Examining the Effects of Appreciative Inquiry on IEP Meetings and Transition Planning

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Abstract

This study analyzes the effects of Appreciative Inquiry as an intervention on participant interactions during IEP meetings and on students' written transition plans. Developed as an organizational development tool, Appreciative Inquiry elicits narratives of success that then create the lens through which the future can be planned. This study implements Appreciative Inquiry as a written protocol in one school district and as a training for staff and a written protocol in a second school district while using a third district as a control. Participants' interactions during IEP meetings were measured in ten second increments while transition plans were analyzed using IDEA plan requirements and best practice indicators. Appreciative Inquiry affected meeting interactions positively. It increased the percentages of student turn taking, positive remarks and the percentages of student self-advocacy and informational and observational remarks while decreasing negative remarks. Although the protocol only district complied with the protocol to 25%, increased percentages were observed in this district and in the district that underwent the training and used the protocol. However, the increases in the protocol only district were less. Appreciative Inquiry had no effect on the quality of transition plans.

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PREFACE

Whenever I began my work in positions as Director of Special Education and Committee on Special Education Chair in various districts, I was each time shocked and sobered. No matter what the grade level of the student present, as the IEP meetings unfolded, the professionals and often the parents at the table would talk about the student in the third person, as if he or she were not there. From the first meeting over which I presided, I addressed the student directly and kept the meeting focused on the child. I reasoned that the student would be the best person out of all of us to discuss the program and describe how he or she envisioned the future. To all of those several hundred students, I am first and foremost grateful for their igniting my passion for student voice, and from there my research interests in Appreciative Inquiry, positive psychology, and neuroplasticity.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

After the introductions of the participants seated around the table, the Committee on Special Education chairperson begins the IEP meeting by saying the group would discuss Andrew's academic progress and plan Andrew's next year in school. Then, the CSE Chairperson turns to Andrew and says,, "Tell us about some of your successes this year." Immediately after the CSE chairperson asks the question, Andrew's, mother, who has transferred him into the district in the last year, says facetiously, "You must be new at your job to ask a question like that."

Andrew, a student with significant developmental delays, talks animatedly about how he has become better organized this year and how much he enjoys his social studies class. His social studies teacher, when asked about Andrew's success, echoes Andrew's appraisal of his academic progress. His mother, too, takes the opportunity to describe Andrew's growing maturity at home and his willingness to take on household tasks as well as his passions for mechanics and snowmobiling. The conversation continues, focused on questions and answers about Andrew's particular successes and strengths and about his and the group's vision for his future. Andrew's father, mid way through the meeting, is able to say in public how proud he is of his son for his participation on the wrestling team and for his engagement in history class.

The meeting continues amid much laughter. After plans are developed for Andrew's career education and work experience with a family friend, Andrew's mother speaks up: "I have been coming to CSE meetings for fifteen years and no one has ever asked us those questions before or made us feel as good as we do today."

This scenario represents the interactions in school district E, one of three districts participating in this study to examine the effects of Appreciative Inquiry on the quality of Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meetings and transition plans. This scenario briefly captures the process and content of an IEP meeting's interactions; more importantly, it represents how IEP meetings can function to encourage student participation and to help plan a student's transition from high school to post-secondary living. The goal of this study is to try and promote IEP meetings during which students like Andrew speak up and self advocate, during which interactions are positive, informational, and based on observation, and out of which come transition plans that meet the definition requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2004) and transition best practices.

This chapter introduces the study, by discussing the observable components in the IEP meeting process and content, some measurable components in transition plans, and describes the use of Appreciative Inquiry as a potential intervention. The chapter then describes the questions the study seeks to answer, the significance of the questions, and the specific research hypotheses for the study. The chapter ends by defining the key words and concepts used in this study.

This study used Appreciative Inquiry as an intervention (Bushe, 1998, 1999; Magruder-Watkins & Mohr, 2001; Shendell-Falik, Feinson, & Mohr, 2007), designed to improve the quality of IEP meetings and the quality of transition planning for students based on observable indicators. Before this study, Appreciative Inquiry, applied primarily in not-for-profit, government, religious, and corporate venues, had never been used as an intervention with IEP meetings and transition plans. Appreciative Inquiry was

used as an intervention in this study primarily due to its potential for team development, for promoting positive outcomes, and for creating a vision of the future and supporting successful planning.

Importance of the IEP Meeting Process and Content

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting is important to the school program of students with disabilities (Burns, 2006). The IEP meeting and the documents it generates represent the legal educational contract between the family of a child with a disability and the school district. Through the interactions of the participants at IEP meetings, trust can either be developed or broken, and an effective collaboration of all parties can either be engendered or threatened. An attitude of collaboration and of working in the student's best interest may help facilitate success for students with disabilities by encouraging support at school and in the home. According to Martin, Van Dycke, Green, Gardner, Christiansen, Woods, and Lovett (2006b) the kinds of interactions among the participants, the levels of student engagement, and the quality of ideas shared at IEP meetings may affect these collaborative relationships and student success.

As a student with disabilities grows older, the requirement for his or her full participation in IEP meetings becomes more important. Therefore, this study was undertaken with students with disabilities of transition age in grades 8 through 12. Under IDEA 2004, "the public agency must invite the child with a disability to attend the child's IEP Team meeting if a purpose of the meeting will be the consideration of post secondary goals for the child and the transition services needed to assist the child in reaching those

goals" (IDEA 2004, 300.320(b)). Martin, Huber Marshall, and Sale (2004) found that, although "IDEA secondary transition reform places the student at the center of the IEP process" (p.290), IEP meetings typically lack meaningful student participation. Among other things, students in meetings speak less and feel less good about their meetings than do other IEP meeting participants (Martin et al., 2004) In fact, student strengths, needs, and interests were discussed less frequently according to *post-hoc* surveys of IEP meetings in the study than was any other category of IEP meeting content. Many studies concur that students participate minimally in their IEP meetings if at all (Arndt, Konrad & Test, 2006; Childre & Chambers, 2005; Hughes & Presley, 1998; Mason, Field, Sawilowsky, 2004; Matthews, 1998; Martin, Mithaug, Cox, Peterson, Van Dycke, & Cash, 2003; Menlove, Hudson, & Suter, 2001; Sands, 1998; Snyder, 2000; Test, Mason, Hughes, Conrad, Neale, & Wood., 2004). It is possible that the content discussed at IEP meetings and the processes by which participants engage with one another and make decisions can affect outcomes for students with disabilities.

The processes and content at IEP meetings include variables that can be measured to describe the quality of the IEP meeting. Student, professional, and parent turn-taking can be counted and can indicate levels of engagement (Martin et al., 2006b). Fredrickson (2003a) found that a healthy number of positive and negative interactions, with positive remarks predominating, can affect the course of a meeting and participants' feelings of satisfaction. Meetings focused on informational and observational remarks instead of opinion may elicit participant confidence and ensure that discussions are evidence based (Sax & Thoma, 2002). The times transition is discussed with secondary students at IEP meetings can produce value added benefits such as greater understanding of programs for

team members, especially parents (Martin et al., 2004). As conceived, the IEP meeting to discuss transition and the development of a student transition plan are meant to be seamlessly connected. The team assembled to design and develop the IEP must incorporate student strengths and include student desires when the student comes of age to warrant a transition plan (*Regulations of the Commissioner*, 200.4(2); 200.4(ix)(a-e). The transition plan written with student input, therefore, is a direct consequence of the IEP meeting.

For students with disabilities after age 16 (15 in New York State) or younger if the IEP team deems it appropriate, writing a transition plan becomes a critical feature of their IEP meetings (Flexer, Simmons, Tuft, & Baer, 2005). The process of transition promotes goal setting and encourages program design with an adjustment to adult living in mind (Flexer et al, 2005). Like the IEP, specific components of the written transition plan must be included in order for the document to satisfy the legal requirements of special education law (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1990, 20 U.S.C.1400 et seq.). Like the IEP, well-written goals and activities, documented access to the full range of curricular opportunities, and coordination among related service providers are among the required components of transition.

A brief discussion of the IEP meeting indicators for quality measured in this study—student turn-taking, student self-advocacy, positive and negative interactions, information, observation, and opinion -- follows.

IEP Meeting Process

Student Turn Taking

Student participation in IEP meetings when transition is discussed remains the law (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq. 300.347(b)(1)(i-iii)). Also, student participation in IEP meetings helps the school meet the student's individual needs and helps the student plan his or her educational goals (McGahee-Kovac, 1995). After studying the IEP meeting process, Mason, McGahee-Kovac, Johnson, and Stillerman (2002) and Test, Mason, Hughes, Konrad, Neale, and Wood (2004) concluded that students of widely varying disability categories can actively participate in IEP meetings. However, despite an emphasis in the law (IDEA, 2004) and through best practice (Martin et al., 2006b; Wehmeyer, 2002, 1998), research demonstrates that student participation in IEP meetings remains weak (Martin et al., 2004). Students participate minimally in their IEP meetings (Mason et al., 2004; Test et al., 2004) IEP meetings are hampered by inequalities. These inequalities seem dictated by the relative positions of power tacitly re-enforced by IEP meeting participants (Boxer, 2005; Ilaqua, 2000; Rogers, 2002). School professionals hold the advantage in the number of conversation turns they take and in the amount of time they dominate IEP meetings (Martin, et al., 2004). "Professionals contribute(d) more often than community participants" (Sax, 2002, p. 15). Students are present less often and, when present, speak less than other participants (Martin et al., 2004).

Student Self-Advocacy

According to Pearl (2004), Pocock, Lambros, Karvonen, Test, Algozzine, Wood, and Martin (2002) and Test (2005) students speaking for themselves at IEP meetings remains

an important component of a successful IEP process. Student self-advocacy, defined as student preferences, desires, and requests, coupled with the skills of self-determination is widely held as important to the success of students with disabilities in post-school venues. A meta-analysis of the literature on self-determination found that several studies discovered a correlation between adult success such as finding and holding a job and living independently with increased self-advocacy and choice making behaviors (Test, 2005). Therefore, Martin, Van Dycke, Christensen, Greene, Gardner, and Lovett (2006a) recommend active student leadership in the IEP process as best practice.

Positive Interaction

Cooperrider, Whitney and Stavros (2003) assert that human organizations are "responsive to positive thought and positive knowledge" (p. 11). Positive thinking and positive knowledge generate positive emotions which can expand and extend people's modes of thinking and action (Frederickson, 2003a). This broadened thinking makes people more open, more creative, and more able to problem solve. Frederickson (2003b) found that the time it took for cardio-vascular function to return to normal after an anxiety-provoking situation was twice as long if student subjects were shown films of sadness as opposed to films of contentment or amusement. Also, she cites her study in which people who were interviewed in the early months of 2001 and found to experience more positive emotions were more resilient and less depressed after the 9/11 attacks (Frederickson, 2003b). From these studies, she posited that "This momentary broadening of thinking and attention through positive emotions leads to the development of novel ideas, actions, and strong social bonds" (p. 333). Frederickson (2003a) documents how,

in groups, “community transformation becomes possible because each person’s positive emotion can resound through others” (p. 174). During IEP meetings, positive interactions include those focused on student progress, on academic, social, and personal achievement, on good will toward the student and the student’s best interest.

Negative Interaction

After analyzing IEP meeting results, Sax (2005) found that, because of a number of factors, interactions during IEP meetings frequently had a negative cast. Some factors that can create negative impressions include discomfort with the balance of participants representing home and school and the lack of being listened to (Oleniczak, 2002), the lack of participation by general educators (Matthews, 1998), and the lack of relevance in the discussion or preparedness for the meeting by staff (Childre & Chambers, 2005). These factors can develop negative emotions. Negative emotions have the effect of narrowing people’s “ideas about possible courses of action…to a specific set of behavioral options,” instead stimulating the urges to escape (fear), to attack (anger), and to expel (disgust) (Frederickson, 2003b, p. 332). Therefore, the less positive individuals experienced greater depression following the 9/11 attacks on the Pentagon and World Trade Center (Frederickson, 2003b). The limiting effects of negative interactions, defined as those that focus on failure or deficit or are disparaging or hostile, make the success of IEP meetings and effective transition planning less likely.

IEP Meeting Content

Use of Information

IEP meetings can be regarded as venues during which information is exchanged (Burns, 2006). Because IEP meetings and their related documentation are governed by law, compliance is fundamental for the IEP process. Compliance includes the exchange of evaluation results for students and their present levels of performance. Facts about the student are shared in the form of classroom achievement, a student's meeting IEP goals, and, in many cases, standardized test results. "Data-based IEPs require data based IEP meetings" (Burns, 2006, p. 6) so that future planning can occur. It is important that when the IEP meeting takes place, the information that is used is accurate and can be independently validated (Argyris, 1970; Argyris & Schon, 1974).

Use of Observation

Classroom observations of students are recognized as providing valuable academic and social information. They focus primarily on seeing or hearing actual student behavior. "Observations of classroom behaviors have a long…history as an important data collection method in …educational evaluation" (Meehan, Cowley, Finch, Chadwick, Ermolov, & Riffle, 2004, p. 1) Teacher observations and parent observations can provide concrete and rigorous evidence of student behavior and performance (Doctoroff & Arnold, 2004; Sitlington, 1996a). How students are seen responding to challenges, negotiating groups, and interrelating with peers provides educators and parents with predictive evidence of future situations and circumstances. Functional Behavior

Assessments as part of the IEP data-gathering process require observational strategies on the part of teachers and parents (Fox, Gunther, Davis, & Brall, 2000).

Use of Opinion

Although the research on "opinion," its relative value, and its use in educational and professional meeting venues is scant, its weakness compared to information and observation seems clear. According to Herrera, Herrera-Veidma, and Verdegay (1997) and Watson (2000) opinion offers a less robust form of assessment generally, one colored by personal perceptions, attitudes, and dispositions. Opinion exists closer to assumption and is subject to change (Yaniv & Milyavsky, 2006). Clark (2000) cautions against allowing "subjective evaluations" into IEP development. During IEP meetings, interactions based on hearsay, personal preference, speaker attitude, or a blanket rather than an individual focus, qualify as opinion.

Discussing Transition

Transition planning is a critical function of the Committee on Special Education (CSE) required by IDEA 2004 at age 16 (Flexer et al., 2005). Discussions about a student's plans following graduation from high school are an important part of IEP meetings (Flexer et al., 2005; Test, 2000). Successful transition incorporates practices of family involvement and community support, promoting student self determination, person centered planning, interagency collaboration, and career education (Flexer et al., 2005; Carter & Hughes, 2005; Keefe, Moore, & Duff, 2006; King, 2006; Kohler, 1993). Often these conversations are held between a special education teacher and the students

for whom he or she is responsible (Carter & Hughes, 2005). However, Sax and Thoma (2002) assert that transition described and discussed during an IEP meeting can have the benefit of engaging all the major stakeholders in a person's future: the student first and foremost, and, in addition, the student's parents, caregivers, related service providers, and counselors, among others.

