CBVI to better improve employment preparation programs for high school students with disabilities. Finally, the researcher attempted to gather information regarding the barriers and facilitators (Kim & Dymond, 2010) that affected planning and implementing community experiences for those students with disabilities.

Employment is an important factor in meeting fundamental needs of life (e.g., food, shelter, and clothing). Employment can also increase opportunities for socialization with peers (Pickens & Dymond, 2015). Despite the benefits, individuals with disabilities are less likely to engage in employment after exiting high school as compared to those without disabilities (Pickens & Dymond, 2015). Participating in work experiences while in high school can increase

the likelihood of individuals with disabilities gaining employment upon graduation (Benz, Lindstrom, & Yovanoff, 2000; Carter, Austin, & Trainor, 2011; Luecking & Fabian, 2000). Community-based vocational instruction (CBVI) is a common method and evidence-based practice used in educational settings to systematically teach vocational skills in community environments (Cimera, 2010; Dymond, 2012; Test, et al., 2006). According to Pickens and Dymond (2015), investigations are needed to further examine individual factors that create meaningful community experiences, which influence positive post-school employment outcomes for students with disabilities. No studies exist that examine the variable of practitioners' planning for CBVI as a means to creating meaningful community experiences for students with disabilities to engage in job skill development opportunities while in high school. Therefore, this study attempted to examine the planning practices of CBVI implemented by secondary special education teachers in Alabama. Next, the interpretations of the results for each research question are discussed.

### **Interpretation of Findings**

#### ***Research Question 1- Extent to which Special Education Teachers in Alabama are trained prior to implementing CBVI***

Early in the 1900s, there was no evident planning taking place to improve employment outcomes for students with disabilities (Stiker, 2000). Additionally, there were no federal initiatives mandating transition planning for students with disabilities. According to Lin (1998), transition planning requires extensive planning of programs in order to increase positive post-school outcomes for students with disabilities. Community-based vocational instruction is a type of program that can be implemented to teach students vocational skills in community experiences (Kim & Dymond, 2010). Careful planning of community experiences is necessary in

order to carry out successful community-based vocational instruction programs (Kim & Dymond, 2010). Research Question 1 investigated the extent to which special education teachers plan prior to implementing CBVI, because transition planning and effective services are a means to improving post-school outcomes for students with disabilities (Kohler, 1993; Rusch & Phelps, 1987). Furthermore, legislative (unfunded) mandates require transition planning to take place, and services to be provided in community environments when appropriate (NCLB, 2001). According to Kohler (1996), community-based instruction is a component of establishing effective program structures for students with disabilities.

This survey was developed to analyze the planning components taking place in Alabama by secondary special education teachers prior to implementing CBVI. This study attempted to answer Research Question 1, through the 29 item survey, the *Evaluation of the Steps Practiced Before Implementing Community-Based Vocational Instruction* survey.

This study found that teachers are planning prior to implementing CBVI ( $M = 3.78$ ). Chapter II, tables one through five, outline the 29 planning components of CBVI, recommended by the literature. On a Likert-scale of one to five, the overall means for each category of planning were similar (gaining approval,  $M = 3.98$ ; job site development,  $M = 3.70$ ; liability and safety,  $M = 3.64$ , and personnel,  $M = 3.58$ ), except for the category student development, which had an overall mean of 4.02. These results suggested that there is more emphasis on developing the student for community experiences during planning than on any other area when preparing for CBVI. This could be due to the fact that the teachers have more time during regular school hours to work and train students. Additionally, students receiving special education services through an Individualized Education Program (IEP) engage in assessments that report the student's strengths, needs, interest and preferences, which are administered at the individual student level

(IDEA, 2004). When further analyzing the individual planning components of each of the five themes of planning for CBVI, more information was found regarding the planning practices to understand the current state of the CBVI program.

Within the planning category of *approval*, participants were more frequently seeking approval from parents of students to participate in CBVI, than they were approval for additional funding for the program. Special education teachers are legally required to involve the parent in the development of transition planning (IDEA, 2004). This could account for more attention focused on seeking permission from parents than seeking approval for additional funding from the principal. Moreover, with liability issues associated with the traveling with students off campus, having parental consent on record, per school board policies, decreases the liability associated with a school if any accidents should occur. In the event of an accident or emergency occurring, the survey attempted to glean information regarding the planning practices of *safety and liability*.

Within the planning category of *safety and liability*, survey participants were planning ahead in the event of an emergency while at job sites, but were not necessarily creating an emergency notebook outlining those plans in the event of emergency. This could be because according to the Red Cross (2017), school environments provide more than just an academic environment for students to engage in. School settings also provide routines. Community-based vocational instruction can be a part of a student with a disability's daily routine. A disruption in the routine, in the form of an emergency, can be stressful for anyone, but especially students with disabilities. Teachers are accustomed to practicing evacuations in case of a fire from the school building and/or school bus. Therefore, special education teachers could be engaging in planning for emergencies more frequently over creating emergency notebooks, because fire drills and

other safety drills are a part of a school's yearly calendar. Planning for emergencies can decrease stress during unforeseen emergencies. Therefore, planning for emergencies during community outings is important. Additional training on the importance of creating an emergency notebook for off campus activities could increase the likelihood of special education teachers creating notebooks, or other forms of emergency documentation, prior to engaging in CBVI (i.e., notebook for a substitute teacher). This survey also attempted to glean information regarding the planning practices implemented for CBVI in the area of *personnel*.

Within the planning category of *personnel*, survey participants were planning for personnel prior to engaging in CBVI. Participants were more likely to collaborate with a school nurse in preparation for CBVI, than to seek additional personnel. This could be due to the nature of individual student's medical needs typically associated with those with disabilities. Teachers may not seek additional funding for support staff to help improve CBVI programs due to lack of available funding.

Community-based vocational instruction cannot occur without partnerships between the school and jobsites in the community. Within the planning category of job site development, survey participants were in fact planning for job sites for their students to attend, but were not planning based on the availability of potential jobs at the job sites based on the students' strengths, needs, interest and preferences. Establishing a professional relationship between the job site supervisor and special education teacher occurred more frequently than conducting a labor market analysis. This could be due to practitioners supporting businesses who invite their students with disabilities to learn job skills in an integrated environment. Additional training may be needed to help special education teachers survey a labor market analysis prior to establishing job sites. In addition, teachers may consult with other personnel who conducted the labor market

analysis. As well, time limitations could restrict practitioners from engaging in labor market analyses prior to implementing CBVI.

On average, more planning was taking place at the individual student level when preparing for CBVI than any other planning area. Within the category of *student development*, participants were more likely to develop appropriate IEP goals for students engaging in CBVI than any other planning activity when arranging for CBVI. Not only does research support the need for students to be involved in the transition planning process (Wehman & Kregel, 1994), legislation mandates that students be a part of the planning process no later than age 16 (IDEA, 2004). The study evaluated the planning practices of secondary special education teachers prior to implementing CBVI; therefore, these results imply that teachers are including students in the development of transition programs, including CBVI.

Overall, participants in this study are making adequate efforts to plan for CBVI for students with disabilities. The next two research questions attempted to analyze the extent to which teachers are trained prior to implementing CBVI, and determine if prior training on CBVI impacted planning practices implemented by the participants of this study.

### **Research Question Two- *Extent to which teachers are trained***

An inspiring and informed teacher may be an important factor in influencing student achievement for students with and without disabilities. According to Good et al., (1975), teachers make tangible differences in the degree to which students achieve at school and in the overall lifetime achievement of the individual. Various types of teacher training opportunities can provide future or current educators with important tools for teaching students. Since teachers have such direct and sustained impact on students, understanding the extent to which teachers are trained prior to implementing new programs may serve as a predictor for increased student

success. In fact, a study from the late 1990s, shortly after transition was legislatively mandated, indicated 90% of Americans believed the best method for increasing student achievement was through highly trained teachers (Harris, 1998). Understanding the planning practices taking place prior to implementing CBVI can be better interpreted if researchers understand how both new and veteran teachers are trained prior to implementing new programs.

Research Question 2 was intended to determine the extent to which participants of this study were trained prior to planning and implementing CBVI with students with disabilities. Out of the 91 participants in this study, 79 participants reported participating in 227 combined training opportunities. Additionally, 11 participants reported receiving no training at all. Reviewing a frequency count for each type of training received revealed that more participants received training through professional development on CBVI than through any other type of training method listed.

The following list ranks the order in which more participants reported receiving training from the most frequently reported responses to the least frequently reported responses: (1) professional development, (2) graduate coursework, (3) conference presentation, (4) undergraduate coursework, (5) individual research, (6) webinar, (7) district training, and (8) practicum/internship. This research study did not account for the number of years participants taught before planning for CBVI as a means to determine if teaching experience coupled with training experiences was a predictor for increased planning to occur prior to implementing CBVI. Teaching experience and training opportunities combined could make a difference in the amount of planning practices exercised by special education teachers before implementing CBVI.

Although the majority of participants reported engagement in more than two trainings on CBVI, more than 80% reported they were likely or extremely likely to participate in additional training on implementing CBVI. This result could be due to the fact that this sample population was primarily derived from participants attending a transition conference. These participants were already engaging in training opportunities outside of the school day to better improve the quality of services delivered to students with disabilities. Research Question Three further describes the impact training had on planning practices prior to implementing CBVI.

### **Research Question Three- *Differences in training***

Until recently (e.g., Every Child Succeeds Act, 2015), legislation from 2001 required teachers to be highly qualified in content areas before teaching students (No Child Left Behind, 2001). In order to gain teacher certification after 2001, teachers had to prove that they not only earned the appropriate degree to attain teacher certification, but they also passed a certification test in their content area and were deemed highly qualified prior to teaching. This piece of legislation emphasized the importance of preparing educators prior to teaching students. Engaging in training opportunities is a means of teacher preparation. Research Question Three was intended to determine if different types of training on CBVI had an impact on the steps Alabama secondary special education teachers of students with disabilities practiced when planning to implement community experiences. Of the 79 participants who reported the extent to which they were trained ( $n = 227$  total training methods) on CBVI practices, 11 did not report receiving any type of training method. Of the 79 who reported being trained on CBVI, more than half of the participants reported engaging in more than two training methods on CBVI. After examining the sum of all training methods, a discrepancy was noted between the group that received training on CBVI and the group that did not receive training on CBVI. There was not

equal variance between the group who had any type of training methods (n = 79) and the group that did not have any training on CBVI (n = 11). Therefore, there was no meaningful analysis used to determine if a significant difference existed between those who had training on CBVI and those who did not have training on CBVI.

Furthermore, the researcher sought to expand the analyses and determine if the number of training opportunities participants engaged in prior to implementing CBVI impacted planning practices within each of the five planning categories of CBVI. Results indicated there is a significant difference in the planning practices implemented between those who had participated in two or more training options as compared to those who had less than two training experiences in the areas of *approval*, *job site development*, and *student development*. In other words, more participants were likely to seek a higher degree of approval, further develop job sites, and better prepare students to participate in CBVI if they participated in two or more CBVI training activities. Additionally, the most notable differences in planning practices were seen in the areas of *student development* and *job site development*. While no previous studies examined the impact that training opportunities have on planning for CBVI, McDiarmid et al. (1989), concluded that a teacher's understanding of their content, along with pedagogical orientations, influence the quality of their teaching. Although no studies examine the impact training on CBVI has on teachers' planning practices, one can extrapolate that training opportunities can increase a teacher's understanding of the subject matter, therefore potentially influencing the quality of their teaching, including planning for CBVI.

When analyzing the group of participants who had training on CBVI prior to planning, the researcher attempted to determine which type of training was a predictor variable to increase CBVI planning practices. Furthermore, statistical analysis allowed for the researcher to compare

the means of overall planning practices across the five categories of training, within the 29 individual planning statements, to determine if training impacted the degree to which participants planned for CBVI.

This study compared the planning practices for CBVI between those participants who received individual training on CBVI and those who did not. The researcher compared the means of participants who engaged in a single training opportunity to those who did not engage in a training opportunity to determine if a particular type of training impacted planning practices more than another. For example, a significant difference in planning practices was observed between participants who reported receiving training through graduate course work and those who reported they did not receive training in the form of graduate coursework. This could be due to graduate coursework being more concentrated in a specific area, as compared to the broad nature of the content taught through undergraduate coursework. Also, participants may not have attended graduate school; therefore they would not have been able to receive training from graduate classes. Overall, the planning practices of CBVI were positively impacted when participants engaged in the following types of training: (1) graduate coursework, (2) professional development, (3) district training, and (4) individual research. A linear regression was implemented to determine which type of training could best predict higher rates of planning for CBVI. Results indicated that overall, if a participant engaged in professional development on CBVI, they were more likely to plan across all five areas of CBVI, as compared to the result of any other training opportunity listed.

This study found that the degree to which teachers were trained in the area of CBVI, did impact the extent to which they planned prior to implementing CBVI. Furthermore, the results indicated on average, that participants who engaged in two or more trainings on CBVI were

more likely to plan to a greater extent than those who engaged in less than two training opportunities on CBVI. Further determined if types of training opportunities impacted planning practices within the five themes of planning (i.e., *approval, liability and safety, personnel, site development and student development*)

The single training method of professional development predicted participants were more likely to engage in increased planning practices within the planning theme of *approval*, than any other training or combination of training method combined. The combination of the following three trainings: (1) undergraduate coursework, (2) graduate coursework, and (3) district training, predicted participants were more likely to engage in increased planning practices within the area of *liability and safety*. The single training method of professional development predicted participants were more likely to engage in increased planning practices within the area of *personnel*, than any other training method or combination of training methods combined. The combination of the following trainings: (1) professional development, and (2) district training, predicted participants were more likely to engage in increased planning practices within the area of *site development*. Finally, the combination of the following three trainings: (1) undergraduate coursework, (2) professional development, and (3) practicum/internship, predicted participants were more likely to engage in increased planning practices within the area of *student development* than any other combination of training methods.

Overall, the training opportunity of professional development predicted increased planning practices across four of the five planning themes for CBVI. These results suggest the impact of professional development on an educator, therefore impacting the quality of services students receive. Professional development builds on the knowledge and philosophical framework a teacher possesses that influence his or her planning practices Professional

development can be tailored to meet individual practitioners' needs, address changes in protocol, and train teachers on a specific new skill. As evidenced by this study, increased professional development on CBVI can increase the extent to which teachers plan for CBVI.

**Research Question Four- *Facilitators and barriers to implementing community-based vocational instruction***

Research Question Four was intended to identify barriers and facilitators to implementing CBVI. The researcher included an open-ended question in the survey to examine advice on how to implement a meaningful CBVI program. The researcher analyzed the responses from 91 current practitioners. The advice offered by current practitioners was intended to provide guidance to those who wish to implement CBVI to students with disabilities. The responses were sorted according to barriers experienced while implementing CBVI and facilitators (Kim & Dymond, 2010) to help establish a successful and meaningful CBVI program for students with disabilities. The open-ended responses recorded from survey participants regarding the barriers and facilitators of CBVI may further explain why creating meaningful jobsites for students with disabilities is difficult for practitioners.

The five most cited barriers to implementing CBVI included: (1) having adequate personnel, (2) lack of available resources, (3) access to jobsites, (4) adequate time for planning, and (5) transportation. Results from this study confirmed barriers reported from previous research (Griegotrog, 2015; Kim & Dymond, 2010; and Wehman, 2006). Further studies that examine how to work through barriers are needed to offer guidance to teachers. The most frequently cited barrier to implementing a successful CBVI program reported in this study was having adequate personnel. However, less emphasis was placed in the area of personnel when examining the extent to which teachers planned prior to implementing CBVI. Consequently, because less emphasis was placed on planning for adequate personnel prior to implementing

CBVI, teachers may have experienced difficulties with supervision and the means to explicitly teach job skills one-on-one during community job sites. Knowing that a lack of adequate personnel is a barrier to a successful CBVI program can help practitioners better plan when organizing this job preparation program. By training paraprofessionals and other support personnel prior to implementing CBVI, staff can explicitly teach job skills to students with disabilities in community settings. Research supports the findings regarding the necessity of adequate personnel when implementing employment preparation programs (Beakley, Yoder & West, 2003; Browder et al., 2014; Test, Aspel & Everson, 2006).

Survey participants reported difficulty establishing job sites and securing transportation to and from jobsites, which are vital to implementing CBVI with efficacy (Kim & Dymond, 2010). In order to have positive post-school employment outcomes for students with disabilities, adequate participation in job sites is needed. Exposing students to multiple job sites provides increased opportunities to develop new job skills.

The five most cited facilitators to implementing CBVI included: (1) gaining administrative approval, (2) developing a contingency plan for when temporary factors prevent participating in a job site, (3) training personnel, (4) developing appropriate job sites, and (5) assessing student needs, preferences, and interests. One of the most frequently cited facilitators to implementing a successful CBVI program was assessing individual student's needs, interest and preferences, which is a transition planning activity supported by research (Kohler, 1996) and mandated by federal law (IDEA, 2004). When examining the extent to which special education teachers plan prior to implementing CBVI, the greatest emphasis of planning found in this study was in the area of student development. The raw data and an exhaustive list of the barriers and facilitators reported by the 91 survey participants are available in Appendix C. According to Kim

and Dymond (2010), teachers' beliefs about teaching vocational skills in the community can impact the extent to which teachers engage in CBVI. Therefore, considering barriers and facilitators to CBVI can help teachers better plan prior to implementing community experiences for students with disabilities.

### **Limitations of the Study**

There are several limitations to consider when reviewing this study. First, the small sample size ( $n = 91$ ) should be considered when interpreting these results. According to research, disseminating an electronic survey should have resulted in a 25%-35% response rate; however, this study yielded a 9.26% response rate (Cook, Heath, & Thompson, 2000). As a result of the low online response rate, the additional data collection method using a convenience sample at a statewide transition conference was used. Additionally, most of the participants in this study were recruited from a conference where professional development on transition practices was occurring. Furthermore, the results from this study do not provide comprehensive representation of the targeted population because an unknown portion of this sample was systematically excluded due to (1) limitations on making direct contact with potential participants and (2) utilizing a convenience sample. Increased participation would have strengthened the study's reliability. A second limitation to consider with the sample size is that the participants of this study were from one geographic location (i.e., one state, Alabama).

Next, the frequency of participants across groups in this study is not evenly distributed; particularly with respect to type of caseloads special education teachers serve and of the number of teachers who were and were not trained in implementing CBVI. Due to the small sample size in each group, the validity of the differences found between the groups may limit the extent to which results can be considered reliable. Additionally, the years of teaching experience was not

considered when analyzing the extent to which teachers plan for community-based vocational instruction, as well as the impact each type of training method had on the planning practiced by participants. Other factors that may have influenced the results of this study include: (1) availability of educational resources, (2) administrative support, (3) other personnel who may be involved in the process of planning for CBVI (e.g., a transition coordinator), and (4) geographic location within the state (i.e., urban school district or rural school district).

### **Implications for Future Research**

According to legislation, (IDEA, 2004; WIOA 2014; and ECSA, 2015) implementing evidence-based practices should be the standard when planning for teaching school-aged students. Additionally, students with disabilities should engage in community experiences and, when appropriate, learn transferable job skills (IDEA, 2004). Future researchers should seek to expand and replicate the findings from this study. Replicating this study increases the generalizability of the results and offers assurance that the results were reliable and valid. Based on the variables investigated in this study, greater comparisons between participants' responses could take place through implementing a random stratified sample across multiple geographic regions as well as between respondents, based on the variables investigated in this study.

Prior to implementing this study, the researcher attempted to locate data on the extent to which special education teachers were planning prior to implementing community-based vocational instruction (CBVI). While three studies examining components of CBVI were located, none attempted to evaluate the planning process or steps practiced by special education teachers prior to implementation. Additionally, it is important to note that limited research exists on how the characteristics of students and teachers affect CBVI. This study on the preparation steps special education teachers practice prior to implementing CBVI serves as baseline data for

future studies that attempt to evaluate the components of this type of employment preparation program. Additionally, this study serves as a catalyst for evaluating the effectiveness of the CBVI program as a whole.