Importance of Transition Plans

For most young people, experiencing the transition from high school to post secondary opportunities such as college, work, or the military can be daunting (Grigal et al., 1997). For students with disabilities, the transition to post secondary opportunities requires academic, psychological, and economic planning and the development of personal and community supports prior to graduation (Flexer et al., 2005; King et al., 2006). Research by Powers et al. (2005) supports the view of transition as an important juncture in the life of students with disabilities. The process of transition, therefore, is an important bridge for students with disabilities and requires a high degree of professional and family collaboration in order to ensure student success (Kohler & Green, 2003; Kohler et al., 1993; Lehman, 2002). King, Baldwin, and Currie (2006) state that, among other aspects of a child's transition, attention to the vision of the child's future is critical.

The IEP team is required by law to provide transition planning for students with disabilities by age 16, or sooner if deemed necessary. The reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in 2004 reemphasized the primacy of transition as important to the process of educating young people with disabilities. The IEP team is mandated to design and to implement an educational program that will

adequately prepare these students for life after graduation from high school. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (1997) defines transition as follows:

> A coordinated set of activities for a student with a disability that (a) is designed within an outcome oriented process, that 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; (b) is based on the individual student's needs, taking into account the students' preferences and interests; and (c) includes instruction, related services, community services, the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives, and if appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation.
>
> (34 C.F.R.300.29)

Although the process of transition is mandated by law and acknowledged by researchers as fundamentally important to the success of students with disabilities (Furney, Hasazi, & Destefano, 1997; Powers et al., 2005; Sax & Thoma, 2002; Skinner & Lindstrom, 2003; Test, 2000), it is rarely implemented as conceived. Attention to factors like independent living, community support, career education, and gainful employment can be overlooked in the transition plan (Powers et al., 2005; Sitlington, 1996a). In a series of case studies, Sitlington (1996a) links the assessment of student strengths and the inclusion of student desires to writing realistic goals and action steps on transition plans.

Appropriate visioning, realistic goal setting, thoughtful integration of employment activities, and successful collaboration can ensure the transition plan's usefulness and implementation. Michaels and Ferrara (2006) recommend person centered planning for successful transition from high school. Best practice suggests that student's cultural values and beliefs should be taken into consideration (Wilder, 2001). Powers et al. (2005) found that these are issues and practices which only a very few transition plans in exemplary school districts actually address. Of 399 transition plans reviewed in Powers et al.'s study (2005), 9.8% made reference to the student's cultural values or background while only 4.5% showed evidence of person-centered planning.

The elements included in transition plans can be measured to describe the quality of these transition plans. IDEA 2004 defines several areas of importance for transition plans (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004). These areas of importance in transition plans include the transition plan's indicating: goals and action steps, anticipated post school outcomes, vocational and integrated employment opportunities, student desires, plans for independent living, and community participation, among others. In addition, the large body of literature on successful transition planning highlights various practices that are characterized as "best" (Flexer et al., 2005; Kohler, 1993; Sax & Thoma, 2002; Skinner & Lindstrom, 2003; Thoma & Nathanson, 2002). These best practices in transition plans include the transition plan's indicating: person-centered planning, evidence of self-determination, the student's employment aspirations, and the incorporation of the student's values and beliefs, among others. Well-constructed transition plans were defined as those having incorporated the perspectives of the student and his or her family, friends, school, and larger community. The frequency of each of

these indicators is measurable, as is the indicator's relative usefulness and potential for implementation.

Unfortunately, transition planning is typically weak (Grigal, Test, Beattie, & Wood, 1997; Powers, Gil-Kashiwaraba, Geenan, Powers, Balandran, & Palmer, 2005). Powers et al. (2005) found that transition plans may not always document the full range of transition services available to the student; moreover, lack of detail in goals and activities and inattention to student desires and potential outcomes may weaken transition for students with disabilities. Seldom are changes made to transition plans as the student matures and as the realities of graduation draw near (Geary, 2007). Powers et al. (2005) report in their study of 399 transition plans that the language across a given school district's transition plans tended to be "repetitive" and "boilerplate" (p. 56).

Clearly, discussing transition during IEP meetings and creating a useful and relevant transition plan can be complex processes. The professionals responsible for the transition plan must reflect IDEA (2004) requirements with which the plans must comply as well as decide to incorporate transition best practices. The indicators of effective transition plans described here by no means represent the complete range of transition topics. However, the following indicators are among those that can help in the successful transition of students with disabilities to post-secondary opportunities:

IDEA 2004 Transition Plan Definitions

Goals and Action Steps

The goals of the transition plan need to be developed with the student firmly at the center of the process and accountable at least to some degree for the goals' achievement

(Flexer et al., 2005). Action steps need to support these goals with a clear time line for when the action step is to be completed. Action steps need to provide sufficient detail so that the goals appear achievable. Goals should be specific, measurable, verifiable, ambitious, and attainable. Action steps should be feasible, capable of being implemented, and relevant or useful for achieving a goal (Powers et al., 2005).

Post-School Outcomes

Post-school outcomes create an overview of the transition plan and develop a sense of the trajectory of an individual student's post-secondary life. As required by IDEA (2004), these outcomes need to be measurable. Likewise, the goals and activities stated in transition plans need to relate directly to those post-school outcomes delineated for the student (Kennedy, 2003) such as post-secondary education or exploring a career.

Vocational Education and Integrated Employment

Among the more significant predictors of post secondary success is student involvement in meaningful employment during high school (Nolan, 1999). Involvement by area businesses and including vocational counselors in the planning process help to develop the broadest spectrum of vocational opportunities and can create increased follow-up (Sitlington, 1996a). Potential activities for the goal of vocational education and employment include the development of a ladder of graduated experiences from community service to paid work (Benz et al., 1997). Transition plans reflect vocational education when goals and action steps link directly to work experiences, apprenticeships, internships, or work in sheltered workshops.

Student Desires

Flexer et al. (2005), Wehmeyer (2002), and Wehmeyer, Palmer, Agran, Mithaug, and Martin (2000) indicate that attention to student desires by the IEP team in the transition plan creates more meaningful goals and activities. The language of IDEA (1997) is predicated on the right of students to choose. It regards student "preferences and interests" as important to the nature of the IEP process (Martin, 1993; Wehmeyer & Ward, 1995). Activities to support the planning around student desires, their wishes, preferences, or endorsements as documented in transition plans, include conversations with teachers and guidance counselors, mentoring, and participation by the family in planning for transition.

Independent Living

Understanding student desires extends to understanding their thoughts about potential living circumstances and their collaborating with the community to plan their future living situations (Flexer et al., 2005). Documentation of post-secondary living arrangements on the transition plans include indications that the student is acquiring skills such as money management, caring for physical needs, and cooking.

Community Participation

As a child enters and develops through the transition process, building a network of supports for post-school success becomes critical (Childre & Chambers, 2005). The goal of community participation requires that professionals, family, and community members listen carefully to the focus individual without preconceived ideas or judgment (Sax,

2002). Among other steps in the process of identifying community participation, understanding the key roles of the student, the family, the professionals, and community members is important (Sitlington, 1996a). Potential activities documented on transition plans that support the goals of family and community include participation in non-school related activities such as clubs, church groups, and volunteering sports.

Transition Plan Best Practices

Because transition is critical for the success of students with disabilities, researchers, practitioners and policymakers have developed a repertoire of best practices that can facilitate a transition plan's desired ends of independence and self-satisfaction.

Person-Centered Planning

Person centered planning is designed as a best practice for developing formal transition plans (Michaels & Ferrara, 2006). Fundamentally, it focuses the resources of an individual student, her school, and her community to creatively shape and fulfill her aspirations (National Center on Secondary Education and Transition, 2004). Person centered planning includes all the adults and colleagues who have a vested interest in seeing a young person succeed. It requires a series of meetings when these adults and colleagues are encouraged to hear the young person's aspirations and then begin the process of supporting those aspirations through the school, the community, and beyond. Person-centered planning as documented on transition plans, should include evidence of a formal futures planning process facilitated by a coach.

Self-Determination

Self determination can be defined as a process that includes:

> "…informed choice, knowing your limits/strengths;… providing the opportunity to choose; knowing options and consequences; setting and having goals; being self directed and person centered; communicating your goals and needs; taking responsibility…." (National Capacity Building Institute, 2001)

Self determination can be measured by the levels of student choice-making, responsibility, and accountability. Mason, Field, and Sawilowsky (2004) found that self-determined youth, as measured by a survey of professional educators, are more likely to experience academic success, develop self-advocacy and communication skills, and gain better employment and quality of life. Activities such as practicing self-advocacy and actively engaging in making choices support the goal of self-determination on student transition plans. Self-determination can be coached as part of the transition planning process (Powers et al., 2005).

Employment Aspirations

Transition planning frequently begins by establishing a student's interests and preferences for employment. Flexer et al. (2005) indicate that, in the transition process, students can be encouraged to research a variety of jobs and challenged to determine how their skills, interests, and limits match these jobs. Also, employment and job choice curricula include initial student consideration of job characteristics he/she would wish for

e.g., working alone or with others, easy job or challenging, etc. (Flexer et al., 2005). Activities on transition plans that speak to a student's employment aspirations include school to work visits or job fairs provided in general education settings (Sitlington, 1996a).

Cultural Values and Beliefs

The comfort level and relative success of a student's post secondary transition plan often depends on the culture in which that student is living. Flexer et al. (2005) asserted that family involvement in the transition planning process requires sensitivity to various cultures. Careful consideration in the transition plan must be given to issues such as the degree of independence for the student desired by the family as well as changes in family life routines and family and cultural life experiences (Parette, 1999). Transition plans can reflect a student's cultural beliefs and values by including details of a student's ethnic or religious involvement or by acknowledging a student's background in describing his or her preferences for the future.

Importance of Appreciative Inquiry as an Intervention

First documented in the research literature in 1987, Appreciative Inquiry is a method whereby a vision of the future is established based on past success (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987). Cooperrider, Whitney, & Stavros (2003) assert that "A(ppreciative) I(nquiry) is based on the simple assumption that every organization has something that works well and these strengths can be the starting point for creating positive change" (p. 3). The method presumes that "human systems grow in the direction of what they study"

(Magruder-Watkins & Mohr, 2001, p. 17). On a basic level, Appreciative Inquiry listens to and uses narrative dialogue in organizations because this dialogue describes the organization's collective thinking through the thinking of its individuals. It aims to focus this dialogue on what is working well by asking questions that elicit stories of success. Appreciative Inquiry is a strength based intervention, predicated on the theories of social construction, the simultaneity principle, the poetic principle, the anticipatory principle, and positive thinking (Cooperrider et al., 2003). These five theoretical principles are briefly summarized below:

1. Social Construction: Appreciative inquiry recognizes that social knowledge, human competence and organizational destiny are formed in the collective imagination and expressed through individual reality.
2. The Simultaneity Principle: Appreciative Inquiry understands that as soon as a question is asked the process of change begins. Inquiry is itself an intervention.
3. The Poetic Principle: Appreciative Inquiry holds that people's pasts, presents, and futures are endless sources of information and perpetually open to interpretation.
4. The Anticipatory Principle: Appreciative Inquiry believes that any group's future is its most significant driving force.
5. Positive Thinking: Appreciative Inquiry operates on the notion that asking positive questions and seeking positive answers will result in completely different outcomes from typical problem solving or analyzing failures (Cooperrider et al., 2003).

Appreciative Inquiry can be used for organizational and team development, as a frame for enhancing personal and institutional change, as a mediation or problem solving tool,

and as a methodology for action research. It has been applied in corporate, religious, government, non-profit, family, and therapeutic venues with significant results (Chandler, 1999). Among other results, Appreciative Inquiry has produced cost savings for medical teams (Shendell-Falik, Feinson, & Mohr, 2007), improved employee retention in the fast food industry (Jones, 1999), and increased profits for a food manufacturer (Barros & Cooperrider, 2001).

The process of Appreciative Inquiry follows a rigorous structure meant to elicit thinking and talking about strengths, to acknowledge shared understandings among participants, to plan for the future, and to commit to continued action and support. The process of Appreciative Inquiry focuses on the 4D-Cycle: Discover, Dream, Design, Destiny, which can take anywhere from two hours to four days to complete with any number of participants from 1 or 2 to 1,000 (Chandler, 1999). This 4D-Cycle is briefly summarized below:

1. Discover: The first task is hearing, understanding, and appreciating "what is."
2. Dream: This stage amplifies the positive present by envisioning a more vital future.
3. Design: This phase embodies the organization dream in "provocative propositions" that add a further grounding to the process.
4. Destiny: Organizational members commit to action in open-space, open ended planning meaning that many different strategies for planning change may be recognized and implemented.

This study applied Appreciative Inquiry in two ways: as a written protocol in one school district and as a training and a written protocol in another school district, with a

third school district serving as a control. All three school districts were chosen based on similar population demographics and on similar levels of inclusion of students with disabilities. The use of Appreciative Inquiry as a protocol helped to provide support for Appreciative Inquiry training in one district and to guide the format of IEP meetings in another district without the training. The use of Appreciative Inquiry as an intervention sought to improve IEP meeting quality by increasing student turn taking and self advocacy and by increasing the number of positive and evidence based informational and observational remarks during meetings. In addition, Appreciative Inquiry in this study sought to affect transition plan documentation by increasing the quality of transition goals, and the number, implementation, and utility of the action steps associated with those goals (Powers, Gil-Kashiwaraba, Geenan, Powers, Balandran, & Palmer, 2005).

For the purpose of this study, Appreciative Inquiry was used as an intervention, first as a training and then as a protocol, primarily due to its potential for team development, for promoting positive outcomes, and for creating a vision of the future and supporting successful planning. These outcomes are relevant to the current study because, by affecting team development during IEP meetings where presently teams show little coherence (Childre & Chambers, 2005; Matthews, 1998; Strogglios & Xanathacou, 2006) and register little satisfaction (Martin et al., 2004; Oleniczak, 2002; Rogers, 2002), the quality of IEP meetings may increase. Also, by trying to create positive outcomes in IEP meetings unlike the present, prevalent experience in IEP meetings (Rogers, 2002; Sax, 2005), an intervention like Appreciative Inquiry may increase meeting quality. Finally, because Appreciative Inquiry can result in a vision of the future and on the plans to achieve that future, the quality of transition planning and written transition plans,

currently problematic (Grigal et al., 1997; Martin et al., 2006a, Powers et al., 2005) may improve.