Future research could seek to determine if the extent to which a teacher is trained and the number of years of teaching experience have an impact on planning for meaningful community experiences for students with disabilities. Additionally, further research should seek to investigate locations where CBVI programs have been established and if they were maintained. Also, research on what variables impact the sustainability of a CBVI program could be evaluated.

Additional research should also further investigate solutions to the barriers that exist in various geographic locations and those experienced by practitioners as they implement CBVI. Further research is needed to better identify barriers and facilitators of CBVI so that training on how to address barriers and practice facilitators specific to certain geographic locations can take place, if indeed, there are differences per geographic locations.

Additionally, researchers can attempt to increase the response rate to better generalize the results from studies on CBVI. Lastly, other research should seek to evaluate the impact CBVI has on the development of individual students as well as the extent to which a student develops after participating in CBVI. Longitudinal studies can be implemented to examine the long-term impact CBVI has on students with disabilities once they transition from high school to post-school employment opportunities.

### **Conclusion**

This study serves as an initial analysis of the planning steps practiced across 29% of Alabama's school districts ( $n = 40$ ) prior to implementing CBVI with students with disabilities.

When interpreting the results from this study, it is important to note that the results cannot be generalized to larger populations, due to the nature of the convenience sample and low response rate. Continued research in the area of evidence-based practices and community-based vocational instruction is needed in order to increase the likelihood of students with disabilities transitioning from school to post-school employment opportunities successfully.

As shown through results of this study, participants in this study are implementing the evidence-based practice, community-based vocational instruction (CBVI) with students with disabilities. To effectively implement CBVI, planning must occur (Beakley, Yoder, & West, 2003). This study focused on the planning components of CBVI. The results of this study indicated that teachers are planning prior to implementing CBVI. Furthermore, the majority of teachers reported that they have also been trained on implementing CBVI as an evidence-based employment preparation practice for students with disabilities. The researcher found that training in the form of graduate coursework, professional development, district training, and individual research was a predictor for increased planning prior to implementing CBVI. Additionally, results found that those participating in two or more training methods on CBVI, prior to planning and implementing CBVI, planned at a higher degree than those who participated in less than two training methods on CBVI. In conclusion, while it is encouraging to see that teachers are being trained, further training opportunities for special education teachers need to take place to improve the quality of services for students with disabilities to help better prepare them for employment after exiting high school. Isaac Asimov stated that “life is pleasant and death is peaceful. It is the transitions that are troublesome.” However, success can be best defined as when preparation and opportunity meet. The transition from school to post-school employment can become less of a troublesome event for students with disabilities when increased job

preparation programs, like CBVI, are implemented prior to students exiting high school, so that when students are met with opportunities for employment, they are prepared; therefore, increasing students' likelihood of successfully transitioning from school to employment.

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## **APPENDIX A**

### **Survey**

An Evaluation of the Steps Practiced Before Implementing Community-Based Vocational Instruction

## Informed Consent



(NOTE: DO NOT AGREE TO PARTICIPATE UNLESS IRB APPROVAL INFORMATION WITH CURRENT DATES HAS BEEN ADDED TO THIS DOCUMENT.)

### INFORMATION LETTER

For a research study entitled:

**“An Evaluation of the Components Practiced Before the Implementation of Community-based Vocational Instruction by High School Teachers of Students with Disabilities in Alabama”**

**You are invited to participate in a research study** to investigate your experiences in planning for the implementation of community-based vocational instruction (CBVI) to students with disabilities. The data gained from the research will assist special education high school CBVI preparation programs in improving employment outcomes for students with disabilities. The study is being conducted by Betty Schiffer, a graduate student, under the direction of Dr. Karen Rabren, Chair, Professor, in the Auburn University Department of Special Education, Rehabilitation, and Counseling. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a teacher of high school students who have disabilities, work in a school district in Alabama, and you are age 19 or older.

**What will be involved if you participate?** Your participation is completely voluntary. If you decide to

participate in this research study, you will be asked to complete an anonymous online survey regarding the extent to which you plan prior to the implementation of CBVI to students with disabilities that you teach. Your total time commitment will be approximately fifteen minutes or less.

**Are there any risks or discomforts?** There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts associated with participation in this study.

**Are there any benefits to yourself or others?** If you participate in this study, you will have the opportunity to access survey results in the form of written reports and/or conference presentations. The study's findings will be compared and contrasted to the evidence-based best practices in empirical literature on the components teachers are suggested to complete prior to the implementation of CBVI to students with disabilities. The findings should assist interested teachers and other special education professionals in evaluating or improving their professional practices concerning CBVI for their students in order to improve students' post-school employment outcomes. We/I cannot promise you that you will receive any or all of the benefits described. Benefits to others may include increased knowledge regarding efforts currently being practiced in the state to prepare students with disabilities for employment after high school.

**Will you receive compensation for participating?** No. However the researcher is offering to conduct a presentation or training on the implementation of CBVI upon request at the conclusion of this research study.

**Are there any costs?** There are no costs involved in participation in this study.

**If you change your mind about participating,** You can withdraw at any time by closing your Internet browser window. Survey responses will be collected anonymously. Therefore, once you've submitted the survey responses, they cannot be withdrawn since they will be unidentifiable. Your decision about whether or not to participate or to stop participating will not jeopardize your future relations with Auburn University or the Department of Special Education, Rehabilitation, and Counseling.

**Any data obtained in connection with this study will remain anonymous.** We will protect your privacy and the data you provide by using online survey software with high levels of privacy standards. Information collected through your participation may be used to fulfill an educational requirement, published in a professional journal, and/or presented at a professional conference.

**If you have questions about this study,** please contact Betty Schiffer at [bjs0017@auburn.edu](mailto:bjs0017@auburn.edu) or Dr. Karen Rabren at [rabreks@auburn.edu](mailto:rabreks@auburn.edu).

**If you have questions about your rights as a research participant,** you may contact the Auburn

University Office of Human Subjects Research or the Institutional Review Board by phone (334) 844-5966 or e-mail at [IRBChair@auburn.edu](mailto:IRBChair@auburn.edu).

HAVING READ THE INFORMATION ABOVE, YOU MUST DECIDE IF YOU WANT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS RESEARCH PROJECT. IF YOU DECIDE TO PARTICIPATE, PLEASE CLICK ON THE LINK BELOW. YOU MAY PRINT A COPY OF THIS LETTER TO KEEP.

Betty Schiffer      01/03/2017

Principal Investigator

Karen Rabren      01/03/2017

Co-Investigator      Date

The Auburn University Institutional Review Board has approved this document for use from **February 20, 2017** to **January 02, 2018**. Protocol #**16-459 EP 1701**.

Clicking on the "agree" button below indicates that: (1) you have read the above information, (2) you voluntarily agree to participate, and (3) you are at least 19 years of age.

- Agree- Proceed to Survey  
 Disagree- Click then exit browser

## Definitions

For the purpose of this survey, the following definition should be considered.

**Community-based vocational instruction (CBVI)** is defined as: Instruction "provided in integrated community settings" (Kim & Dymond, 2010, pp. 314). CBVI occurs when students with disabilities are taught job skills in environments where the specific targeted job skill would be naturally occurring. Community-based vocational instruction consists of paid and non-paid work experiences such as: job shadowing, volunteering, internships, and apprenticeships (Test et al., 2006; Kim & Dymond, 2010)

## Section A: Demographics

Have you implemented CBVI within the past year, plan to implement CBVI within the next year, or are you currently implementing CBVI to students with disabilities?

- Yes
- No

Please answer the following questions regarding your demographics.

#### Gender

- Male
- Female
- Other

#### Race

- African American
- Asian
- Caucasian
- Native American
- Pacific Islander
- Other

#### Ethnicity

- Hispanic
- Non-hispanic

### Highest Level of Education Received

- BS in Education
- BA in Education
- MEd
- MS
- EDS
- PhD
- Other

Select all that apply: Have you received any training or preparation that addressed implementing CBVI? (You can select multiple responses by holding the "control" button or "command" button-(Mac) while you select the responses that apply to you)

Undergraduate Course(s)  
Graduate Course(s)  
Professional Development  
Webinar  
Conference Presentation  
Practicum or Internship  
District Training  
Individual Research

What title best describes your role as a special education teacher?

- Resource Teacher
- Self-Contained Teacher/Students with Significant Disabilities
- Co-Teacher

Which Alabama High School Diploma pathway best describes the majority of students

currently on your case load? Majority means 51% or more of your students are on the selected pathway.

- Alternate Achievement Standards Pathway
- Essential Skills Pathway
- General Education Pathway

How long have you been teaching high school students with disabilities?

How many students with disabilities are on your caseload?

Does your high school implement CBVI to students with significant disabilities?

- Yes
- No

### Section B: Reflect

The following questions request that you reflect on activities completed prior to engaging in community-based vocational instruction. Please be open and honest by describing to what extent you planned for CBVI to take place. (5) Almost always (4) Frequently (3) Occasionally (2) Rarely or (1) Almost Never.

Reflect on the practices completed prior to implementing a new CBVI job site.