Limitations of Appreciative Inquiry as an Intervention

Appreciative Inquiry, like any intervention, needs careful consideration and critique. As Richer (2007) reported, the variable she hypothesized would change as a result of Appreciative Inquiry, the retention rate for nurses on an oncology unit, did not. For Peelle's (2006) quantitative study, Appreciative Inquiry increased group identification mid-task and increased team effectiveness post-task. Creative Problem Solving, however, also tested in Peelle's study, generated equally reasonable and potent outcomes. Whether or not Appreciative Inquiry successfully increases the levels of quality of IEP meetings and transition plans in this study may depend on potential variables, among them the acceptance of Appreciative Inquiry as a training or as a protocol by the participants in this study.

Any critique of Appreciative Inquiry must extend to assumptions of what can be called "positive." Social construction dictates that what is "positive" is variable and relies on local interpretation (van der Haar & Hosking, 2004). It may be that, in cases where one person attempts to impose a particular view of reality, positive or not, on another, the results will be perceived as negative (van der Haar & Hosking, 2004). Much depends in Appreciative Inquiry on the intentions of the leaders and of the facilitators and on the "goodwill" of the first interlocutors in the process. As Barge and Oliver (2003) describe, interpersonal communication recognizes that "certain conversational acts, such as turning points and transgressions, can trigger relational reconfiguration" (p. 139). As

Rogers (2002) recognized in her study of IEP meetings, intentions can be hidden behind managerial language and positions of power. Meaning and power, contested within organizations and on teams, can dampen appreciative intentions (Barge and Oliver, 2003).

Research Questions

This study utilizes Appreciative Inquiry as an intervention to try and improve the quality of IEP meetings and to influence transition plans to contain more required and useful elements. Because both the content and process of the IEP meeting and the plan of transition depend on collaboration, positive connection, and future planning, using Appreciative Inquiry as an intervention to improve meeting and plan quality seems reasonable. The research questions, therefore, are:

For students with disabilities in three rural New York State school districts, does Appreciative Inquiry improve the quality of IEP meeting process as measured by increased percentages of student turn taking, student self advocacy, and positive remarks, decreased percentages of negative remarks, and increased ratio of positive to negative remarks?

For students with disabilities in three rural New York State school districts, does Appreciative Inquiry improve the quality of IEP meeting content as measured by increased percentages of information, observation, and transition remarks and decreased percentages of opinion remarks?

For students with disabilities in three rural New York State school districts, does Appreciative Inquiry improve the quality of their transition plans as measured by

increases in well-written goals that connect to post school outcomes and action steps with high implementation and utility and that comply with the IDEA (2004) definitions for vocational education and integrated employment, student desires, independent living, and community participation?

For students with disabilities in three rural New York State school districts, does Appreciative Inquiry improve the quality of their transition plans as measured by increased evidence of best practices such as person-centered planning self determination, employment aspirations, and cultural values and beliefs?

Significance of the Research Questions

Among all sub-groups delineated under the No Child Left Behind Act (2001), students with disabilities have experienced the least success. A national survey of rural schools and several studies have revealed disquieting trends in the academic progress of this population of children (Harriman, 2005; Kossar, 2005; Lewis, 2004; McLaughlin et al. 2005). For school districts in New York State, the annual yearly progress (AYP) on standardized tests of students with disabilities remains a cause for concern. In New York State in 2005, only 75 school districts out of 712 (10.5%) made AYP for students with disabilities in the grades and subjects for which they had sufficient enrollment to be counted under No Child Left Behind (IDEA Part B State Performance Plan 2005-2010, 2005).

Children with disabilities remain at risk for not graduating from high school. In 2005, New York State reported that out of 173,978 students, 76% graduated with high school diplomas. However, out of 15,056 students with disabilities, only 58% successfully

completed high school, a difference of 18% (IDEA Part B State Performance Plan 2005-2010, 2005). Nationally, graduation rates reflect a similar trend (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996), and dropout rates for students with disabilities nationwide remain high (Johnson, Stodden, Emanual, Leucking, & Mack, 2002). To compound the problem, high school completion status affects workers with disabilities in that they are "older, work fewer hours, and are more likely to be single and less likely to have a college degree. They are still disproportionately represented in low-growth, low-wage occupations" (Wonacott, 2003, p. 3). Studies have shown that people with disabilities are disproportionately represented among prison populations. The arrest rate for those exiting high school with disabilities is 56% among drop outs compared with 16% among graduates and 10% among those who aged out of the system (Keefe, at al., 2006). IEP meetings and transition plans are important to the success of these students with disabilities (Flexer et al., 2005; Johnson et al., 2002; Martin et al., 2006a; Wehmeyer & Schwartz, 1997) If the quality of IEP meetings and transition plans was enhanced, drop out rates might be reduced and the consequences of these drop out rates might be ameliorated.

In addition to performance on standardized measures and school completion, school success for students with disabilities is measured by transition to post-secondary opportunities. As a result of the 1990 passage of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (P.L. 101-476), transition plans need to be part of a student's Individualized Educational Plan or IEP. New York State Post-Secondary Indicators show students with disabilities struggle to find employment at roughly the same rate as those nationwide (Shepard, 2005). In order for students with disabilities to be successful, close attention must be paid to how well their transitions are planned. The literature suggests

that transition planning, if accompanied by self-determination and self-advocacy skills, may offer a lynchpin in the process of educating students with disabilities that may ensure higher graduation rates, employment rates, and consequent benefits to society (Johnson, Stodden, Emanual, Luecking, & Mack, 2002; Wehmeyer & Schwartz, 1997). Because Appreciative Inquiry is a process for visioning the future and planning, developing Appreciative Inquiry as an intervention to affect these transition outcomes may hold the potential of securing this lynchpin for these students.

Students' current levels of performance, post-secondary outcomes, and transition plans are discussed during committee of special education (CSE) or IEP team meetings. Mandated by law (P.L. 94-142), these meetings are, in many respects, the only regular interface that the school has with the community surrounding the school. Parents are required to attend these meetings, as are their children at the secondary level and when transition planning is an issue. The quality of IEP meetings varies as do the documents these meetings generate (Cotone & Brady, 2005; Horn, Lieber, Shouming, Sandall, & Schwartz, 2000; Martin et al, 2004; Reu, McLaughlin, & Walter-Thomas, 2002). Williams and O'Leary (2001) found that, in many schools, students are not invited to attend their own IEP meetings. Parental dissatisfaction with the IEP process is evident in the 5,422 filings for impartial hearings or arbitration recorded in New York State for the school year ending in 2005 (IDEA Part B State Performance Plan 2005-2010, 2005). It would seem, therefore, that positively affecting IEP team meetings, in addition to ensuring adequate transition planning, would improve outcomes for students with disabilities.

Appreciative Inquiry offers a potential means to affect the quality of IEP team meetings and the quality of transition planning. Cooperrider (1987) developed this method of team building after he and researchers discovered the power of asking positively framed questions to change work environments. The premise of the method as an intervention is to elicit narratives of success among participants that then create the lens through which the future can be seen and planned. Because Appreciative Inquiry is strength based and designed for planning, it appears a reasonable method to encourage self-advocacy and self-determination in students, to develop effective meeting patterns, and to generate a creative focus among IEP teams on transition planning.

Research Hypotheses

This study utilizes Appreciative Inquiry in two ways, using three separate groups of students with disabilities in three rural New York State school districts to test its hypothesis that Appreciative Inquiry will improve the quality of IEP team meetings and on the quality of transition plans.

Using Appreciative Inquiry as a protocol in one district, as a training and a protocol in a second district, and using a third district as a control, the hypotheses to be studied are the following:

1) That Appreciative Inquiry will improve the quality of IEP meeting process by increasing the percentage of

a) student turn taking and

b) self advocacy behaviors during IEP meetings;

2) That Appreciative Inquiry will improve the quality of IEP meeting process by increasing the percentage of

a) positive remarks

b) and decreasing the percentage of negative remarks

c) and increase the ratio of positive to negative remarks during IEP meetings;

3) That Appreciative Inquiry will improve the quality of IEP meeting process by increasing the percentage levels of

a) informational and

b) observational remarks as opposed to

c) decreasing opinion

d) and increasing the percentage of remarks regarding transition

. during IEP meetings.

4) That Appreciative Inquiry will improve the quality of transition plans by increasing the:

a) quality of goals and

b) the number of action steps in transition plans for definitions according to IDEA 2004; and

5) That Appreciative Inquiry will improve the quality of transition plans by increasing the:

a) implementation of action steps,

b) utility of action steps,

c) goals tied to post-school outcomes, and

d) documentation of student desires; and

6) That Appreciative Inquiry will improve the quality of transition plans by increasing the use of best practices such as:

a) person - centered planning,

b) student self-determination,

c) student employment aspirations,

d) student cultural values and beliefs.

Definitions

Several concepts used through out this study require definition. These concepts include: disability, IEP meeting, transition plan, the quality of IEP meeting process, the quality of IEP meeting content, and the quality of transition plans.

Disability

The term "child with a disability is defined according to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (1997) as the following:

> A child with mental retardation, hearing impairments (including deafness), speech or language impairments, visual impairments (including blindness), serious emotional disturbance, orthopedic impairments, autism, traumatic brain injury, other health impairments, or other specific learning disabilities. These children also must need special education and related services because of their disorder. (20 U.S.C.S.1401 (3)(A)(i)(ii)).

Individualized Educational Plan (IEP)

By law, the IEP must include certain information about the child and the educational program designed to meet his or her unique needs. This information includes:

> Current performance based on evaluation results such as classroom tests and assignments, individual tests given to decide eligibility for services or during reevaluation, and observations made by parents, teachers, related service providers, and other school staff affecting the child's involvement and progress in the general curriculum (*A guide to the individualized education program,* 2000).
>
> .
>
> Measurable annual goals… that can be academic, social or behavioral, or relate to physical needs or address other educational needs (*A guide to the individualized education program,* 2000).
>
> Special education and related services including supplementary aids and services that the child needs such as modifications to the program or supports for school personnel such as training or professional development that will be provided to assist the child (*A guide to the individualized education program,* 2000).
>
> Participation with non-disabled children and the extent (if any) to which the child will not participate with non-disabled children in the regular class and other school activities (*A guide to the individualized education program,* 2000).

Participation in state and district-wide tests that specify what modifications in the administration of these tests the child will need and if a test is not appropriate for the child and how the child will be tested instead (*A guide to the individualized education program,* 2000).

The IEP must state when services will begin, how often they will be provided, where they will be provided, and how long they will last (*A guide to the individualized education program,* 2000).

Transition service needs -- At age 16, the IEP must state what transition services are needed to help the child prepare for leaving school (*A guide to the individualized education program,* 2000).

Finally, the IEP must state how the child's progress will be measured and how parents will be informed of that progress (*A guide to the individualized education program,* 2000).

IEP Meeting

An IEP meeting, referred to as the Committee on Special Education, is defined in New York State regulations as consisting of:

> …the parents or persons in parental relations to the student; not less than one regular education teacher if the student is participating in the regular education environment; not less than one special education teacher

> or…special education provider of the students; a school psychologist; a representative of the school district who is qualified to provide or supervise special education and is knowledgeable about the general education curriculum…; an individual who can interpret the instructional implications of evaluation results; a school physician, if specifically requested…; an additional parent of a student with a disability residing in the district…; others who have special knowledge or expertise regarding the student…; and, if appropriate, the student. (Regulations of the Commissioner, 200.3 (a)(1)(i)(x))

The purpose of the IEP meeting is to:

> …evaluate the child's levels of performance, to determine whether the need for specialized educational services exists, and, if so, to design, review, and periodically modify that child's educational program (Martin, 2005, p. 3).

Transition Plan

For purposes of this study, the transition plan is defined as the part of the IEP:

> …(that) states…what services, supports, and activities will be provided to students to help them reach their career goals (Flexer et al., 2005, p. 494)

Quality of IEP Meetings

The quality of IEP meetings is defined for this study as meetings where the meeting process involves a proportionately large number of student turns taken (Martin et al.,

2006a), examples of student-self advocacy (Test, Fowler, Wood, Brewer, & Eddy, 2005) and positive interactions as opposed to negative interactions (Fredrickson 2003a; Fredrickson & Branigan, 2005). The quality of IEP meetings is defined further as meetings where informational (McMahan & Baer, 2001) and observational remarks are evident as opposed to remarks that reflect opinion (MacPherson, 2006). Finally, for IEP meeting quality to be present, remarks about transition planning should be evident for those students for whom secondary transition goals have become part of their IEP (Martin, Huber, & Sale, 2004). For purposes of the observations of IEP meeting, therefore, the following definitions of IEP meeting process are relevant:

Student Turn-Taking. Any remark by the student that was recorded when he or she was the first to speak during any single ten second interval during an IEP meeting (Martin et al., 2006a).

Self-Advocacy. Any remark in which the student speaks up for his or her preferences, needs, or desires, or requests help or support in some form (Test et al., 2005).

Positive remark. Any remark that encourages the meeting participants and/or the student at the meeting (Fredrickson, 2003b); a remark focused on student progress, on academic, social, or personal achievement or on a student's maturity, mature decision-making, or well developing character; a remark whose intention has the best interest of the students and/or the meeting participants at heart.

Negative remark. Any remark that stifles or derails discussion at the meeting; a remark regarding a deficit or failure that casts the student in a bad light or focuses on failure (Fredrickson & Losada, 2005); a remark that is generally disparaging, angry, undiplomatic, or hostile.

For purposes of the observations of IEP meeting, the following definitions of IEP meeting content are relevant:

Information. Any remark that provides some fact or objective measure of a student's progress, grades, test grades, or meeting the goals of an IEP or transition plan; any objectively verifiable remark (Thompson, Peterson, & Brodt, 1996).

Observation. Any remark about a student based on seeing or hearing actual performance or behavior, formal or informal (Fox, Gunther, Davis, & Brall, 2000).

Opinion. Any remark based on hear-say, the personal preference or attitude of the speaker, or blanket regard rather than specific or individual focus; any remark that can not be objectively corroborated (Paglieri, 2000; Yaniv & Milyavsky, 2006).

Transition. Any remark focused on a student's goals after high school, his or her aspirations, preferences for work, employment, post-secondary plans, living accommodations, transportation, community participation, or health needs after graduation (Powers et al., 2005).

Quality of Transition Plans

The quality of transition plans is defined for this study as plans where goals and action steps are evident and tied to post-secondary outcomes, vocational and integrated employment, student desires, independent living, and community participation (Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004, 20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.). In addition, the literature distinguishes best practices in transition planning that include person-centered planning (Sitlington, 1996; Fore & Riser, 2005), self-determination (Tunglanel, 2002; Wehmeyer & Schwartz, 1997), employment aspirations

(Flexer, Simmons, Luft, & Baer, 2005), and cultural values and beliefs (Yuen & Shaughnessy, 2001). For the purposes of measuring transition plan quality, the following definitions are relevant:

Tally. A record of the number of goals and activities listed for each area without duplication or overlap (*Coding manual,* Powers et al, 2005).