	Almost Never (1)	Rarely (2)	Occasionally (3)	Frequently (4)	Almost Always (5)
Seek board approval	<input type="radio"/>				
Verify students have health insurance coverage	<input type="radio"/>				
Train peer assistants without disabilities to help students with disabilities	<input type="radio"/>				
Conduct a labor market analysis	<input type="radio"/>				
Conduct vocational assessments	<input type="radio"/>				
Seek principal approval	<input type="radio"/>				
Develop a safety plan	<input type="radio"/>				
Collaborate with a job coach	<input type="radio"/>				
Establish professional relationships with job site supervisors	<input type="radio"/>				
Develop appropriate IEP goals	<input type="radio"/>				
Seek approval for transportation	<input type="radio"/>				
Develop an evacuation plan	<input type="radio"/>				
Seek additional staff support	<input type="radio"/>				
Conduct site visits	<input type="radio"/>				
Include CBVI as a special education	<input type="radio"/>				

## service

Seek approval for funding	<input type="radio"/>				
Seek additional teacher unit(s)	<input type="radio"/>				
Develop an emergency notebook	<input type="radio"/>				
Secure a jobsite agreement	<input type="radio"/>				
Implement student interest surveys to match student to a job site	<input type="radio"/>				
Seek approval from parents/guardians	<input type="radio"/>				
Develop a contingency plan for inclement weather	<input type="radio"/>				
Train paraprofessional(s)	<input type="radio"/>				
Develop a task analysis in collaboration with the job site supervisor	<input type="radio"/>				
Align job placement with individual post-school goals	<input type="radio"/>				
Seek approval from a community job site	<input type="radio"/>				
Collaborate with the school nurse(s)	<input type="radio"/>				
Conduct an orientation with the job site supervisor	<input type="radio"/>				
Teach pre-skills	<input type="radio"/>				

needed for a site

### Section G: Preparing for CBVI

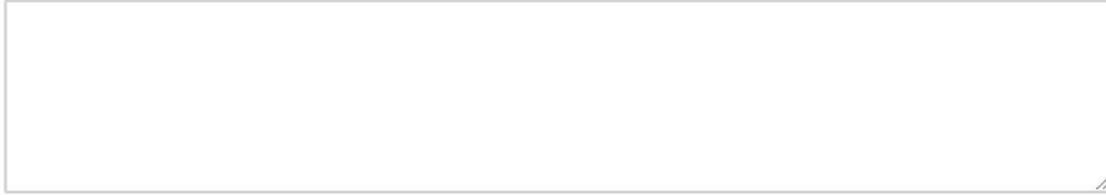
To what extent do you agree or disagree the following are necessary preparation steps needed to implement CBVI?

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Gaining approval	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Planning for safety	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Securing personnel	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Developing the job site	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Developing the student for participation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Open-Ended Responses

The following questions will give you the opportunity to provide additional information regarding your personal experiences with CBVI. Please be open and honest when you provide feedback.

What advice would you share with teachers preparing for CBVI based on your experiences? (e.g., barriers to CBVI and facilitators to CBVI)?



## Final Questions

How likely are you to participate in training or professional development on implementing CBVI?

- Extremely likely
- Somewhat likely
- Neither likely nor unlikely
- Somewhat unlikely
- Extremely unlikely

Select all of the training options you would be interested in completing to better/best implement CBVI to students with disabilities. (You can select multiple responses by holding the "control" button or "command" (Mac) button while you select the responses that apply to you)

State directed professional development  
District directed professional development  
Webinar  
Attend a presentation at a conference  
Attend a workshop  
On-site training

Please specify your local education agency (LEA= school district).

If you have any questions or concerns with this survey, please contact Betty Schiffer at [bjs0017@auburn.edu](mailto:bjs0017@auburn.edu)

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**APPENDIX B**

**Interrater Reliability Form**

## Expert Transition Panel Suggestions

**Directions:** Review the survey link distributed to you through email. As you take the survey entitled *An Evaluation of the Components Practiced Prior to Implementing Community-Based Vocational Instruction*, reflect on what the question is asking. Based on your expert opinion, in the chart below rate each question as either a “1” or a “2.” The number “1” represents that you, the expert reviewer, recommend that the survey item remain an item in the survey. The number “2” represents that you, the expert reviewer, recommend that the survey item should be removed from the survey. Additionally, provide any comments you may wish for the researcher to consider in the comments section next to each survey item number.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Item # or Description	Expert Reviewer Rating. Enter a “1” to keep the item or a “2” to eliminate the item.	Comments
Definition of CBVI.		
Have you implemented CBVI within the past year, plan to implement CBVI in the next year, or are you currently implementing CBVI to students with disabilities?		
Gender		
Race		
Ethnicity		
Highest level of education.		
Select all that apply: Have you received any training or preparation that addressed implementing CBVI?		
Which title best describes your roles as a special education teacher?		
Which Alabama High School Diploma pathway best describes the majority of students currently on your caseload? Majority means 50% or more of your students are on the selected pathway.		
How long have you been teaching high school students with disabilities?		

How many students are on your caseload?		
Does your high school implement CBVI to students with significant disabilities?		
Seek board approval?		
Verify students have health insurance coverage?		
Train peer assistants without disabilities to help students with disabilities?		
Conduct a labor market analysis?		
Conduct vocational assessments?		
Seek principal approval?		
Develop a safety plan?		
Collaborate with a job coach?		
Establish professional relationships with job site supervisors?		
Develop appropriate IEP goals?		
Seek approval for transportation?		
Develop an evacuation plan?		
Seek Additional staff support?		
Conduct site visits?		
Include CBVI as a special education service?		
Seek approval for funding?		
Develop an emergency notebook?		
Secure job site agreement?		
Implement student interest survey to match student to a job site?		
Seek approval from parents/guardians?		
Develop a contingency plan for inclement weather?		
Train paraprofessionals?		
Develop a task analysis in collaboration with the job site supervisor?		
Align job placement with individual post-school goals?		
Seek approval from a community job site?		
Collaborate with the school nurse(s)?		
Conduct an orientation with the job site supervisor?		
Teach pre-skills needed for a site?		
To what extent do you agree or		

<p>disagree the following are necessary preparation steps needed to implement CBVI?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Gaining approval?</li> <li>2. Planning for safety?</li> <li>3. Securing personnel?</li> <li>4. Developing the job site?</li> <li>5. Developing the student for participation?</li> </ol>		
<p>What advice would you share with teachers preparing for CBVI based on your experiences? (e.g., barriers to CBVI and facilitators to CBVI)?</p>		
<p>How likely are you to participate in training or professional development on implementing CBVI?</p>		
<p>Select all of the training options you would be interested in completing to better/best implement CBVI to students with disabilities?</p>		
<p>Please specify your local education agency (LEA= school district)</p>		

## **APPENDIX C**

### **Open-Ended Responses**

## Raw Open-Ended Data Responses

- 1 CBVI is a job for all involved.
- 2 Planning and preparation are just as important to successful work placement as they are to successful instructional outcomes.
- 3 Consistency in attendance, instructions, evaluation, and procedures are important for students entering the world of work instruction.
- 4 I believe that it is a great service that we can provide to our students!
- 5 I think that it can be challenging in many different ways, but the reward is far greater than the small challenges it presents itself with.
- 6 Finding work sites that are appropriate for the kids is very important and can be challenging if you do not live in a big city.
- 7 Train all adults involved in CBVI.
- 8 Communication is key.
- 9 Make sure each adult knows what is expected of them and what is going on while off campus.
- 10 Make sure one on one para's know what is expected of their student.
- 11 If all leadership is on the same page the instruction will run more smoothly.
- 12 Come up with emergency plans.
- 13 Try and think of every case scenario because it is bound for something to happen or go wrong while you are working.
- 14 Review the peer reviewed research that supports community-based work training.
- 15 Exceptional education students do not generalize very well from school to the community.
- 16 Exceptional education students excel when training occurs in a hands on community setting.
- 17 Find something that interests the students and that will create an intrinsic motivation.
- 18 Our biggest barrier to CBI is our location.
- 19 We are in a rural area that limits our ability to access a variety of job sites.
- 20 This coupled with our funding being at a minimum does make it difficult to access the amount and variety of CBVI opportunities found elsewhere.
- 21 Preparing students (specifically Essential Skills students) with the purpose behind CBVI.
- 22 Students need to understand they will not be paid, but they will be gaining experience that is crucial to their future.
- 23 We have very limited funds and transportation has been a big issues with CBVI
- 24 talk with others who have experience and do not be afraid or hesitant to ask questions.
- 25 Ensure that the job sites are relevant to the student receiving services.
- 26 Our school has to plan CBVI as a 'Field Trip'.
- 27 This is often time consuming and requires extra time and effort from the teacher, principal, book keeper, and director of transportation.
- 28 Finances has also been a barrier, especially when it comes to board approval.
- 29 Communicate with the site before taking students.
- 30 be over prepared
- 31 plan
- 32 The greatest barriers are transportation and job sties.

- 33 Resources and knowledge
- 34 Make sure that you assess the needs and wants of your students
- 35 Dig deeper to match students with job that will prepare the for post school outcomes.
- 36 Develop job sites in the community in a variety of settings and rotate those experiences every semester to develop a variety of skills.
- 37 Meet with job site supervisors to explain needs/abilities of all students.
- 38 Give clear expectations to students before beginning experience.
- 39 make an IMPACT to our student's lives
- 40 Keep asking and pressing the importance of CBI!!
- 41 train all paraprofessionals and job site supervisors ahead of time -have clear and concise expectations -expect for extra planning time due to logistics
- 42 be proactive in training all staff and job site supervisors in the expectations at each job site -It takes a a lot of hard work and time facilitating relationships with the job site -It takes a lot of planning and logistics
- 43 Have everything lined up before you tell the students you are going on the site.
- 44 Be sure you have enough paras to help with students.
- 45 Get students engaged by letting them be hands on and training them about the job they are going to do.
- 46 Match students interest with their ability level and interests.
- 47 Make sure they are aware of what their expectations are and that they are prepared (no surprises).
- 48 Make sure that students are participating in a job that the student has interest in, even if just a little.
- 49 Be open to a variety of job opportunities.
- 50 Utilize your community and make connections outside the classroom that could benefit your students in the future.
- 51 Have additional resources and staff
- 52 Try to get parents involved as much as possible.
- 53 We try to get as many students we have into the community working.
- 54 The job skills available are basic and not many store owners/employers are willing to give our behaviorally challenged students a chance.
- 55 Regardless of if you have a job site lined up, always look to prepare you students fro transition.
- 56 I had a hard time answering a few questions, because we have always provided step-by-step instructions and vocational skill lessons even without a job site they were specifically working towards.
- 57 Always believe your kids can do more than they believe they can.
- 58 I primarily work with individuals with a diagnosis of autism and other intellectual disabilities.
- 59 Due to severe behaviors exhibited by our students, it can be difficult to know how to prepare and facilitate CBVI with this specific populations.
- 60 There are not a lot of resources for Residential providers looking for job placements for individuals that meet the necessary skill set to hold a job.