Goals. An outcome that is well constructed, i.e. specific, measurable, verifiable, ambitious, and attainable in the not so distant future (*Coding manual,* Powers et al, 2005).

Action Step. An observable activity listed with a goal that seems reasonably calculated to lead to a goal's attainment (*Coding manual,* Powers et al, 2005).

Post-School Outcomes. Although achievable during high school, there must be a direct link to life after school or in adulthood such as enrollment in post-secondary education such as college courses or exploring a major (*Coding manual,* Powers et al, 2005).

Vocational Education and Integrated Employment. This category includes unpaid work experience; apprenticeships; job shadowing, or summer internships; may relate to work in a segregated environment or sheltered workshop where individuals without disabilities also work (*Coding manual,* Powers et al, 2005).

Student Desires. An indication of a wish for, preference for**,** endorsement of or identification of a goal or activity (*Coding manual,* Powers et al, 2005).

Independent Living. Refers to skills acquisition such as money management, caring for personal needs or hygiene, cooking, etc. (*Coding manual,* Powers et al, 2005).

Community Participation. Includes participation in non-school, community based activities such as 4-H clubs; church groups, volunteering sports; membership in a health club, etc. (*Coding manual,* Powers et al, 2005).

Person-Centered Planning This reference is to a formal futures planning process facilitated by a coach (*Coding manual,* Powers et al, 2005).

Self-Determination. Any indication that a student has engaged or been encouraged in goal-directed, self-regulated, and autonomous behavior (Pocock et al., 2002)

Employment Aspirations. Clear mention of the future hopes of a student for work beyond high school (*Coding manual,* Powers et al, 2005).

Cultural Values and Beliefs. Some indication of competence and sensitivity to the experience of the student through participation in ethnic, religious, or other activities and support of these activities (*Coding manual,* Powers et al, 2005).

Implementation. A description of an activity that is specific enough to indicate feasibility and potential "doability" including if specific and reasonable supports have been mentioned for the student (*Coding manual,* Powers et al, 2005).

Utility. The relevance that a particular activity has toward achieving a goal and whether or not the activity will reasonably lead to a goal's fulfillment (*Coding manual,* Powers et al, 2005).

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

The scholarly literature for this study is broadly focused on IEP team meetings, on student self-advocacy and self-determination behaviors, on transition plans, and on Appreciative Inquiry as an intervention for improving the quality of IEP team meetings and transition planning. Specifically, after a brief history and review of IEP meeting process and content, this literature review describes IEP meetings with regard to student turn-taking, self advocacy, positive and negative interaction during meetings, discussions about transition, and remarks conveying information, observation, and opinion. In regard to transition plans, this literature review summarizes the history of transition and reviews transition planning generally. Then, this review focuses on areas of compliance, specifically: goals and action steps, post-school outcomes, vocational education and integrated employment, student desires, independent living, and community participation. In addition, literature on person-centered planning, self determination, employment aspirations, and cultural values and beliefs is discussed as documenting best practices in transition plans. This literature review describes the development of teams and organizations and the need for collaboration on IEP teams specifically. Finally, Appreciative Inquiry as an intervention for this study is discussed and its proposed benefits for students with special learning needs.

History and Review of IEP Meeting Process and Content

The Education for All Handicapped Children Act (Public Law 94-142) passed in 1975 began the historic effort of school districts' working to ensure "free appropriate public education" for students with disabilities. The 1975 statute also mandated that this

education be provided in the least restrictive environment until the individual reaches 21 years of age. Reissued as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in 1990, the law proposed a working committee of educators and parents to create an Individualized Education Program (IEP) for each student. Parents were provided the right to pursue a due process hearing if there was a disagreement with the content of the IEP. As an outcome, the document created a blueprint for the student's education over the course of a year and has the force of law. It includes information on the nature of the student's disability, present levels of academic, social, and personal functioning, accommodations and technologies necessary for success, objectives for student achievement and progress, the services rendered to ensure this achievement, as well as their frequency and location.

Although the content of the IEP itself has been defined by regulation over the course of successive iterations of IDEA (1997, 2004), the content of the meeting and the process by which the IEP is developed remain open. The law stipulates that the IEP must be developed in concert among team members during the IEP meeting and that the meeting focus on the development of the IEP document. Beyond the development of the IEP document, however, the process and content of the meeting itself can take any number of directions focused on the student's educational program. In his guidebook on IEP meeting process, Burns (2006) suggests that the purposes of the IEP meeting are several: communication, resolution, commitment, management, and compliance. Routinely, Burns (2006) observes, there is greater attention to form over substance. Because the agenda is almost always set by educators, and because the IEP document carries the weight of law, compliance is the most critically observed feature in many IEP meetings. Burns (2006) questions whether the regulatory intent of IEP meetings, to develop a plan

"reasonably calculated" to educate a young person, presuming the child will be educated in regular classes with the "use of supplementary aids and services" is ever adequately achieved (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.).

Since the law's inception, parent and student attendance at IEP meetings has been included in regulation as important to the IEP's formation (Martin, Huber Marshall, & Sale, 2004). By law, an invitation to the parents or caregivers of a student with a disability to attend the IEP meeting must be issued by the school district where the child attends school. Burns (2006) insists that there are inherent flaws in IEPs when parents are not included in IEP development. IEP meetings often include introductions of participants, particularly if parents, parent advocates, or outside service providers are present. The annual review meeting focuses on developing a blueprint for the education of the student with disabilities in the coming year (Kupper, 2000). Generally, topics include the student's current academic and social profile, his academic needs, and the levels of participation recommended in accessing the regular curriculum (Burns, 2006). Likewise, if the student is 16 years of age, discussion of the student's transition plan is routinely an additional focus of the annual review (Flexer, Simmons, Luft, & Baer, 2005).

Students can be invited to attend "whenever appropriate," a requirement legislated in 1990, at the same time that transition planning became a mandated component of the IEP. This transition planning must reflect student desires. However, the phrase "whenever appropriate" has never been defined in the law, in regulation, in case law or by the courts (Strickland & Turnbull, 1993; Wehmeyer & Ward, 1995). Essentially, the decision to encourage student attendance remains up to the adults, the educators and parents, who

attend the IEP meetings. As Martin et al. (2004) note, documenting a three year study of 393 IEP meetings, many parents and students are still not aware of the regulations for student attendance at IEP meetings, and therefore few students participate directly in the development of their own IEPs. In fact, the law requires that the discussions at IEP meetings reflect student interests and preferences (Martin et al, 2004). Without students, it would seem, a valuable source of data is missing in the content of IEP meetings. Burns (2006) points out that, if IEP meetings are to be data-driven, they must contain actual data from the student's performance and behavior in school.

As noted, in addition to content, the process by which the meeting evolves can take any number of directions. Meetings are normally led by an administrative designee in a school district appointed by the district's board of education. Most often, a Committee on Special Education (CSE) chairperson oversees IEP meetings, although sometimes the school psychologist undertakes that role (New York State Department of Education, 1980). It has been argued that the school as institution, represented by the administrator in charge of the IEP meeting and other professionals at the meeting is engaged in the social reproduction of perspectives on disability. In her two year ethnographic case study of IEP meetings, Rogers (2002) elucidates a mother's surprise at having her daughter remain in a self-contained classroom against her own wishes and better judgment. Subsequently, she finds herself powerless to contest the decision because of the school's logic supporting a deficiency model of disability. Rogers' analysis focused on student and parent turn-taking which resulted in a seven fold increase in turns taken by the parent from one annual review to the next; however, the student's placement, predetermined by school authorities, remained the same (Rogers, 2002).

IEP meetings can be as individual as the students for whom they are intended. Often, IEP meetings serve as the single and most consistent interface between the school and families. Several authors point out the use of IEP meetings as forums for collaboration between family and school (Clark, 2000; Conderman & Morin, 2004; Martin, 2005; Pogoloff, 2004; Sax & Thoma, 2002). However, Stroggilos and Xanthacou (2006), after analyzing IEP documents and completing structured interviews with ten families of individuals with profound disabilities, found that IEPs were not collaborative at all, in part, because teachers had designed the documents before the meetings even took place. This contributed to the already passive role of families during the process. They found that the hierarchical nature of the IEP process, with teachers and school professionals as the gatekeepers of information, precluded equal participation. As witnessed by the large number of impartial hearing requests in New York State (5,422), the IEP meeting process can break down. Shy of dysfunction, the IEP meetings bring together team members with different needs, proficiencies, and expectations (Martin, N.R.M., 2005; Martin, J.E. et al, 2004) and therefore can create dissatisfaction and disaffection. In many cases, programs for students with special needs have been developed specifically from a model of skill and ability deficit, focused on student weakness (Harry & Klinger, 2007).

IEP meetings vary in their process and content, often with negative results. IEP meetings rarely reflect consistent and successful models of organizational development. They can deviate from their intended purpose of building equal access to schools for families and for students. Ethnographic studies of IEP meetings have developed understanding about issues of power, positioning, and perceived expertise as barriers to consensus (Egan, 1997; Ilaqua, 2000; Rogers, 2002). Acknowledging that the IEP

meeting process represents a set of infinitely arrayed and complex factors, McCombs-Tolis (2002) suggests that training be offered to staff in providing positive influence on the dynamics of the meeting. Otherwise, because of different participant expectations she claims, bewilderment, resentment, and frustration inevitably result.

IEP Meeting Process

Student Turn Taking

Research has been done recently on the level of student turn-taking during IEP meetings as a measure of student involvement. Although, as noted above, student participation is expressly sought in federal regulation for IEP meetings, active student participation in IEP meetings is sporadic and often non-existent. Findings indicate that other IEP meeting participants, most notably parents and special education teachers, speak the most during IEP meetings (Martin et al., 2004; Rogers, 2002). When students do attend their IEP meetings, they rarely know what to do, and tend to be passive and often remain silent (Mason, Field & Sawilowsky, 2004). In a qualitative study of student involvement in IEP meetings, Lehmann, Bassett, and Sands (1999) found that a majority of students failed to understand the outcome of their meetings and found the process meaningless. A literature review of 16 research studies of student involvement in IEP meetings conducted by Test, Mason, Hughes, Konrad, Neale, and Wood (2004) determined that between 48% and 64% of students with disabilities attended their annual IEP meetings. Interestingly, Mason, Field, and Sawilowsky (2004) in a survey of 523 educators discerned that although student involvement in IEP meetings was minimal, practitioners placed a high value on student self-determination. Practitioners believed

that students with disabilities were capable of participating in IEP meetings and exercising self –advocacy and self-determination. Martin et al.'s study (2004), found that students attended about 70% of their secondary IEP meetings and that students took turns during IEP meetings 3% of the time.

Self Advocacy

In part, students engage less in IEP meetings because of a significant lack of education about the nature and purpose of IEP meetings (Martin et al., 2004). Students are unheard when it comes to school reform efforts and schooling generally (Mitra, 2004).

Few students, whether having a disability or not, utilize their voices and practice self-advocacy in school settings (Cook-Sather 2002a, 2002b; Fielding, 2003; Mitra, 2004). Inquiry groups begun with high school students in California helped researchers pinpoint areas of critical reform in their schools (Jones & Yonezawa, 2002). Echoing psychological research that demonstrates the connection between autonomy and motivation, Mitra (2004) solicited the participation of a California high school with a 57% graduation rate in a restructuring project. Students at the high school created a student forum that regularly met with faculty to help guide reform efforts and keep adults accountable to the process. Further, as a method of developing student self-advocacy among all students in a suburban high school, Cook-Sather (2002a) helped to build relationships between them and pre-service teachers. Through correspondence and weekly meetings, the high school students provided regular feedback on the work of the student teachers and learned in the process about themselves and learning (Cook-Sather, 2002b).

Cook-Sather's (2002b) literature review on student voice questions the role of authority in dampening student participation in decision-making. Describing a case study in the Southwestern United States, Barrie and McDonald (2002) noted the importance of administrative involvement in creating a program for students with disabilities to self advocate. Zickel and Arnold (2001) noted that the continual shifts in teacher, administrator, and student grade level seem to send the IEP process back to square one. In the process, they develop an argument for greater self-advocacy by students to ensure consistency at a suburban elementary school. Douglas (2004), in a study of 23 seventh grade students using pre and post survey data, discovered that students with and without disabilities could effectively self-advocate for the use of differentiated instruction in their classroom. Likewise, after students learned about methods of self-advocacy, there was a marked interest in developing their own voices on other issues of learning in school (Douglas, 2004).

The advantage of student self- advocacy is that the consideration of post-secondary goals required under IDEA 2004 is better achieved with input from the subject of the meeting, the student. However, the reality of student self-advocacy has proven difficult to foster. Wehmeyer (2002) states that "(The) student role historically has been one of passivity and inactivity in educational planning and decision-making." (p. 32). Within the school context students with disabilities, facing considerable social and academic barriers to success, fare even less well socially and academically than their general education counterparts. Many school reforms fail to restructure special education programming and almost none depend on student input (Borman, Hewes, Overman, & Brown, 2003). Disability, for example, is seen by some educators as antithetical to

student leadership; hence, self-advocacy for them is a deeper reach for students with disabilities than for students without disabilities (Paraschiv, 2000). The results from sampling student outcomes in the NELS:88 database from the National Center for Educational Statistics led Rojewski (1996) to conclude that students with learning disabilities have significantly lower academic and occupational aspirations. Stone and May's (2002) study of 101 students with and without disabilities that included surveys of parents and teachers discovered that students with learning disabilities seem to have unrealistically high views of their own academic performances. This finding raises concerns for these researchers about the facility of students with disabilities to self-advocate effectively.

In spite of any skepticism, scholars and researchers for at least twenty-five years have analyzed student self-advocacy, particularly as it is defined in the context of self-determination for students with disabilities. In a review of data-based intervention research on the self-advocacy of students with disabilities combined with seven interviews with stakeholders, Test, Fowler, Wood, Brewer, and Eddy (2005) counted 26 definitions for self advocacy. As a result of their review, they developed a framework for successful self advocacy which includes student indicators for focusing on knowledge of self, knowledge of rights, communication, and leadership (Test et al, 2005).

Given Test et al.'s framework (2005), students should be attending their IEP meetings and registering their preferences and interests as mandated by law (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1990, 20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.). Researchers argue that student self-advocacy, particularly as it relates to student-directed IEPs, remains an important component of IEP success for younger students as well as with students in

post-school venues (Pearl, 2004; Pocock et al., 2002; Test et al., 2005). As the result of a five subject, multiple base-line design study, Arndt, Konrad, and Test (2006) argued for self-directed IEP meetings as increasing student participation in IEP meetings. Baseline was set as the level of participation during mock IEP meetings and observational checklists measured results during real meetings for five students with various disabilities. In another study, Mason, McGahee-Kovac, Johnson, and Stillerman implemented student-led IEPs for 43 high school students and found, upon observing five of these IEP meetings, that students were able to engage in target behaviors 96% of the time. Follow-up interviews with teachers reinforced the fact that student involvement and self advocacy in IEP meetings was viewed favorably. Test and Neale (2004) implemented instruction on self-advocacy with four seventh grade students with severe disabilities, discovering their having made significant gains on scales of self-determination measuring autonomy, self-regulation, and psychological empowerment after the intervention. Acknowledging the comparative success of instruction in self advocacy and the ability of students to engage successfully in their IEP meetings, why don't students participate more often and more effectively in IEP meetings? First of all, students with disabilities are being asked to display their self-advocacy skills in the context of IEP meetings which, as we have learned, can have a negative cast (Sax, 2002). Conducting trainings for a self-directed IEP curriculum protocol, Torgerson, Miner, and Shen (2004) described student reactions to their IEP meetings as ranging from boredom with the process to resentment and embarrassment for the information being shared about them. However, at no place in the protocol as described is the opportunity reserved to acknowledge student feelings or to create more positive responses in anticipation of IEP

meetings. Several IEP programs have this goal in mind (Field & Hoffman, 1996; Pocock, et al., 2002; Van Reusen, Bos, Schumaker, & Deschler, 1994; Wehmeyer, Palmer, Agran, & Mithaug, 1998). Students are provided the skills of self-advocacy primarily through direct instruction, in workbooks, and through role play, and receive coaching on dress, posture, and eye-contact (Field & Hoffman, 1996; Hoffman, 2004). These courses rely on separate and distinct curricula that cannot be easily infused into other secondary curricula (Yuen & Shaughnessy, 2001). Torgerson et al. (2004), for example, have students work through several separate classroom sessions to enhance self-advocacy. Teachers cite the lack of knowledge generally about self-determination and the amount of time necessary to teach these skills as impediments to self-determination's implementation on a wider scale (Grigal, Neubert, Moon, & Graham, 2003).

Recently, active student leadership in the IEP process has been recommended as evidence based practice (Martin, Van Dycke, Greene, Gardner, Christensen, Woods, & Lovett, 2006b). After observing 627 IEP meetings across 109 middle and high schools through 17,804 10-second interval interactions, Martin and his team discovered that special educators talked 51% of the time. Families in the study talked 15% of the time, combining for a monopoly of 66% of the total available time during IEP meetings. Like Martin et al., 2004, this study determined that students spoke 3% of the time. However, having instructed students in *ChoiceMaker*, a self-determination strategy, and using a 10 second interval design for gathering data, Martin, Van Dycke, Christensen, Greene, Gardner, &Lovett (2006a) found that, through 130 meetings, students spoke almost 13% of the time, representing over a four fold increase.

The IEP meeting has been empirically demonstrated as an effective venue for students to engage in self-advocacy and self determination (Algozzine, Browder, Karvonen, Test, & Wood, 2001). Student-led IEP meetings for which students are provided instruction in introducing team members, stating the purpose of the meeting, reviewing past progress and asking for feedback, expressing needs, skills, limits, options and goals, and closing the meeting have been recommended as evidence based practice (Martin et al., 2006a). However, even when student leadership of IEP meetings is developed, the results often remain problematic (Martin et al., 2006a). Because special education teachers take responsibility for having instructed their students in self-determination, they feel responsible for their students' performances during these meetings. After interviewing six families of students with disabilities on their perceptions of student led IEP meetings, Childre and Chambers (2005) concluded that the locus of control remained firmly with the professionals at the meeting. Teacher expectations interfered and often led the student responses in these cases (Martin et al., 2006a). The *Steps to Self-Determination* curriculum (Field & Hoffman, 2002) has measured student success in part based on indicators of internal locus of control. From pre-test to post-test situations, these indicators favorably increase. However, Field and Hoffman (2002) concluded that, in large part, the results indicate that self-determined teachers help develop self-determined learners, and that the curriculum may not be responsible for the results. Therefore, the desired results of having students make and speak about their own needs and choices can be difficult to achieve. Likewise, after surveying teachers and parents on self determination, Grigal et al. (2003) found that parents' views on their child's placement, whether in regular and college preparatory classes or in life skills classes, mediated their

views of self determination as even possible. Parents with children in segregated settings believed their children less able to master strategies of self-determination such as being aware of their strengths and needs, making choices, experiencing consequences, and speaking for themselves. Most parents in Grigal et al.'s study (2003), though, supported the concept of self-determination.

Positive Interaction

The development and tracking of positive emotional valence, particularly among social interactions, has recently gained considerable attention in research. Beginning in 1990 with the work of Csikszentmihalyi (1999) on the concept of "flow," scholars in psychology and sociology have theorized the effects of positive interactions and sought empirical evidence to validate these effects. "Flow" describes any experience that is engrossing and enjoyable for its own sake with no consequences outside of the experience itself, as when artists and authors create (Csikszentmihalyi, 1999). Using a timed sampling technique to measure periodic engagement, Csikszentmihalyi investigated the concept of flow as an indicator of classroom engagement. Among 526 high school students, engagement was defined as students' experiencing control of their individual learning environment, a balance between their skills and the perceived challenge at hand, and the relevance of the instruction. Csikszentmihalyi and his colleagues discovered considerably less engagement with teachers in control, i.e. lecturing, than when students exercised autonomy, i.e. choosing their own learning goals within tasks of appropriate challenge (Shernoff, Csikszentmihalyi, Schneider, & Shernoff, 2003).

The positing of the experience of flow has likewise captured the imaginations of researchers like Seligman and Fredrickson who have investigated patterns of positive behavior and emotion (Fredrickson, 2003a; Fredrickson, 2003b Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Seligman, Steen, & Park, 2005). Seligman (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Seligman, Steen, & Park, 2005; Weissberg, & Kumpfer, & Seligman, 2003) has focused his efforts on the development of "positive psychology," defined as the study of positive attitudes, positive character traits, and positive organizational characteristics. He and his colleagues' review of the literature on substance abuse prevention programs underscored the need for developing positive relationships within the family, community, and school in order to enhance young people's life experiences (Weissberg, Kumpfer, & Seligman, 2003).

Fredrickson's work focuses more specifically on the interplay of positive emotional valence and the life of groups. Among her studies, she documents that positive emotions can help solve problems of personal growth and development as well as improve immediate task performance (Fredrickson, 2003b). After showing films laden with positive or negative emotional images or with neutral subject matter, Fredrickson tested the relative ability of college students to attend to tasks or to seek global solutions to problems. Students exposed to positive images performed better (Fredrickson & Branigan, 2005). She postulated that team functioning can be enhanced by a swing to a positive perspective by a few individuals (Fredrickson, 2003a). This indeed turned out to be empirically founded in her work.

Out of this experiment and others, her "broaden and build" theory of social interaction postulates that positive emotions facilitate creativity and behavioral flexibility while

helping to develop long term personal resources (Fredrickson & Branigan, 2005; Otake, Shimai, Tanaka-Matsumi, Otsui, & Fredrickson, 2006). Positive emotions tend to speed up and broaden the development of new relationships among incoming freshman at a large university (Waugh & Fredrickson, 2006), determined by scales of how close these freshman felt with one another. Positive emotions also tended to minimize racial bias among 89 Caucasian students after films induced in them joy, fear, and a neutral state and they were asked to identify with "other race" individuals (Johnson & Fredrickson, 2005). A review of the literature on positive emotions points to the value of positive emotions for increased immunity from diseases, lowered risk of heart attack, and increased longevity in patients with AIDS (Tugade, Fredrickson, & Barrett, 2004). For the present study, this literature review has implications for the practice of "positive emotional disclosure" or the telling of personal events from a positive viewpoint. It makes sense that the expression of positive emotions during meetings can and should be facilitated (Schwartz, 2002).

Negative Interaction

Studies of negative emotions and tracking their diffusion and their effect in groups and organizations have been documented in several studies. Tested against neutral states in Fredrickson's research with college students, negative emotions serve a purpose because they provide the human organism with the impetus to cope in life threatening situations, eliciting immediate and direct action (Fredrickson & Branigan, 2005; Fredrickson & Losada, 2005). Commonly referred to as "fight or flight," the result of negative emotional interaction is an immediate narrowing of an individual's scope of action and

thought-action repertoire (Fredrickson & Branigan, 2005). The effects of negative emotions are minimized through the resilient use of positive emotions (Tugade & Fredrickson, 2004). By tallying the number of positive and negative emotions experienced daily by two sample groups of university students for 28 consecutive days, Fredrickson and Losada calculate that a ratio of between 2.9 and 11.6 to 1, positive to negative interactions, facilitates maximum human flourishing. Anything above or below these levels begins to have debilitating consequences, depending on the circumstances. Therefore, a ratio between these rates of positive and negative interactions may lead to increase quality in team meetings.

The literature on organizational and group dynamics investigates ways to minimize negative interactions at meetings among participants. Drawing on observations of senior management meetings at several large corporations, Edmondson and Smith (2006) identify issues that spark relational conflict and detail the handling of these issues through mapping negative interactions and eliciting team reflection. Likewise, toxic decisions in organizations are tracked in three symphony orchestras by Maitlis and Ozcelik (2004), revealing that, often, a negative lens on events easily prevails, resulting in volatility, emotional contagion, and finally, a dangerous suppression of negative emotions. Organizational decisions about how to handle the consequences of negative emotions become important to ensure the functioning of the group. For the success of team meetings, Tagliere (1990) recommends always keeping interpersonal processes positive.

Given the number of factors and the types and expectations of participants affecting IEP team meetings, interactions during IEP meetings frequently have a negative cast.

Analyzing IEP meeting results, Sax observes that interactions at IEP meetings are often negative (Sax, 2005). Sax (2002) also warns that positive comments often leave negative impressions because of meeting history and distrust. Among others, factors that can create negative impressions include discomfort with the balance of participants representing home and school and lack of being listened to (Oleniczak, 2002). The lack of participation by general educators, i.e. classroom teachers (Matthews, 1998), and lack of relevance in the IEP meeting discussion or preparedness by the professional staff can also leave negative impressions (Childre & Chambers, 2005). These factors can develop negative emotions. Negative emotions have the effect of narrowing people's options regarding potential courses of action. A specific set of behavioral options, namely the urges to escape (fear), to attack (anger), and to expel (disgust), are the primary considered actions when faced with negativity according to Frederickson (2003b). The limiting effects of negative emotions make the success of IEP meetings and effective transition planning less likely.

IEP Meeting Content

The Use of Information

The exchange of information about a student's social and academic progress is important in IEP meetings (Burns, 2006). Because IEP meetings and their related documentation are governed strictly by law, compliance is largely the order of the day. In order to comply with the law, the IEP meeting must include the exchange of evaluation results for students and their present levels of performance. Classroom

achievement results are shared and, in many cases, standardized test results. “Data-based IEPs require data based IEP meetings” Burns (2006, p. 6) observes.

Information, as an example of communication set against an objective criterion, can be used to mutual advantage. Citing several case studies in management, Fisher and Ury (1991) argue for the need to understand information from several different perspectives, allowing different parties to play key roles in negotiating on teams. McMahan and Baer (2001) support the view that information gathered from multiple levels and from various stakeholders within a system can lead to stronger transition outcomes. Surveying 104 transition teams using the *Survey on Transition Compliance and Best Practices*, they found that the best predictor of transition plan compliance and best practice was the incorporation of interagency transition teams in schools. It follows that these teams would typically bring helpful information from the various interests that they represented. However, it is important to note that when the IEP meeting takes place, this planning occurs by using information that is accurate and can be independently validated (Argyris,1970; Argyris & Schon, 1974).

Information functions as a dependent variable in a study of group negotiations conducted by Thompson, Peterson, and Brodt (1996) with 462 students working on teams designed to negotiate with one another of 4 to 8 participants each. These researchers note that information exchange more often leads to accurate judgments because it minimizes the risk of uncertainty and task ambiguity. They posit that, without the need for consensus (of the sort for which IEP teams are responsible), information exchange would be less of a requirement. Likewise, if one person has control of a situation, as might be

evidenced by a special education teacher monopolizing the decision making for an IEP, information becomes less necessary.

The Use of Observation

Classroom observations of students can provide valuable academic and social information. In reviewing the history of classroom observations, Meehan, Cowley, Finch, Chadwick, Ermolov, and Riffle (2004) note the half dozen formal observational instruments available commercially, including one that is accomplished quickly as a "snapshot" of student behaviors. In proposing methods for evaluating written work, Goodman (1982) suggests that teachers, by nature, are "kid watchers." Teacher observations and parent observations can provide concrete and rigorous evidence of student behavior and performance and frequently coincide (Doctoroff & Arnold, 2004; Sitlington, 1996a).

How students are seen responding to challenges, negotiating groups, and interrelating with peers provides educators and parents with predictive evidence of future situations and circumstances. Willis (1995) highlights three types of observations: skill focused, behavior focused, and "by chance" observations. Although the first two types can require the use of commercially available or locally developed instruments, the third can also identify behaviors that lead to helpful evaluations of performance and growth. Fox, Gunther, Davis, and Brall, (2000) recommend Functional Behavior Assessments as part of the IEP data-gathering process that require observational strategies on the part of teachers and parents. Observational data on actual student behaviors seen and experienced by IEP meeting participants can make IEP meetings more relevant (Martin,

2005). These observations can be of the more formal variety, although they still carry relevance as "by chance" observations. As a result of a survey of 253 teachers in New York State, Southworth (1999) discovered the value teacher hold in using observation in creating and assessing student performance. Using interviews of parents and teachers of 79 elementary students, Doctoroff and Arnold (2004) discovered that classroom observations of behavior correlated highly to parent perceptions of their students' behaviors. The introduction of observational data can provide valuable perspective to improve student assessment and, therefore, IEP meeting outcomes (Southworth, 1999).

The Use of Opinion

Based on the literature, opinion seems to have less value in educational and professional meeting venues, and its weakness compared to information and observation seems clear. Paglieri (2002), defining opinion as expressing a feeling or wish, measured opinion type remarks in her observational study of a hospital team, finding that opinion ranks behind information at a ratio of 6 to 5. Opinion offers a less robust form of assessment generally, one colored by personal perceptions, attitudes, and dispositions (Herrera, Herrera-Veidma, & Verdegay, 1997; Watson, 2000). Opinion is more akin to assumption and, unlike fact, is changeable (Yaniv & Milyavsky, 2006). Clark (2000) finds that "subjective evaluations" can weaken IEP development. Individual opinions can appear imprecise and can require additional explanation to be useful (Hse-Mei & Chen-Tung, 1996). Closely held beliefs often conflict with observed beliefs (Rutstrom & Wilcox, 2006). After proving that subjects in a matching pennies game had greater success based on evidence of their opponents' strategies than on their own convictions,

Rutstrom and Wilcox (2006) posited that stated beliefs often conflict with empirical or observed beliefs. They surmised, too, that empirical beliefs were better predictors of action. The literature in philosophical research contrasts opinion with "truth-telling" because of its emotional ambiguity and general subjectivity (Finocchiaro, 2005; Perkins, 2004; Wheeler, 2005). Professional opinion provided by a source of expertise like a teacher, counselor, or administrator at an IEP meeting can have the effect of limiting other stakeholder input (MacPherson, 2006).