- 61 I have many students that ask about acquiring a job over the summer and additional resources would be helpful in preparing them for the work force.
- 62 Relationships are so important to plan for CBVI.
- 63 Not only relationships with the staff at the job sites that you plan to use, but also relationships with the administration at your school and the school staff.
- 64 You should promote what you are doing and the successes you are having to staff at your school.
- 65 Administration should not have to ask what are you doing or why is this important?
- 66 Sell your CBVI Program to your school staff, your parents and your community.
- 67 Developing responses to behavior problems that do not hinder employment or training.
- 68 Having alternate plans for funding or transportation barriers would be extremely helpful.
- 69 Also, having students complete interest inventories helps to find potential job sites.
- 70 I would like to get advice on CBVI.
- 71 Seek approval from the administrators.
- 72 Make sure the job coach is willing to assist with the students and you are not doing this alone.
- 73 Plan & Plan for anything
- 74 just to follow up and don't stop until you have accomplished the goal.
- 75 Great opportunity, participate as much as possible!
- 76 Transportation and scheduling are usually the hardest things to work out.
- 77 It is hard to pull students out of general education classes that are already struggling to participate and then get work made up.
- 78 That you need to make sure that the students' interests are taken into account.
- 79 The process takes lots of time. Be patient and stick with the program.
- 80 We are in the process of working towards better community based work hour experiences.
- 81 Usually only personel enough to cover 1 off-campus site.
- 82 Arranged by Central Office...we are told where to go and who we will work with;
- 83 Seniors have priority with juniors filling spots as alternates, other requirements (food handling cards, etc
- 84 As stated earlier, I do not plan CBVI services. THIS is pretty much left to our school job coach.
- 85 Make sure the job site is conducive for learning as far as ensuring each student has an opportunity to participate on the job site.
- 86 Go to the job sites ahead of time and meet/collaborate with the business people who are over the job site. This makes a world of difference!
- 87 Help students understand soft skills for work prior to going.
- 88 Explain the difference between a filed trip and work experience prior to going.
- 89 Have enough staff to have eyes on each participant at all times.
- 90 Make sure that teachers of courses missed during CBVI understand the importance of this training prior to missed class time.
- 91 try to development as many placements as possible provide students with varied placements evaluate often don't force a placement

- 92 This is the first year that I've worked with the self contained high school.
- 93 I need more information on implementing the program.
- 94 Strong administrative and community support and funding are essential for CBVI.
- 95 Additionally, training and collaboration with others who have been involved would be very beneficial (to learn what works, what doesn't work, how to's, etc.)
- 96 Need administrative support, funding, and cooperation with the community.
- 97 In the rural area where I teach transportation is a major issue.
- 98 Have a couple weeks training in your school before you enter a job site. (communication skills, eye to eye contact, firm hand shakes, dress code, politeness, posture, good manners, hygiene, ect.....)
- 99 My advice is to be creative and think "outside" of the box.
- 100 job sites can be a challenging to find especially in rural areas.
- 101 Trying to work out how to get students to interest related sites is also challenging.
- 102 barriers are: lack of varied job shadowing/business opportunities; school and school system is in a rural community; lack of a designated person to contact local businesses and maintaining consistent contacts; scheduling time from "academic" classes to pursue vocational training; more focus should be on job training/living skills rather than traditional academics; transportation to and from job site; lack of funds and resources to implement such a program that can be effective in a way that addresses transition goals and actual "job-training"; essential track students may not qualify for traditional career technical training - a program should be designed just for them.
- 103 talk to as many businesses as possible
- 104 Research job sites before setting one up for students.
- 105 Make sure they are appropriate for the work skills of the student.
- 106 Also, always outline clear expectations for students before beginning the work site.
- 107 I have limited experience with implementing CBVI.
- 108 We are from a small rural school and many of my students on my caseload already have part time jobs.
- 109 I need more training in this area to correctly implement it into our program.
- 110 We teach appropriate work related behavior but not specifically for a certain job.
- 111 Rural areas and lack of opportunities
- 112 Establish a back-up plan to account for staff absences to ensure that scheduled CBVI opportunities are consistent.
- 113 It is important to lay the foundation before diving in. Starting off small/ slowly is best when implementing CBVI. 114 Pre-planning and organization should be established on the educators side, as well as businesses, community members, etc. involved.
- 115 Once this is secure, then it is important to then begin working with the students and preparing them for the vocational experience!
- 116 I believe that it is very important to be organized when preparing for CBVI.
- 117 Knowing the skills that the students will be doing on the job site are important to teach prior to attending the job site.
- 118 I have also found that it is crucial for the teachers to communicate constantly to ensure that everyone is where they need to be and attending to their work tasks.

**APPENDIX D**  
**IRB Approval Form**

**AUBURN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD for RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS  
RESEARCH PROTOCOL REVIEW FORM  
FULL BOARD or EXPEDITED**

For information or help contact THE OFFICE OF RESEARCH COMPLIANCE (ORC), 115 Ramsay Hall, Auburn University  
Phone: 334-844-5966 e-mail: IRBAdmin@auburn.edu Web Address: <http://www.auburn.edu/research/vpr/ohs/index.htm>

Revised 2.1.2014 Submit completed form to [IRBsubmit@auburn.edu](mailto:IRBsubmit@auburn.edu) or 115 Ramsay Hall, Auburn University 36849.

Form must be populated using Adobe Acrobat / Pro 9 or greater standalone program (do not fill out in browser). Hand written forms will not be accepted.

1. PROPOSED START DATE of STUDY: 12/15/2016

PROPOSED REVIEW CATEGORY (Check one):  FULL BOARD  EXPEDITED

SUBMISSION STATUS (Check one):  NEW  REVISIONS (to address IRB Review Comments)

2. PROJECT TITLE:

3. Betty Schiffer Doctoral Student SERC bjs0017@auburn.edu  
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR TITLE DEPT AU E-MAIL  
555 North Dean Rd. Auburn, AL 36830 334-303-3307 bjs0017@auburn.edu  
MAILING ADDRESS PHONE ALTERNATE E-MAIL

4. FUNDING SUPPORT:  N/A  Internal  External Agency: \_\_\_\_\_  Pending  Received

For federal funding, list agency and grant number (if available). \_\_\_\_\_

5a. List any contractors, sub-contractors, other entities associated with this project:

b. List any other IRBs associated with this project (including Reviewed, Deferred, Determination, etc.):

**PROTOCOL PACKET CHECKLIST**

All protocols must include the following items:

- Research Protocol Review Form (All signatures included and all sections completed)  
(Examples of appended documents are found on the OHSR website: <http://www.auburn.edu/research/vpr/ohs/sample.htm>)
- CITI Training Certificates for all Key Personnel.
- Consent Form or Information Letter and any Releases (audio, video or photo) that the participant will sign.
- Appendix A, "Reference List"
- Appendix B if e-mails, flyers, advertisements, generalized announcements or scripts, etc., are used to recruit participants.
- Appendix C if data collection sheets, surveys, tests, other recording instruments, interview scripts, etc. will be used for data collection. Be sure to attach them in the order in which they are listed in # 13c.
- Appendix D if you will be using a debriefing form or include emergency plans/procedures and medical referral lists (A referral list may be attached to the consent document).
- Appendix E if research is being conducted at sites other than Auburn University or in cooperation with other entities. A permission letter from the site / program director must be included indicating their cooperation or involvement in the project.  
NOTE: If the proposed research is a multi-site project, involving investigators or participants at other academic institutions, hospitals or private research organizations, a letter of IRB approval from each entity is required prior to initiating the project.
- Appendix F - Written evidence of acceptance by the host country if research is conducted outside the United States.

**FOR ORC OFFICE USE ONLY**

DATE RECEIVED IN ORC: \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_ PROTO  
DATE OF IRB REVIEW: \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_ APPRO  
DATE OF IRB APPROVAL: \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_ INTERV  
COMMENTS:

The Auburn University Institutional  
Review Board has approved this  
Document for use from  
01/03/2017 to 01/02/2018  
Protocol # 16-459 EP 1701

7. PROJECT ASSURANCES

**A. PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR'S ASSURANCES**

1. I certify that all information provided in this application is complete and correct.
2. I understand that, as Principal Investigator, I have ultimate responsibility for the conduct of this study, the ethical performance of this project, the protection of the rights and welfare of human subjects, and strict adherence to any stipulations imposed by the Auburn University IRB.
3. I certify that all individuals involved with the conduct of this project are qualified to carry out their specified roles and responsibilities and are in compliance with Auburn University policies regarding the collection and analysis of the research data.
4. I agree to comply with all Auburn policies and procedures, as well as with all applicable federal, state, and local laws regarding the protection of human subjects, including, but not limited to the following:
  - a. Conducting the project by qualified personnel according to the approved protocol
  - b. Implementing no changes in the approved protocol or consent form without prior approval from the Office of Research Compliance
  - c. Obtaining the legally effective informed consent from each participant or their legally responsible representative prior to their participation in this project using only the currently approved, stamped consent form
  - d. Promptly reporting significant adverse events and/or effects to the Office of Research Compliance in writing within 5 working days of the occurrence.
5. If I will be unavailable to direct this research personally, I will arrange for a co-investigator to assume direct responsibility in my absence. This person has been named as co-investigator in this application, or I will advise ORC, by letter, in advance of such arrangements.
6. I agree to conduct this study only during the period approved by the Auburn University IRB.
7. I will prepare and submit a renewal request and supply all supporting documents to the Office of Research Compliance before the approval period has expired if it is necessary to continue the research project beyond the time period approved by the Auburn University IRB.
8. I will prepare and submit a final report upon completion of this research project.

My signature indicates that I have read, understand and agree to conduct this research project in accordance with the assurances listed above.

Betty Schiffer

Printed name of Principal Investigator

Betty Schiffer  
Principal Investigator's Signature

11-16-16  
Date

**B. FACULTY ADVISOR/SPONSOR'S ASSURANCES**

1. I have read the protocol submitted for this project for content, clarity, and methodology.
2. By my signature as faculty advisor/sponsor on this research application, I certify that the student or guest investigator is knowledgeable about the regulations and policies governing research with human subjects and has sufficient training and experience to conduct this particular study in accord with the approved protocol.
3. I agree to meet with the investigator on a regular basis to monitor study progress. Should problems arise during the course of the study, I agree to be available, personally, to supervise the investigator in solving them.
4. I assure that the investigator will promptly report significant incidents and/or adverse events and/or effects to the ORC in writing within 5 working days of the occurrence.
5. If I will be unavailable, I will arrange for an alternate faculty sponsor to assume responsibility during my absence, and I will advise the ORC by letter of such arrangements. If the investigator is unable to fulfill requirements for submission of renewals, modifications or the final report, I will assume that responsibility.

Karen Rabren

Printed name of Faculty Advisor / Sponsor

Karen Rabren  
Faculty Advisor's Signature

11-16-16  
Date

**C. DEPARTMENT HEAD'S ASSURANCE**

By my signature as department head, I certify that I will cooperate with the administration in the application and enforcement of all Auburn University policies and procedures, as well as all applicable federal, state, and local laws regarding the protection and ethical treatment of human participants by researchers in my department.

Jamie Carney

Printed name of Department Head

J. Carney  
Department Head's Signature

11/17/16  
Date

- 8. PROJECT OVERVIEW: Prepare an abstract that includes:**  
(350 word maximum, in language understandable to someone who is not familiar with your area of study):

- a) **A summary of relevant research findings leading to this research proposal:**  
(Cite sources; include a "Reference List" as Appendix A.)  
b) **A brief description of the methodology, including design, population, and variables of interest**

Post-school outcomes of students with disabilities continue to be a focus of special education literature (Carter, Trainor, & Austin, 2011; Certo, Luecking, Murphy, Brown, Courey, & Belanger, 2008; Test et al., 2009). Additionally, current legislation (i.e. No Child Left Behind, 2001; Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA), 2004; and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, 2014) calls for implementing evidence-based practices (EBP) to help students better succeed in life after high school. Evidence-based practices are proven to be effective by rigorous and systematic research and are substantiated by high quality research designs (Test et al., 2006). Both results from research conducted and federal mandates outlined in legislation, suggest the need for increasing post-school outcomes for students with disabilities to improve their lives. More specifically, increasing employment preparation programs for individuals with disabilities to improve their post-school outcomes (Blackorby & Wagener, 1996; Colley & Jamison, 1998; Luecking & Sabien, 2000). Special education transition services are required by IDEA, 2004 and mandate that special education services prepare the individual (ages 16-21) for a successful movement from school to post-school activities, which includes employment. Implementing employment preparation programs, such as community-based vocational instruction (CBVI) during community experiences, can be used to effectively prepare students for employment after high school (Kim & Dymond, 2012). In an effort to evaluate the employment preparation of community-based vocational instruction, the following research study was designed to methodically collect and analyze information about what Alabama special education teacher's efforts are in planning for community-based vocational instruction. Descriptive statistical analysis will be conducted, including means, frequencies, standard deviations, as well as analysis of variances (ANOVA), and any post hoc test that may arise to answer research questions that aim to improve services for students with disabilities. An original survey will be used (located in Appendix B) by the researcher to obtain data. Prior to dissemination of the survey to participants, an expert panel will review the survey and anonymously make suggestions about the content and edits needed for each survey item by using an interrater reliability form (attached). Once the survey is disseminated, anonymous quantitative and qualitative data on this topic will be obtained through closed-ended and Likert-scale type questions through the use of an online survey (developed by the researcher) that is secure and password protected. The researcher employed the software Qualtrics to build the survey. The researcher will also analyze qualitative data that is to be gathered from open-ended items on the survey through a thematic analysis. The researcher will conduct an exploratory factor analysis to test the internal consistency and validity of the survey used to examine the steps special education teachers are practicing prior to implementing CBVI.

- 9. PURPOSE.**  
a. **Clearly state the purpose of this project and all research questions, or aims.**

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the components being practiced by secondary special education teachers of students with disabilities before implementing CBVI. Specifically, to what extent are recommended components of CBVI being practiced before the implementation of the job preparation program? This study will report components of the following factors that are taking place before CBVI is implemented to students with disabilities: gaining approval; developing sites; planning for safety/liability; utilizing personnel; and student development. Research questions: (1) How do Alabama teachers of students with disabilities plan for CBVI before implementing the program? (2) To what degree would high school special education teachers of students with disabilities like to receive more training or instruction in the areas of: seeking approval for CBVI; preparing for safety associated with CBVI; preparing students to participate in CBVI; developing sites for CBVI; and arranging personnel for CBVI? (3) As measured through a thematic analysis, what recommendations or barriers do teachers currently implementing CBVI programs or have previously implemented CBVI programs suggest for teachers to consider before implementing CBVI? (4) Is there a significant difference in preparation practices between special education teachers who have and have not received training on implementing CBVI to students with disabilities. ■

- b. **How will the results of this project be used? (e.g., Presentation? Publication? Thesis? Dissertation?)**

Results from this study will be used to partially fulfill requirements for a dissertation. Results may also be used in a professional conference, executive summary, and publication in a professional journal.

10. **KEY PERSONNEL.** Describe responsibilities. Include information on research training or certifications related to this project. CITI is required. Be as specific as possible. (Include additional personnel in an attachment.) All key personnel must attach CITI certificates of completion.

Principle Investigator Betty Schiffer Title: Doctoral Student E-mail address bjs0017@auburn.edu  
 Dept / Affiliation: Special Education, Rehabilitation, and Counseling (SERC)

Roles / Responsibilities:

Ms. Schiffer will be responsible for carrying out all tasks related to the research methods of this study. Ms. Schiffer will recruit participants for participation in this research study. Ms. Schiffer will collect data, analyze data, and write-up the results from the study to meet requirements for a dissertation. Ms. Schiffer will also work to publish and present the findings from the study.

Individual: Dr. Karen Rabren Title: Professor E-mail address rabreks@auburn.edu  
 Dept / Affiliation: Special Education, Rehabilitation, and Counseling (SERC) and Auburn Transition Leadership Institute (ATLI)

Roles / Responsibilities:

Dr. Rabren serves as Ms. Schiffer's doctoral committee chair. Dr. Rabren will be responsible for overseeing this research study, providing feedback and guiding Ms. Schiffer.

Individual: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_  
 Dept / Affiliation: \_\_\_\_\_

Roles / Responsibilities:

Individual: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_  
 Dept / Affiliation: \_\_\_\_\_

Roles / Responsibilities:

Individual: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_  
 Dept / Affiliation: \_\_\_\_\_

Roles / Responsibilities:

Individual: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_  
 Dept / Affiliation: \_\_\_\_\_

Roles / Responsibilities:

11. **LOCATION OF RESEARCH.** List all locations where data collection will take place. (School systems, organizations, businesses, buildings and room numbers, servers for web surveys, etc.) Be as specific as possible. Attach permission letters in Appendix E. (See sample letters at <http://www.auburn.edu/research/vpr/ohs/sample.htm>)

The survey distributed is an electronic survey and will be distributed through a third party. Data collection will take place electronically across 137 school districts in Alabama. The researcher will contact special education coordinators, a third party, (contact information is public knowledge) and ask for participation in this survey.

12. PARTICIPANTS.

- a. Describe the participant population you have chosen for this project including inclusion or exclusion criteria for participant selection.

Check here if using existing data, describe the population from whom data was collected, & include the # of data files.

The participants for this study will include high school special education teachers of students with disabilities who teach in Alabama's public school systems. In order to participate in this study, special education teachers must teach students with disabilities and teach grades 9-12. If a special education teacher does not meet this criteria, they will not be recruited to participate. This population of teachers was chosen because these teachers should be aware of the importance of providing students with disabilities employment preparation programs. The researcher will attempt to survey all of the secondary special education teachers in Alabama who implement, have implemented in the past year, or plan to implement in the next year community-based vocational instruction (approximately 982 secondary special education teachers in Alabama who teach students aged 16-21) to students with disabilities (Alabama State Department of Education, 2016). Therefore, to ensure that only secondary teachers of students with disabilities will participate in the study, the researcher will contact special education coordinators so that an email can be forwarded to the correct teachers in each school district inviting teachers to participate. An initial interest survey will be completed to determine the exact number of teachers who are eligible to participate in this study.

- b. Describe, step-by-step, in layman's terms, all procedures you will use to recruit participants. Include in Appendix B a copy of all e-mails, flyers, advertisements, recruiting scripts, invitations, etc., that will be used to invite people to participate. (See sample documents at <http://www.auburn.edu/research/vpr/ohs/sample.htm>.)

Step 1: The researcher first will access each of the special education coordinators contact information from the Alabama State Department of Education (The contact information is public knowledge and located on the state department's website.) The principal investigator will first email the all of special education coordinators to request special education teachers participation in this study. Please see the attached email (Appendix B). Within the recruitment email, the researcher will include a link to a six question Qualtrics survey that seeks to learn demographic information regarding each school district as well as consent for their district to participate. Before disseminating the survey, the researcher will follow up with the school districts who have not responded to the first recruitment email by a telephone call. The researcher will follow a script (Appendix B) when speaking with a coordinator.

Step 2: If the special education coordinator consents to their district's participation, the researcher will email the coordinator a follow-up email. The email will include an information letter, instructions to copy content into an email and send to the appropriate teachers, and include a live link to the on-line anonymous survey. The follow up email and survey included in the email are attached.

- c. What is the minimum number of participants you need to validate the study? 100  
How many participants do you expect to recruit? 982  
Is there a limit on the number of participants you will include in the study?  No  Yes - the # is \_\_\_\_\_

- d. Describe the type, amount and method of compensation and/or incentives for participants.