Discussing Transition

Transition planning is a critical function of the Committee on Special Education (CSE), which oversees IEP meeting process and content (Sax & Thoma, 2002). Discussions about a student's plans following graduation from high school are an important part of IEP meetings (Flexer et al., 2005; Test, 2000). Ideally, student self-determination, i. e. setting goals and making choices to achieve those goals drive the development of the IEP transition plan. Successful transition incorporates practices of family involvement and community support, promoting student self determination, person centered planning, interagency collaboration, and career education (Flexer et al., 2005; Carter & Hughes, 2005; Keefe, Moore, & Duff, 2006; King, Baldwin, Currie, & Evans, 2006; Kohler & Hood, 2000). To try and promote student success at independent living, at a minimum, these transition discussions should have the outcome of ensuring employment, community living, transportation, and recreation supports during the last year of high school (Hasazi, Furney, & Destefano, 1999). However, students with

disabilities rarely get the opportunity to be heard during IEP meetings when discussing transition.

The amount of time spent discussing issues of transition planning varies. Martin et al., (2006b) found that, after training in student directed IEP meetings, discussions of transition issues emerged 24% of the time, showing no change over the study's controls. Students interviewed for the study knew the least about transition of any other topic. In fact, the study noted that the highest level of transition discussions occurred toward the end of meetings with special education teachers still dominating transition discussions (Martin et al, 2006b). The reason for the timing of talk about transition, these researchers postulated, might have had to do with where in the IEP form itself transition was noted. In the case of this study, transition plans and services were located at the very end of the form. The late and rushed conversations about transition, though, seem indicative of how transition planning is generally handled. Often, it remains an afterthought (Martin et al., 2006b).

Overall, conversations regarding transition during IEP meetings are comparatively rare even though the IEP meeting is the forum during which transition needs to be discussed (Grigal et al., 1997). As Stoggilos and Xanthacou (2006) have noted that IEP documents, of which transition plans are a part, are often created by teachers before the IEP meeting even begins. Often these conversations are held between a special education teacher and the students for whom he or she is responsible (Carter & Hughes, 2005). However, transition described and discussed during an IEP meeting can have the benefit of engaging all the major stakeholders in a person's future: the student first and foremost, and, in addition, the student's parents, caregivers, related service providers, and

counselors, among others. This is often the only opportunity to collaborate to plan the support of the efforts of students, professionals, and families. The ideal process for transition begins long before a person faces graduation (Johnson Stodden, Emanual, Luecking, & Mack, 2002), and the conversations that do occur should be designed to fashion a successful post-secondary process.

History of Post-Secondary Transition and Transition Planning

Within the 1990 amendments to IDEA, developing transition plans for assisting students with disabilities to move from secondary education to post-secondary opportunities became mandated components of the IEP. These changes developed due to poor post-secondary outcomes for these students as research attempted to track their outcomes in the mid-1980s (Will, 1984). In 1990, IDEA transition planning stipulated that students take an active role in the post-secondary planning process and that, if a student does not attend his or her IEP meeting, steps must be taken to ensure that a student's preferences and interests are taken into consideration.

In the reauthorization of the 1990 law in 2004, transition services became defined as a "coordinated set of activities designed to be within a results-oriented process, that is focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the child with a disability to facilitate the child's movement from school to post-school activities, including post-secondary education, vocational education, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation." (IDEA, 2004) The age at which transition plans must be included in IEPs was raised to 16 in 2004.

Transition plans are developed as part of a student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and technically need to represent consensus on the part of an IEP team. The IEP team at the secondary level (grades 7 – 12) is comprised of the student, special education teacher, general education teacher, person versed in diagnostics (e.g. school psychologist), administrator, parent of the student, and parent advocate (Kupper, 2000). Depending on the student's grade level, in New York State, a representative from VESID (Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities) may also be present along with related service providers and, if necessary, a physician. The presence of VESID and related service providers is designed to make the transition process as seamless as possible, although, in practice, the process can be daunting.

After analyzing documents and interviewing policymakers, Furney, Hasazi, and DeStefano (1997) outlined seven themes found in transition planning in three unnamed states of varying sizes and populations. Among these themes, they underscore the need for shared values and beliefs on the part of the planners and the need to include students with disabilities fully in schools and communities, balancing this need against local resources and control. In addition, Furney et al. (1997) point to the importance of collaboration in the context of building capacity in communities for successful transition of students with disabilities.

Johnson et al (2002) and others (Hasazi, Furney, & DeStefano, 1999; McAffee & Greenwall, 2001; Shearin, Roessler, & Shriner, 1999) argue that this crucial aspect of a student's career in school, transition planning, can be and frequently is overlooked. Student and parent participation in the process remains a significant challenge to successful transition (Johnson et al., 2002). Although there is sporadic compliance with

the mandate, the components of the transition plan remain ineffective. Interviewing 12 students with developmental disabilities, their parents and educators, Powers, Turner, Matuszewski, Wilson, and Loesch (1999) found that transition plans were often incomplete and that student involvement in their development was weak. Shearin et al. (1999) analyzed the IEPs of 68 Arkansas high school students with disabilities for the quality of their transition plans. They discovered that plans were unclear regarding goals and activities in areas such as living arrangements, post-secondary education plans, and employment goals. In their archival study of 94 transition plans for high school students aged 18 to 21, Grigal, Test, Beattie, and Wood (1997) found that often compliance with Federal mandates was apparent, but that best practices such as developing post-school accommodations of materials and resources were not. Among their findings, student outcomes and activities were characterized as vague, little chance was provided for interaction in the community, and there was a general lack of vision and long range planning. Grigal et al. (1997) found that the transition plans they studied failed to meet even minimal levels of compliance when it came to efforts to ensure student voice and student desires. In an in-depth cross case analysis of nine school sites, Hasazi et al (1999) supported these conclusions. The National Council on Disability (2000) estimates that as many as 44 states out of 50 have failed to ensure compliance with even minimal standards for transition plans.

The literature on the difficulties and challenges of transition planning has grown considerably in the last decade, yet the literature on successful transition plans is sparse. The National Longitudinal Study of 1988 and the National Longitudinal Transition Study of Special Education Students, 1987 – 1991 have provided researchers with statistical

data on outcomes for students who require transition planning as part of their exiting high school. From these studies, youth with disabilities are found to be significantly underemployed and less likely to attend any sort of post-secondary education opportunity (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996). In spite of these findings, "how-to" guides such as *Guide to Writing Quality Individualized Education Programs: What's Best for Students with Disabilities?* (Gibb, 2000), *A Guide to Collaboration for IEP Teams* (Martin, 2005), and *What Every Principal Needs to Know about Special Education* (McLaughlin and Nolet, 2004), give passing reference to transition if at all.

Many required and recommended components of transition plans are designed to ensure seamless and effective delivery of post-secondary services. Identified through meta-analysis, these components include: vocational education, community based instruction, and interagency collaboration (Kohler, Johnson, Chadsey-Rusch, & Rusch, 1993). In a comparison study of 22 IEPs of students with mental retardation, Miner and Bates (1997) found that well-constructed transition plans that reflect person-centered planning can contribute to parent satisfaction and their willingness to participate in meetings.

Several references exist to help bolster the quality of the transition process overall. In a review of the literature of transition, Skinner and Lindstrom (2003) provided several strategies for educators to try and ensure the success of transition. They cite self-advocacy, discussed earlier, the need to keep students informed of their rights, and assistance for students in choosing post-secondary schools wisely. In addition, learning to live outside the home and organizing time and resources are important for students with disabilities, as is the available support network upon their graduation from high

school. Ultimately, Skinner and Lindstrom (2003) and other scholars (Cuskelly, Jobling, & Buckley, 2002; Wehmeyer & Schwartz, 1997;) recognize that transition is a life-span issue and needs long range planning and coordination.

King et al. (2006) emphasize holistic models of assessment and service delivery for transitioning students. Positive relationships for students remain crucial for success as are experiences within the community where adequate social support exists. The use of single strategies, these researchers caution, is less effective than focusing on the whole person and his or her needs and aspirations (King et al., 2006).

Qualitative studies that exist on proactive transition planning focus on strategies that can be attempted to improve transition outcomes. Neubert and Moon (2000) describe a field test of a transition profile that is designed to provide quick updates by student, parents, and educators of student experiences that can enhance post-secondary success. The profile is shared among constituents so that student progress can be monitored with regard to developing student strengths and improving weaknesses, changing transition goals continually as well as eligibility for adult services (Neubert & Moon, 2000).

Kohler and Greene (2003) identified competencies necessary for teachers to help enact successful transition plans. Knott and Asselin (1999) have recognized particular transition competencies necessary for pre-service teachers. Heal and Rusch (1995), after an extensive study of 2,405 employed individuals with disabilities, argue that personal and family characteristics of the employee seem to trump the type and quality of the high school program from which they graduated. Yet the same personal and family characteristics, e.g. those of independence and connections to the community are precisely the stuff of successful transition planning. Furney et al. (1997) agree with these

results when describing the necessary supports to be in place for transition to work well. Therefore, it may be said that schools largely fail to tap into the strength of families and communities that could otherwise ensure greater transition success. In short, schools failed to collaborate.

IDEA 2004 Transition Plan Definitions

Goals and Action Steps

The amendments to the 1997 IDEA legislation require that IEP teams identify post-school activities for students with disabilities in an "outcome oriented process" (IDEA 1997, 300.29). As indicated above, the IEP and transition process can be fraught with problems, yet the fact remains that the goals and activities or action steps delineated for the student are mandated because they have the potential to enhance transition. As Huefner (2000) and Carter and Hughes (2005) write, the amendments to the 1997 IDEA legislation clearly demand that students, through a process of self determination, describe their goals for life after high school. A majority of the goals of transition, therefore, need to be developed with the student firmly at the center of the process and accountable at least to some degree for the goals' achievement (Flexer et al., 2005). Goals without action steps provide little benefit in the transition plan, and Powers et al. (2005) discovered that 33% of the goals had no action steps associated with them. Likewise, the goals and action steps in the transition plan need to provide sufficient depth and breadth so that successful transition for a student with a disability seems possible and even likely. Non-specific goals and objectives on transition plans have resulted in compensatory education awards provided by the courts (McAffee & Greenwalt, 2001). For example,

McAffee and Greenwalt cite a legal decision in Navato Unified SD (1995) in which the use of checklists for transition goals and objectives resulted in compensatory damages to a student (p. 5).

Although the quality of goals and activities can vary, they are often disappointing. Cotone and Brady (2005) after analyzing reading goals on IEPs for 54 high school students asserted that 73% of the students diagnosed with reading difficulties had goals that essentially remained the same from grades 3 to 9. They also observed the general shallowness of IEPs at all levels without specific enough diagnoses of problems or plans for remediation. The same may be said for transition plans, developed by the same professionals. According to Geary (2007), the New York State Education Department VESID Office has undertaken a concerted effort to make sure transition goals actually change for students from year to year, tailoring the transition plans to the student's continued growth (Geary, 2007). Horn, Lieber, Shouming, Sandall, and Schwartz (2000) advocate through multiple case studies for the embedding of IEP goals and objectives within the regular education curriculum for younger students. Their results indicate that seeking the integration of goals and objectives more tightly into the education of children holds promise for the success of students with disabilities.

Action steps, likewise, need to carry relevance by reflecting student experiences and a measure of flexibility. Action steps need to support goals with a clear time line for when the action step is to be completed with some adjustment following. Rea, McLaughlin, and Walther-Thomas (2002) found that action steps need to provide sufficient detail so that the goals appear achievable. When developing goals and action steps, broader integration of the skills and needs of individuals with disabilities of the kind found in

inclusive programs can lead to more successful transition (Bullock, 2002; King et al., 2006). Lignugaris/Kraft, Marchand-Martella, and Martella (2001) assert that the IEP, with its goals and activities, is a living document. The goals and objectives serve as benchmarks that flex and change with a person's growth over time. This calls for interactive transition plans where all stakeholders have input (Doyle, 2000).

Arguably, like the case for self advocacy and self-determination, a student's input into the goals of the IEP and the transition plan can create a greater chance for success. Based on observation and interviews with teachers and parents associated with 7 students with disabilities, Doll and Sands (1998) asserted that individual goal setting increased the chances of self-determined behaviors and ensured a level of ownership of the process. Goals must be clear, specific, and quantifiable, they tell us, and in creating these goals themselves, students will better understand the purpose of the process and their own involvement. Powers, Gil-Kashiwabara, Geenen, Powers, Balandran, & Palmer (2005) concluded that goals without action steps or vice versa provide little benefit in the transition plan. Likewise, the goals and action steps in the transition plan need to provide sufficient depth and breadth so that successful transition for a student with a disability seems possible and even likely. Based on a review of 399 transition plans, it was discerned that action steps must be feasible, capable of being implemented and relevant or useful for achieving a goal (Powers et al., 2005).

Post-School Outcomes

Post-school outcomes are post-secondary outcomes and include the range of potential results determined by transition plan goals such as independent living, integrated

employment, and community participation. As required by IDEA (2004), these outcomes must be measurable. Hence, these outcomes are often used as indicators of program effectiveness (Goldberger, Keough, & Almeida, 2000). Likewise, the goals and action steps stated in transition plans, noted above, need to relate directly to those post-school outcomes delineated for the student (Brown, Higgins, Pierce, Hong, & Thoma, 2003). The process of delineating these outcomes creates a continuum of opportunities available to the student that then can be integrated into the transition plan (King et al., 2006).

There are significant needs remaining among the transitioning population of students with disabilities. Frustration with the quality of post-school goals and outcomes was voiced by the coordinators of student disability at 74 colleges and universities nationwide (Janiga & Castenbader, 2002). Their concerns include students' lack of self-advocacy and understanding of their own strengths and weaknesses. College counselors were concerned with how much students with disabilities remained reliant on parents and special education providers (Janiga & Castebader, 2002). Lukose (2000) echoed these observations, criticizing the "learned helplessness" of students with disabilities in lacking study skills, an awareness of their disabilities, and a way to link their course of studies to a career path. Similarly, after interviewing 35 students with disabilities who were attending college, Lehmann, Davies, and Laurin (2000) concluded that, besides a lack of acceptance and understanding by their peers, these young adults still required access to a full range of services and a well-honed ability to self advocate to prosper. Powers et al. (2005) found that, out of 399 transition plans in three school districts, 6% had no goals at all and 63% of these transition plans had outcomes with minimal or no specific targets for students to achieve. Without specific, measurable, and relevant goals and action steps,

students with disabilities did not always have access to the full range of services, and, as we have seen above, their ability to self-advocate is not always well developed (Lehmann, Davies, & Laurin, 2000).

Vocational Education and Integrated Employment

Nolan (1999) found that student involvement in meaningful employment during high school remains a critical factor to include on transition plans. In fact, a student's holding one or more jobs during high school and the support of a strong network of family and friends are two strong indicators of post-school success for students with disabilities. A review of two comprehensive studies in Oregon and Nevada of school to work opportunities for students with (131) and without disabilities (422) led Benz, Yovanoff, and Doren (1997) to focus on several indicators of post-school student success. These researchers concluded that, overall, school to work components in educational planning serve to bridge the experience of transition for persons with disabilities as well as for those without disabilities. Functional skills in reading, writing, and math, vocational and career awareness, and personal-social strengths and connections all emerged as important predictors of the success of students with disabilities one year beyond high school. Competitive employment while in high school emerged as the single most important variable in the study.

Community involvement in the planning process also helps to develop the broadest spectrum of vocational opportunities. Sitlington, Neubert, Begun, Lombard, and Leconte (1996) argue that the involvement of community based vocational opportunities is valuable. These researchers add that learning about work and occupations helps to

establish individual identity in relation to career. Engaging in learning about careers means asking questions about which decisions come next, leading to a natural progression of plans about vocation. Potential activities for the goal of vocational education and employment include the development of a ladder of graduated experiences from community service to paid work (Benz et al., 1997).

In spite of these efforts at providing students with disabilities adequate vocational preparation, life upon graduation presents any number of potential barriers. Gosling and Cotterill's evaluation (2000) of a project in North England to ensure people with disabilities are provided adequate employment focused on several routes to potential work satisfaction. They discovered that the difficulties inherent in learning complex systems like social service agencies, the lack of community networks to support employment, and the attitudes of employers were roadblocks that people with disabilities faced. Negotiating these barriers burdened school-to-work and vocational education programs even further and complicated the transition process. Carter and Hughes (2005) described a number of interventions to try and overcome barriers such as the lack of community network support earlier in a person's transition period. Among these interventions are collaboration with students and assessments of work environments to prepare students for integration and inclusion. Adult relationships for students with vocational educators and guidance counselors for the purpose of emphasizing vocational opportunities proved important in the research conclusions of Harvey (2001).

Student Desires

By law, a student's preferences, career interests, desire for continuing education, and expectations for adult living need consideration for successful transition. Scholars describe students with disabilities as expected to self-advocate (Dole, 2001; Field, 1996; Lehmann et al, 2000; Pearl, 2004; Tunglanel, 2002). Several researchers have emphasized the need for students with disabilities to practice self-determination behaviors which are setting goals, making choices, and experiencing consequences among others (Edelin-Smith, 1995; Skinner & Lindstrom, 2003; Turnbull & Turnbull, 2001; Van Reusen et al, 2002; Wehmeyer, et al, 2001; Wood et al, 2004; Wood & Test, 2001). Describing research in multiple case studies, educators have advocated student-led IEP meetings precisely for the self-advocacy this arrangement elicits (Barrie and McDonald, 2002; Mason et al, 2004). Flexer et al. (2005) argue that the preferences and interests of individuals with disabilities need to be considered. Flexer et al. (2005), Wehmeyer (2002), Wehmeyer et al. (2000) have indicated that attention to student desires by the IEP team in the transition process creates more meaningful goals and activities. For example, by teaching 40 students with various disabilities to provide input into the goals of their IEPs, Wehmeyer (2002) discovered that 80% of these students made progress toward theses goals and 30% exceeded these goals.

Pavri and Luftig (2000) note that, since the growth of inclusive education, educating all youngsters in general education environments, a voice for children with special needs has become even more important and more often elicited (Meivette, Stichter, & McCormick, 2002) though difficult to ensure (Fisher, 1999). A survey of 532 teachers by Thoma, Nathanson, Baker, and Tamura (2002) reinforced the willingness on the part of

educators to solicit student voice. The difficulty with this effort, they report, is in independently implementing self-determination for their students. Often, Lane, Pierson, & Givner (2003) argue, adults' narrow-minded attitudes regarding school, teaching and learning, and children with disabilities create the biggest barriers to including student desires as part of IEP transition plans (Brown et al., 2003).

Independent Living

Understanding student desires extends to understanding their thoughts about potential living circumstances and collaborating with the community to ensure the best life circumstances. Appropriate transition planning can ensure a consideration of potential options and the collaboration of community resources necessary for functional independent living for people with disabilities. A survey of 1,067 New York State residents with disabilities found that focused and comprehensive transition planning was instrumental in developing living arrangements upon graduation that were successful (Shepard, 1991). Independent living is based on the concepts of consumer control and community integration. The deinstitutionalization of individuals with disabilities in the late 1960s and 1970s brought with it a changing emphasis for the more direct control of living options and arrangements by these individuals. In other words, people with disabilities moving into neighborhoods should be given the opportunity to choose their living arrangements (Flexer et al., 2005). Questions about post-secondary living arrangements in the transition process are standard. However, in exploring post-secondary living arrangements, attention to the details of maintaining control and dignity for students with disabilities may not be. Sitlington (1996b) in a meta-analysis of several

models for independent living found that only 27% of all people with learning disabilities had met the criteria for independence of engagement with work or education outside the home, residential arrangements, and involvement in social activities. Based on these findings, Sitlington (1996b) explained the need to implement goals for independent living including teaching life skills to all students, exploring various living arrangements in the community, and developing specific assessments of independent living abilities.

Community Participation

As a child enters and develops through the transition process, building a network of supports for post-school success becomes critical (Childre & Chambers, 2005). Connecting with the community and developing pro-social skills among children generally can result in positive support from the family and community (Caprara, Barbanelli, Pastorelli, Bandura, & Zimbardo, 2000). Enhancing the outlook on the personal and academic efficacy of students with disabilities at school and during the transition process can help integration into the community. Student motivation and self image regarding efficacy also can have significant impact on integration into the community. Important to the process is the need for family and community members to make contributions that are valued (Pearpont, Forest, & O'Brien, 1993). The goals of community and family support require an ability to listen deeply, to focus on the student for whom transition is being planned, and to abandon preconceived ideas (Sax, 2002).

A review of models available for post-secondary living arrangements by Sitlington (1996b) indicated that very few students with disabilities participated in community activities with any regularity. Most watched television; however, after integration into

community life 3 to 5 years after graduation, many more participated in groups and engaged in activities outside the home (Sitlington, 1996b). Stiltington goes on to provide recommendations for transition plans for special educators including greater integration of thinking about post-school outcomes to include life in the community. This means an exploration of available community based organizations and activities and more evidence based practice when developing goals and action steps. A collaborative approach among schools, families, and service providers can provide students the ability to transition into communities in self empowered ways. Recognizing and capitalizing on the positive attributes and effectiveness of individuals and organizations can help develop successful models of community integration. Empowerment of all stakeholders is the key (Lehman, Clark, Bullis, Rinkin, & Castellanos, 2002).

Best Practices in Transition Plans

In addition to the mandated components of the transition plan represented here as IDEA 2004 definitions, research over the last twenty years has determined several practices that can be termed “best” in the transition plans (Grigal et al., 1997; Powers et al., 2005; Wehmeyer & Schwartz, 1997) . These include a number of documented practices, some of which are only beginning to receive acceptance among practitioners, all of which can make more likely transition’s desired ends of independence and self-satisfaction.

Person-Centered Planning

According to Michaels and Ferrara (2006) person centered planning is designed as a best practice for developing formal transition plans. With the help of a facilitator, typically a family member or school staff member, the process focuses the resources of an individual student, her school, and her community to creatively shape and fulfill her aspirations (National Center on Secondary Education and Transition, 2004). Person centered planning begins by developing a list of all the adults, colleagues, service providers, and community connections that have a vested interest in seeing the young person succeed. Person centered planning requires a series of meetings when participants are encouraged to hear the young person's aspirations and then begin the process of supporting those aspirations through the school, the community, and beyond. Listening carefully to the student and building a community around this individual is important for person-centered planning. The group of individuals, including peers, personal friends, family, school staff, and employers among others assist the student's development of a personal history and profile, help the student understand major milestones in his or her life, and acknowledge the person's strengths and competencies. Group members discuss observations on the person's profile and information is shared with the student with disabilities; potential opportunities are brainstormed. With this information, the group formed to help develop the person centered plan can then suggest, seek, and implement viable family, school, and community supports to assure the person's success (National Center on Secondary Education and Transition, 2004).

The process of person centered planning has a number of advantages. It can create a supportive environment for the students with disabilities (National Center on Secondary

Education and Transition, 2004). It encourages self-expression in the creation of a profile with the assistance of the facilitator that then can help inform student choices and continued visioning. It develops the supports found in the community, among school mates and friends and with significant adults whose interest is the student's success.

As best practice for transition planning, person centered planning has yet to come fully into its own (Fore & Riser, 2005). With this process, the likelihood becomes possible that the relevance, quality, preparedness, and the need to identify innovative approaches might mollify the negative parent perceptions IEP meetings (Childre & Chambers, 2005). Sax (2002) makes this point by arguing that person centered planning, because of its inherently positive perspective, can enhance the active involvement of all stakeholders. Collecting data through interviews and survey instruments for 93 adults with intellectual disabilities, Robertson, Emerson, Hatton, McIntosh, Swift, Krinjen-Kemp et al. (2007) found that person-centered planning can provide an improved social network, increased schedule of daily activities, and improved choice overall. The process elicits personal choice and capitalizes on the connections that might already be available to the person with disabilities in the community.

Self-Determination

Thoma, Nathanson, Baker, and Tamura's (2002) survey research of 43 special education teachers suggests that students who are supported in self determined behaviors by teachers are more likely to achieve their goals and graduate high school. Self determination for students with disabilities remains not only a desirable means to an end, but a fundamental method of engaging students in the transition process (Thoma et al.,

2002; Tunglanel, 2002; Wehmeyer & Schwartz, 1997), . Self determination includes several attitudes and behaviors necessary for students to manifest. Among them are: informed choice, knowing one's strengths and limits, options and consequences, setting and communicating goals, being self directed, person centered, and taking responsibility for one's actions (Izzo & Lamb, 2001).

Self determination, therefore, focuses on student choice-making, responsibility, and accountability all of which are measurable on transition plans. Wehmeyer (1999) suggests that students who exhibit self determined behaviors by becoming involved in their own IEP meeting process are more likely to achieve their goals and graduate high school. Likewise, self-determined youth are more likely to experience academic success, increase self-advocacy and communication skills, and experience better employment and quality of life (Mason et al., 2004). Self determination can be coached and self-determined students with disabilities find themselves more often in situations where they need to exercise flexibility and sound judgment, thus leading to the acquisition of important life skills (Martin et al., 2003). Turnbull and Turnbull (2001) in a single case study of a student with a significant cognitive disability report that, with timely and intensive support for this student, his self determination could be realized measured through interviews with the student, family, and caregivers. Activities such as practicing self-advocacy and actively engaging in making choices support the goal of self-determination.

A carryover from the general education environments described earlier, students with disabilities routinely face teasing, the test of school rules, and the barrier of adult attitudes in their efforts to develop self-determination (Fisher, 1999). The IEP process

and the process of teaching self-determination to students with disabilities can be frustrating. As indicated earlier, student voice can be muted in the verbal exchanges between the student and the transition or IEP team (Thoma, 1999). Thoma (1999) warns that time limits on IEP meetings, weak linkages to adult support agencies, and community and societal norms often predetermine and limit student involvement in speaking their desires.

Self-determination curricula teach students how to set goals, how to make choices, and how to monitor their progress toward their goals. In one of the few detailed follow-through studies of students with disabilities in post-secondary settings, Wehmeyer and Schwartz (1997) tested the results of self-determination instruction on the quality of life of 80 students with disabilities one year after graduation. They found that, although 90% of students lived at home with parents and caregivers, over 80% of the individuals who had received self-determination instruction in making choices and requesting assistance were employed, twice as many as in the group without self-determination instruction. Self-determined students with disabilities find themselves more often in situations where they need to exercise flexibility and sound judgment thus leading to the acquisition of important life skills (Martin, Mithaug, Cox, Peterson, VanDycke, & Cash, 2003).

Employment Aspirations

As part of the development of student preferences and interests, aspirations for employment play a significant part. Questions asked during the transition process frequently focus on where a students sees him or herself working upon completing his or her education.

Establishing a student's interests and preferences for employment is an indication of transition best practice (Powers et al., 2005). Students can be encouraged to research a variety of jobs and challenged to determine how their skills, interests, and limits match these jobs. In job choice curricula, students with disabilities are frequently encouraged to include their initial consideration of potential job characteristics such as working alone or with others, having an easy job or a challenging one, etc. (Flexer et al., 2005).

Often, unlike some general education counterparts, students with disabilities begin the process of contemplating employment at a significant disadvantage. Their school careers have been marked by teacher attitudes that have made them less likely to experience success. Cook, Cameron, and Tankersley (2007) asked elementary teachers to rate their relationships and attitudes regarding 93 students without disabilities and 65 students with disabilities. Their results indicated that teachers registered low attachment ratings and high rejection of students with disabilities when compared to their counterparts without disabilities. Students with disabilities' lower likelihood of creating significant relationships with their teachers can only serve to make their looking forward to successful employment more tenuous (Wehmeyer & Schwartz, 1997).

After surveying elementary school children, Bandura, Barbanelli, Caprara, and Pastorelli (2001) conclude that self efficacy regarding career aspirations is largely shaped through perceived academic efficacy rather than actual academic achievement or ability. Not unexpectedly, using the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988, Rojewski (1996) indicates that high school seniors without disabilities enjoy significantly higher employment aspirations than do their peers with disabilities.

Although students with disabilities struggle with developing realistic and successful employment aspirations, many highly successful adults with disabilities have maintained high aspirations, largely through their own sense of control. Gerber, Ginsberg, & Reiff (1992), using ethnographic retrospective interviews, investigated the success of 46 highly successful and 25 moderately successful adults with disabilities. They found that, in addition to a sense of control, these successful adults exercised persistence in managing their careers and sought a level of adaptability in the goodness of fit with the work they pursued (Gerber et al., 1992). In their survey of 2,405 students with disabilities from the National Longitudinal Transition Study, Heal and Rusch (1995) make the argument for greater student and family input into the transition process because characteristics such as personal initiative and family support seem to outweigh school experiences in gaining employment. Benz, Lindstrom, and Yavonoff (2000) found through student focus groups that completion of transition goals over a four year period in high school proved to be important to students finding gainful employment as did person-centered planning practices and student self-determination.