(If no compensation will be given, check here: )

Select the type of compensation:  Monetary  Incentives  
 Raffle or Drawing Incentive (Include the chances of winning.)  
 Extra Credit (State the value)  
 Other

Description:

13. PROJECT DESIGN & METHODS. *Continued*

- c. List all data collection instruments used in this project, in the order they appear in Appendix C. (e.g., surveys and questionnaires in the format that will be presented to participants, educational tests, data collection sheets, interview questions, audio/video taping methods etc.)
1. Expert Panel Rating Form (attached in Appendix C)
  2. Qualtrics online survey to special education coordinators ( live link: [https://auburn.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV\\_0eKbDf17tlyQNkF](https://auburn.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_0eKbDf17tlyQNkF) ),(Attached in Appendix C)
  3. Qualtrics online survey for special education teacher (third party) to forward to special education teachers ( live link: [https://auburn.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV\\_5Bfk0xnpv73ECvb](https://auburn.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_5Bfk0xnpv73ECvb) ). (Attached in Appendix C)

- d. Data analysis: Explain how the data will be analyzed.

All data will remain anonymous and be reported in aggregate form to ensure that confidentiality is maintained. IBM's SPSS statistical software will be used to analyze the quantitative data obtained from the survey respondents. ATLAS.ti will be used to analyze the qualitative data obtained from open-ended survey responses. Furthermore, descriptive statistics, correlational, and analysis of variances will be conducted using IBM's SPSS statistical software. An exploratory factor analysis will also be used to test the internal consistency of the survey. ■

14. RISKS & DISCOMFORTS: List and describe all of the risks that participants might encounter in this research. *If you are using deception in this study, please justify the use of deception and be sure to attach a copy of the debriefing form you plan to use in Appendix D.* (Examples of possible risks are in section #6D on page 2)

There are no known risks.

15. **PRECAUTIONS.** Identify and describe all precautions you have taken to eliminate or reduce risks as listed in #14. If the participants can be classified as a "vulnerable" population, please describe additional safeguards that you will use to assure the ethical treatment of these individuals. Provide a copy of any emergency plans/procedures and medical referral lists in Appendix D. (Samples can be found online at <http://www.auburn.edu/research/vpr/ohs/sample.htm#precautions>)

The survey to be distributed is an anonymous survey that will be distributed through a third party.

If using the Internet or other electronic means to collect data, what confidentiality or security precautions are in place to protect (or not collect) identifiable data? Include protections used during both the collection and transfer of data.

This study will be using an electronic method to collect data. The researcher will be utilizing Qualtrics, and online survey software to solicit responses from survey participants. The following was obtained from [www.qualtrics.com](http://www.qualtrics.com): Qualtrics has SAS 70 certification and meets rigorous privacy standards imposed on health care by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). All Qualtrics accounts are protected by strong passwords and data is protected through real-time data replication. Only individuals with the password can access the data.

16. **BENEFITS.**

- a. List all realistic direct benefits participants can expect by participating in this specific study.  
(Do not include "compensation" listed in #12d.) Check here if there are no direct benefits to participants.

Participants of this study will benefit from the data that is reported regarding the preparation that takes place by special education teachers who implement community-based vocational instruction. Findings from this study will be reported and interested coordinators and special education teachers may access this information. The findings from this study will be compared to the recommendations by researchers outlined in literature on how to prepare before a practitioner implements community-based vocational instruction (CBVI) through statistical analysis. The findings will report the extent to which a district is preparing for the evidence-based practice of CBVI and serve as a baseline for where their program is functioning and where they need to improve in order to better prepare students with significant disabilities. Findings from this study should assist teachers and coordinators on how to improve their professional practices concerning CBVI in order to improve post-school employment outcomes for students with significant disabilities.

- b. List all realistic benefits for the general population that may be generated from this study.

The findings of this study will inform the general population on the efforts of high school special education teachers who are currently working to prepare students with significant disabilities for employment after high school. These findings will inform the general population on the extent to which special education teachers are planning and preparing community-based vocational instruction programs for students with significant disabilities. The outcomes of these student's effects the social and economic well being of individual counties and the state of Alabama collectively.

17. PROTECTION OF DATA.

a. Data are collected:

- Anonymously with no direct or indirect coding, link, or awareness of who participated in the study (Skip to e)
- Confidentially, but without a link of participant's data to any identifying information (collected as "confidential" but recorded and analyzed as "anonymous") (Skip to e)
- Confidentially with collection and protection of linkages to identifiable information

b. If data are collected with identifiers or as coded or linked to identifying information, describe the identifiers collected and how they are linked to the participant's data.

c. Justify your need to code participants' data or link the data with identifying information.

d. Describe how and where identifying data and/or code lists will be stored. (Building, room number?) Describe how the location where data is stored will be secured in your absence. For electronic data, describe security. If applicable, state specifically where any IRB-approved and participant-signed consent documents will be kept on campus for 3 years after the study ends.

e. Describe how and where the data will be stored (e.g., hard copy, audio cassette, electronic data, etc.), and how the location where data is stored is separated from identifying data and will be secured in your absence. For electronic data, describe security

The computer used to collect and store data is secure and password protected. Data will be stored electronically through Qualtrics which is also a secured program and is password protected. The data collected is anonymous. Qualtrics has SAS 70 certification and meets rigorous privacy standards imposed on health care by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPPA). All Qualtrics accounts are protected by strong passwords and data is protected through real-time data replication. Only individuals with the password can access the data.

f. Who will have access to participants' data?

*(The faculty advisor should have full access and be able to produce the data in the case of a federal or institutional audit.)*

Principal Investigator and faculty advisor/chair will review and analyze the anonymous data collected by participants.

g. When is the latest date that identifying information or links will be retained and how will that information or links be destroyed? (Check here if only anonymous data will be retained )

**AUBURN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD for RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS  
REQUEST for MODIFICATION**

For help, contact: **THE OFFICE OF RESEARCH COMPLIANCE (ORC)**, 115 Ramsay Hall, Auburn University  
Phone: 334-844-5966 e-mail: [IRBAdmin@auburn.edu](mailto:IRBAdmin@auburn.edu) Web Address: <http://www.auburn.edu/research/vpr/ohs>

**Revised 2.1.2014** Submit completed form to [IRBsubmit@auburn.edu](mailto:IRBsubmit@auburn.edu) or 115 Ramsay Hall, Auburn University 36849.

Form must be populated using Adobe Acrobat / Pro 9 or greater standalone program (do not fill out in browser). Hand written forms will not be accepted.

1. Protocol Number: #16-459 EP 1701
2. Current IRB Approval Dates: From: 01/03/2017 To: 01/02/2018
3. Project Title: "An Evaluation of the Steps Practiced by Secondary Special Education Teachers before Implementing Community-based Vocational Instruction"
4. 

<u>Betty Schiffer</u>	<u>Doc Student</u>	<u>SERC</u>	<u>334-303-3307</u>	<u>bjs0017@auburn.edu</u>
<b>Principal Investigator</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Department</b>	<b>Phone</b>	<b>AU E-Mail (primary)</b>
<i>Betty Schiffer</i>	<u>555 N. Dean Rd H6, Aub, AL 36830</u>		<u>334-844-5927</u>	<u>bjs0017@gmail.com</u>
<b>PI Signature</b>	<b>Mailing Address</b>	<b>Department</b>	<b>Phone</b>	<b>Alternate E-Mail</b>
<u>Karen Rabren</u>	<i>Karen Rabren</i>	<u>SERC</u>	<u>334-844-5927</u>	<u>rabreks@auburn.edu</u>
<b>Faculty Advisor</b>	<b>FA Signature</b>	<b>Department</b>	<b>Phone</b>	<b>AU E-Mail</b>
<b>Name of Current Department Head:</b>	<u>Dr. Jamie Carney</u>			<b>AU E-Mail:</b> <u>carnejs@auburn.edu</u>
5. Current External Funding Agency and Grant number: n/a
6. a. List any contractors, sub-contractors, other entities associated with this project:  
n/a
- b. List any other IRBs associated with this project: n/a
7. Nature of change in protocol: (Mark all that apply)
  - Change in Key Personnel ([attach](#) CITI forms for new personnel)
  - Change in Sites ([attach](#) permission forms for new sites)
  - Change in methods for data storage/protection or location of data/consent documents
  - Change in project purpose or questions
  - Change in population or recruitment ([attach](#) new or revised recruitment materials as needed)
  - Change in consent procedures ([attach](#) new or revised consent documents as needed)
  - Change in data collection methods or procedures ([attach](#) new data collection forms as needed)
  - Other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

FOR ORC OFFICE USE ONLY			
DATE RECEIVED IN ORC:	_____ by _____	MODIFICATION	<div style="border: 2px solid blue; padding: 10px; margin: 0 auto; width: 80%;"> <p>The Auburn University Institutional Review Board has approved this Document for use from <u>02/20/2017</u> to <u>01/02/2018</u> Protocol # <u>16-459 EP 1701</u></p> </div>
DATE OF IRB REVIEW:	_____ by _____	PROTOCOL	
DATE OF IRB APPROVAL:	_____ by _____	MODIFICATION INTERVAL	
COMMENTS:	_____		

**8. Briefly list (numbered or bulleted) the activities that have occurred up to this point, particularly those that involved participants.**

1. Researcher has emailed previously approved recruitment email to the 137 special education coordinators in the state of Alabama seeking their willingness for their respective districts to participate in the study.
2. As special education coordinators completed the approved 6-question demographic survey and selected "yes" to their district participating, the researcher responded to the coordinator with an approved email that instructs the coordinators to copy and paste an email to send to the appropriate teachers in their districts that includes a live survey link for teachers to take.

**9. For each item marked in Question #7, describe the requested changes to your research protocol, with an explanation and/or rationale for each. (Additional pages may be attached if needed to provide a complete response.)**

Recruitment: I am requesting that another method of recruiting special education teachers to participate in this research study be added to my original IRB approval. I am still executing the approved recruitment strategies. I am requesting this additional method to increase the number of possible participants for this study to potentially have a larger sample size. The changes that are requested are as follows: On March 6 and 7, 2017, the Auburn Transition Leadership Institute (ATLI) is hosting the 27th annual transition conference at the Auburn University Hotel and Dixon Conference Center. Attendees of this conference include secondary special education teachers from across the state of Alabama. I would like to set up a booth at this conference (with approval from Dr. Karen Rabren, Director of ATLI) that includes a flyer advertising the anonymous survey and seeking participants (attached). Participants will take the survey on site on one of six laptops that will have the approved survey with the approved information letter and IRB information located on the first page of the survey, pulled up on the screen of the laptop to complete the survey while attending this conference. The responses are recorded anonymously.

**10. Identify any changes in the anticipated risks and / or benefits to the participants.**

A change to an anticipated risk is that potential stress may be felt by the participant may feel while completing the survey at a conference rather than at home or in their classroom or that their responses may not be anonymous because they are taking the survey in a public. The results are anonymous.

**11. Identify any changes in the safeguards or precautions that will be used to address anticipated risks.**

A sign (attached) will be placed on the table to remind participants that their responses are anonymous and that no identifiable information will be associated with their responses to the online survey.

**12. Attach a copy of all "stamped" IRB-approved documents you are currently using. (information letters, consents, flyers, etc.)**

**APPENDIX E**

**Recruitment Poster**

# Job Preparation Program Planning for Students with Disabilities

What steps are you practicing prior to implementing the employment preparation program community-based vocational instruction?

I would appreciate a few minutes of your time to complete a brief online survey so I can learn more about the steps secondary special education teachers take when planning for CBVI.

**Thank you!**

**R E S O U R C E S  
A V A I L A B L E H E R E**

## **APPENDIX F**

### **Initial Emails**

## Initial Email

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Would you like to learn more about how to improve community experiences for students with disabilities? Continue reading to learn how **you** can help improve post-school outcomes for students with disabilities. My name is Betty Schiffer and I am a doctoral candidate in the Department of Special Education, Rehabilitation, and Counseling at Auburn University. I am writing to seek your participation in a statewide research study.

### Why should you participate?

- ***Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004* requires community experiences** for transition-age students with disabilities.
- Community-based vocational instruction ( ) is a means to meeting the expectation set forth by legislation.
- In Alabama, CBVI is referred to as community-based work training and is a requirement for two of the pathways (e.g., Essential Skills Pathway and Alternate Achievement Standards Pathway) that lead toward earning the Alabama High School Diploma.
- Research has proven that implementing high-quality CBVI programs to students with disabilities can improve their post-school outcomes in the area of employment.

### What is the study about?

- Statewide research study to evaluate CBVI programs across Alabama
- Improvement in the quality of community-based vocational instruction programs for students with disabilities
- Evaluation of the planning process teachers use to develop community-based vocational instruction programs for students with disabilities and training needs for teachers who implement CBVI
- Free **district executive summary** of CBVI program
- Free **statewide executive summary** of CBVI programs

### What is your role in the study?

- Complete an online 1 minute survey reporting demographics
- Forward an email (with information letter and link to a survey, provided by the researcher) to teachers to request participation
- Forward reminder emails to teachers to complete the survey (provided by the researcher)

The online survey should not cause participants any discomfort. Any identifiable information obtained through your teachers' participation will remain confidential. I am requesting you, the special education coordinator, to complete a preliminary 6-question survey to seek current demographic information regarding your district and your willingness for your district to participate in this study. Click here for this

short survey [https://auburn.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV\\_0eKbDf17tlyQNkF](https://auburn.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_0eKbDf17tlyQNkF)

If you would like any additional information prior to participation in this study, please contact me at 334-303-3307 or at [bjs0017@auburn.edu](mailto:bjs0017@auburn.edu). If you need any assistance, have any concerns, or questions, please contact me or my committee chair, Dr. Karen Rabren, at [rabreks@auburn.edu](mailto:rabreks@auburn.edu). Thank you in advance for your consideration regarding your district's participation in this research study.

Sincerely,

Betty J. Schiffer, ABD  
Special Education Teacher and Principal Investigator  
334-303-3307  
[bjs0017@auburn.edu](mailto:bjs0017@auburn.edu)

### Follow Up Email

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for consenting to your district's participation in this study aiming to evaluate and improve community-based vocational instruction ( ) programs for students with disabilities. Please copy and paste the email typed below and send to all of the secondary special education teachers who teach students in grades 9-12 within your LEA. At the conclusion of my study, I will provide you with an executive summary of this study. If after you review the summary and determine that your teachers would benefit from additional training on implementing CBVI, we can discuss possible methods that training could occur. Again, thank you very much for your participation in this valuable research study.

**COPY THE TEXT BELOW AND PASTE IN A NEW EMAIL. PLEASE SEND EMAIL TO THE APPROPRIATE TEACHERS**

Special Education Teachers,

You are invited to participate in a research study that evaluates an employment preparation program for secondary students with disabilities. You may participate in this study if you are a high school special education teacher and teach job preparation skills to students with disabilities.

As a participant, you will be asked to complete an online survey that will take approximately 10 minutes of your time. Any information obtained through your participation will remain confidential. Your name, email address, and IP address will not be associated in any way, with the findings of this study.

Additional information on this study is located on the first page of the electronic survey link ([https://auburn.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_5Bfk0xnpv73ECvb](https://auburn.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_5Bfk0xnpv73ECvb)). If you decide to participate after reading the first page of the electronic survey, please select the "Agree- Proceed to Survey" button and complete all of the survey items.

If you would like any additional information, need any assistance, or have any concerns and/or questions, please contact Betty Schiffer ([bjs0017@auburn.edu](mailto:bjs0017@auburn.edu)) or Dr. Karen Rabren ([rabreks@auburn.edu](mailto:rabreks@auburn.edu)).

Thank you in advance for your participation in this research study.

LINK TO SURVEY BELOW

[https://auburn.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_5Bfk0xnpv73ECvb](https://auburn.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_5Bfk0xnpv73ECvb)

Sincerely,  
Betty Schiffer, ABD  
Principal Investigator

**APPENDIX G**  
**Information Letter**

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information letter!

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DEPARTMENT OF  
SPECIAL EDUCATION,  
REHABILITATION, AND COUNSELING

(NOTE: DO NOT AGREE TO PARTICIPATE UNLESS IRB APPROVAL INFORMATION WITH CURRENT DATES HAS BEEN ADDED TO THIS DOCUMENT.)

**INFORMATION LETTER**  
**for a Research Study entitled**  
**“An Evaluation of the Components Practiced Before the Implementation of**  
**Community-based Vocational Instruction by High School Teachers of Students with**  
**Disabilities in Alabama”**

**You are invited to participate in a research study** to investigate your experiences in planning for the implementation of community-based vocational instruction (CBVI) to students with disabilities. The data gained from the research will assist special education high school CBVI preparation programs in improving employment outcomes for students with disabilities. The study is being conducted by Betty Schiffer, a graduate student, under the direction of Dr. Karen Rabren, Chair, Professor, in the Auburn University Department of Special Education, Rehabilitation, and Counseling. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a teacher of high school students who have disabilities, work in a school district in Alabama, and you are age 19 or older.

**What will be involved if you participate?** Your participation is completely voluntary. If you decide to participate in this research study, you will be asked to complete an anonymous online survey regarding the extent to which you plan prior to the implementation of CBVI to students with disabilities that you teach. Your total time commitment will be approximately fifteen minutes or less.

**Are there any risks or discomforts?** There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts associated with participation in this study.

**Are there any benefits to yourself or others?** If you participate in this study, you will have the opportunity to access survey results in the form of written reports and/or conference presentations. The study's findings will be compared and contrasted to the evidence-based best practices in empirical literature on the components teachers are suggested to complete prior to the implementation of CBVI to students with disabilities. The findings should assist interested teachers and other special education professionals in evaluating or improving their professional practices concerning CBVI for their students in order to improve students' post-school employment outcomes. We/I cannot promise you that you will receive any or all of the benefits described. Benefits to others may include increased knowledge regarding efforts currently being practiced in the state to prepare students with disabilities for employment after high school.

**Will you receive compensation for participating?** No. However the researcher is offering to conduct a presentation or training on the implementation of CBVI upon request at the conclusion of this research study.

2084 Haley Center, Auburn, AL 36849-5222; Telephone: 334-844-7676; Fax: 334-844-7677

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REHABILITATION, AND COUNSELING

**Are there any costs?** There are no costs involved in participation in this study.

**If you change your mind about participating,** you can withdraw at any time by closing your Internet browser window. Survey responses will be collected anonymously. Therefore, once you've submitted the survey responses, they cannot be withdrawn since they will be unidentifiable. Your decision about whether or not to participate or to stop participating will not jeopardize your future relations with Auburn University or the Department of Special Education, Rehabilitation, and Counseling.

**Any data obtained in connection with this study will remain anonymous.** We will protect your privacy and the data you provide by using online survey software with high levels of privacy standards. Information collected through your participation may be used to fulfill an educational requirement, published in a professional journal, and/or presented at a professional conference.

**If you have questions about this study,** please contact Betty Schiffer at bjs0017@auburn.edu or Dr. Karen Rabren at rabreks@auburn.edu.

**If you have questions about your rights as a research participant,** you may contact the Auburn University Office of Human Subjects Research or the Institutional Review Board by phone (334) 844-5966 or e-mail at IRBChair@auburn.edu.

HAVING READ THE INFORMATION ABOVE, YOU MUST DECIDE IF YOU WANT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS RESEARCH PROJECT. IF YOU DECIDE TO PARTICIPATE, PLEASE CLICK ON THE LINK BELOW. YOU MAY PRINT A COPY OF THIS LETTER TO KEEP.

Betty Schiffer      01/03/2017

Principal Investigator      Date

Karen Rabren      01/03/2017

Co-Investigator      Date

The Auburn University Institutional Review Board has approved this document for use from January 03, 2017 to January 02, 2018. Protocol #16-459 EP 1701.

#### [SURVEY LINK](#)

[https://auburn.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_5Bfk0xnpv73ECvb](https://auburn.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_5Bfk0xnpv73ECvb)

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DEPARTMENT OF  
SPECIAL EDUCATION,  
REHABILITATION, AND COUNSELING

**Are there any costs?** There are no costs involved in participation in this study.

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Betty Schiffer \_\_\_\_\_

Principal Investigator      Date

Karen Rabren \_\_\_\_\_

Co-Investigator              Date

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