Cultural Values and Beliefs

Invitations to parents and information about the IEP meeting itself must be provided in a parent's native language (IDEA, 2004), and acknowledging and working with different cultural values and beliefs remain suggested best practices. The culture in which a student has been raised can often influence the comfort level and relative success of a student's post-secondary transition plan. Family involvement in the transition process requires sensitivity to various cultures (Flexer et al., 2005). These cultures may not be readily

identifiable by physical attributes or dress, but may instead be evident in the effects of an extended family or a student's religious beliefs and service to the community. Furthermore, careful consideration in the transition plan should be given to issues such as the degree of independence for the student desired by the family as well as changes in family life routines and family and cultural life experiences (Parette, 1999). In some cultures, for example, the teaching of self-determination is seen as a threat (Yuen & Shaughnessy, 2001).

Teachers bear responsibility for providing messages that are culturally sensitive and fair. Although Geenen, Powers, and Lopez-Vasquez (2001) report that parents of color perceive themselves to be significantly involved in the transition process for their children, teachers report that they appear less involved than white parents. Diamond, Randolph, and Spillane (2004), through ethnographic research in five urban elementary schools, discover that teacher expectations become leveled and their sense of responsibility to students becomes less in poorer socio-economic circumstances. Just as privilege is communicated to the white and wealthy so, too, is social disadvantage positioned for the black and poor (Diamond et al., 2004). Pedroza, Mullen, and Whitley (1998) describe the restructuring of a special education program to address better the overrepresentation of ethno linguistically diverse students. Among the changes, greater collaboration, increased contact with minority parents, and the use of participatory research increased the level of student empowerment and mitigated the pre-referral process. Finally, in her program evaluation of the employment prospects of 4,571 urban young people, Fabian (2007) reflects that the rate of employment for people of color with disabilities lags significantly behind the rate of employment for their white counterparts.

Cultural issues of gender also play a part. Fabian (2007) reports as well that boys with disabilities were more likely to find work than girls with disabilities. Culturally sensitive teaching is critical, given these results, as is competent and sensitive attention to culture in transition plans.

Team Development

Designated as teams by law (20 U.S.C.S.1414 (3)(C)(i)), IEP teams are unique because of their short and intense duration, their mix of professionals, parents, students, and advocates, and their focus on a single individual as the subject of study and decision making. IEP teams experience many of the same dynamics that any human working group experiences because they meet for a particular goal, in this case, a review of a student's progress and a plan for the student's future. Lewin (1951) first postulated groups as dynamic and complex systems and mapped their complexity in models of how teams and organizations functioned over time. Ng and Bradac (1993) described the amount of turn-taking behavior in teams as being directly representative of the status level within the team. In an observational study of a hospital-based multidisciplinary team created for the short term purpose of developing a medical guideline, Paglieri (2002) found that status created social influence which affected the conformity of group members. Team meetings were taped for the study and the words for each participant counted. The team's chairperson was responsible for 32% of the verbal interaction whereas the specialist on staff provided the next largest proportion of words: 20%. Rogers's (2002) observations of an IEP team's decisions concerning placement of a student with disabilities reflected the status and power conferred on professionals in the

process. Decisions on IEP teams are governed by the same complexity, the same conferring of social status, and the same pressures of conformity to which any team is subject. Confounding the process is the fact that IEP teams meet regularly but only once a year. Members of the IEP team come to know each other on some level. If a team member experiences negative emotions through some slight or hurt that occurred years before, the feeling is likely to be easily rekindled with each subsequent meeting (Fisher & Ury, 1991). Therefore, the unique situation in which IEP teams form, disband for a year, and form again for annual reviews of a student's progress, can often reflect one-sided results, favoring the school district and not necessarily the parent or the child (Rogers, 2002; Simon, 2006).

Teams and participation in teams can, however, provide benefits. Depending on the size of representation on the team, mutual decision making regarding the allocation of resources can be positively affected. Thompson, Peterson, and Brodt (1996) described the way in which supportive connections on teams can affect mutually beneficial results when negotiating. Their study would argue for both parents to come together to IEP meetings, for students and parents to be unitary in their approach, and for the parent advocate to take an active role in supporting the decision-making of the student's parents on the team. Unfortunately, often, the parents and their adolescent sons and daughters are at odds with one another, and, as indicated in this study, the parent advocate on the team says little. There seems, therefore, to be a need for closer collaboration and support among all IEP team members to design mutually beneficial outcomes in the best interests of the student (Burns, 2006).

IEP Collaboration

Collaboration on IEP teams emerges time and again in the research as critical for the success of the process and, consequently, the success of a student with disability's educational program. Bandura (2000) reflects that behavioral acts like collaboration can be engendered through cues created by team members both consciously and unconsciously. In fact, collective efficacy, he argues, is an outgrowth of personal agency and enhances the feeling of personal efficacy. After reviewing case studies of young people with Down Syndrome, Giorecelli (2002) outlined a continuum of potential reactions to their inclusion in regular classrooms on the part of teachers. This continuum runs from "pathological" on the one hand, or a refusal to include and a failure to collaborate, to "generative" on the other, or a willing sharing of ideas and responsibility and open collaboration. Clark (2000) in describing the IEP process and Malian and Nevin (2002) in reviewing the literature on self-determination assert that success for students with disabilities depends on collaboration and the advocacy of others.

Status, hierarchy, and power relations among the various IEP team members complicate the meeting dynamic and make collaboration less likely. The Committee on Special Education Chairperson, who organizes and monitors the meeting, may also have the responsibility of observing and evaluating some or all of the special education staff at the meeting and the school psychologist. Ng and Bradac (1993), Palgieri (2002), and Rogers (2002) all analyze the use of power and position to thwart potential decision making on teams. Childre and Chambers (2005) describe non-collaborative and unilateral actions and a failure to understand a family's perspective as leading to the collapse of the IEP team meeting process. In fact, Martin (2005) described the attitudes of parents when

coming to the IEP meeting as expecting the worst because this is the legacy of their involvement. Finally, Lehmann, Bassett, and Sands (1999) after interviewing participants and observing the IEP meetings and transition processes for 12 individuals, concluded that teachers, parents, students, and administrators will need to alter their roles and work outside their levels of comfort in order for transition to be successful. Teachers will need to work beyond the confines of the school to seek opportunities for students; parents will need to cede control of their children's futures; administrators will need to coordinate school and community resources. Students will need to be better advocates and more future directed (Lehmann et al., 1999).

Unlike other teams, IEP teams are unique in that they come together for a specific purpose for half an hour once a year and then disband to meet again. The professionals of the IEP team are likely to know each other as colleagues and friends from the work environment. The related service providers are likely to know each other from other meetings. The student is likely to know his own special education teacher, the general education teacher if present, the parent, perhaps the guidance counselor, and the related service providers if their services apply to his case. The parent knows her child with a disability and may know her child's teacher and service providers, although these professionals most likely change from year to year. IEP teams must coalesce quickly, therefore, and, without practice, their levels of collaboration may not be as strong as if they all met together more frequently.

The development of similar team models casts light on potential IEP team collaboration processes. Leonard, Graham, and Bonacum (2004), using the crew resource management model designed for aviation teams which often fly together for

short durations and then disband, reported on increased collaboration within the patient safety hospital setting. Acknowledging that every member of a team is important and has an equal responsibility to alert the team of concerns, team members are instructed, no matter their status in the hierarchy, to immediately speak up if something is wrong. In several case studies, the authors described reduced patient risk and improved prognosis because the teams responsible utilized improved communication and enhanced collaboration (Leonard et al., 2004). With respect to special education identification, after reviewing 411 referrals for special education, 5% of which displayed a two standard deviation discrepancy in reading, Kahan (1991) determined that fewer children were recommended for services when the parents collaborated with the team, i.e. provided input into the team's decision, earlier in the process.

Appreciative Inquiry

Appreciative Inquiry began when David Cooperrider discovered that the Cleveland Clinic, where, as a graduate student, he had been assigned to develop an organizational plan to guide the Clinic's continued growth, seemed healthy. Wondering if an intervention was even necessary, Cooperrider explored what made the Cleveland Clinic a high performing organization. His work then focused solely on what made the organization successful, discovering the kinds of questions that focused on positive interactions rather than remediating deficit (Magruder-Watkins & Mohr, 2001). His inquiry seemed to continue to engender positive organizational outcomes such as a commitment by one department to developing greater consensus. His dissertation developed the principles and structure of Appreciative Inquiry (Cooperrider, 1986).

Appreciative Inquiry was first described in *The Journal of Management and Organizational Change* in 1987 (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987).

Appreciative Inquiry is an exploration of what motivates human systems when they are at their best. It is a method of creating organizational change whereby a vision of the future is established based on past success (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987). The method draws on the work of Geoffrey Vickers (1965) who proposed that to appreciate anything meant paying close attention to it. In addition, the roots of Appreciative Inquiry are found in the theories of Berger and Luckmann (1966) who postulated reality as being socially constructed.

These intellectual traditions represented by Vickers (1965) and Berger and Luckmann (1966) of appreciation and of social constructionism capture two critical tenets of Appreciative Inquiry. The first is that, as humans, our influence affects what we pay attention to. Magruder-Watkins and Mohr (2001) explain this notion by describing how human systems tend to develop in the direction of what they study. This first tenet finds support in the empirical evidence of studies in Buddhist meditation documented by Begley (2005) and in the work of Schwartz and Begley (2002) with psychiatric patients with Obsessive Compulsive Disorder. In both cases, attention to technique on the one hand and cognitive health on the other yield beneficial outcomes that, in the process, alter brain structure and build capacity for further growth. Practically speaking, because Appreciative Inquiry attends to the strengths in an organization, what works well becomes a starting point for change (Cooperrider et al., 2003). The focus of Appreciative Inquiry is on stories of individual or collective efficacy, peak experiences, and aspects of an organization or team that are effective. This focus is developed in the initial question

asked, a critical first step in the process designed to get to the “positive core” of a person’s experiences and beliefs. In this way, the positive core of an organization or team finds its expression through individuals’ narratives (Cooperrider et al., 2003).

The second tenet of Appreciative Inquiry is that humans create their reality through perception and through action. Appreciative Inquiry assumes that in every situation there is a story of success. The method acknowledges that perceptions differ from individual to individual and that there exists a collective life and wisdom that operates at the level of the organizational system. By focusing efforts on appreciating and attending to the reality of a system as positive and successful, the social reality of a positive and successful system is developed (Magruder-.Watkins & Mohr, 2001).

The central tenets of Appreciative Inquiry are translated into 5 principles that help define this method of organizational change. These are the principles of: social construction, the simultaneity principle, the poetic principle, the anticipatory principle, and positive thinking. These five theoretical principles are developed below:

1. Social Construction: Appreciative inquiry asserts that social knowledge, human competence and organizational destiny are formed in the collective imagination. The social knowledge available in organizations and the destiny of those organizations are inter-connected. In the pursuit of meaning, a constructivist believes that change is inherent the moment a question is asked. Thus the questions asked become fateful choices. Appreciative Inquiry seeks to link the imagination or picture of a group’s future with the reason and rationality of a carefully posed inquiry.
2. The Simultaneity Principle: Appreciative Inquiry believes that as soon as a question is asked the process of change begins. Inquiry is itself an intervention. The

processes of asking the question and making the changes happen simultaneously. Therefore, any inquiry needs to be carefully developed in order to begin growth in a positive direction.

3. The Poetic Principle: Appreciative Inquiry holds that people's pasts, presents, and futures are endless sources of information and perpetually open to interpretation. Likewise, the story of an organization is continually being re-written. Appreciative Inquiry acknowledges the power of language to shape reality. The kind of words people use, whether positive or negative, can affect the valence of their thinking, their associates' thinking, and the trajectory of the organization. Finally, this principle conceives that a person can study virtually any topic in a human system. The possibilities for change and discovery, in other words, are limitless.

4. The Anticipatory Principle: Appreciative Inquiry believes that any group's future is its most significant driving force. The organization's image of itself in the future drives current thinking and therefore behavior. This present set of expectations brings the future powerfully into the present and dictates how the organization or group defines itself, how it functions, what it can achieve, and what it will become.

5. Positive Thinking: Appreciative Inquiry operates on the notion that asking positive questions and seeking positive answers will result in completely different outcomes from problem solving or probing failures. Organizations are human constructions, and they exist for the purpose of creating synergy, social bonding, sustained effort, success, profit and joy. Thus, it is argued, the more positive the questions asked initially, the more effective and sustainable the level of change that emerges as a result (Cooperrider et al., 2003).

The process of Appreciative Inquiry follows a rigorous structure. The structure begins by eliciting individual thinking. It continues through talking about strengths and personal and professional engagement with shared understanding. Its outcome is often planning for the future and the creation of a commitment to continued action and supports on the part of any and all participants. On a basic level, the process of Appreciative Inquiry is developed through four stages, expressed as the 4-D cycle: Discover, Dream, Design, and Deliver, summarized below (Cooperrider et al., 2003):

1. Discover: The first task is hearing, understanding, and appreciating "what is."
2. Dream: This stage amplifies the positive present by envisioning a more vital future.
3. Design: This phase embodies the organization's dream in "provocative propositions" that add a further grounding to the process.
4. Destiny: Organizational members commit to action in open-space, open ended planning meaning that, rather than decide on a single plan of action, individual as well as collective plans are developed and implemented.

The process usually begins in dyads, listening to one another's stories of success. During this "discover" phase, an interview is elicited and captured by a partner who then relates what he or she has heard in the pair to a larger group of six to eight participants. Next, during the "dream" phase, broader themes are developed from these narratives, focused on what is working in the organization and what events have brought about the peak experiences that have been shared. Out of these themes, potential ideas on which to focus are selected by all the individuals in the group. After these themes are selected, smaller groups "design" the potential future using these themes. These potential futures

are then described and combined to create a sense of the vision of the organization. Participants in the Appreciative Inquiry are then given the opportunity to volunteer to speak about how they will, at their level of responsibility, commit to the group's "destiny" by undertaking some realistic action or change of behavior to assure that the potential future becomes a reality (Cooperrider, Whitney, & Stavros, 2003; Magruder-Watkins & Mohr, 2001; Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2003).

As the method unfolds, participants engage with one another in various ways, in pairs, in smaller groups, in making their choices for positive themes, in creating smaller group visions of a potential future, and in committing to action (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2003). Because Appreciative Inquiry is an inventory of what works developed by the people who live and work within a team or an organization, it is regarded as a strength based intervention, much the same, for example, as many self-determination and person centered processes used in transition planning. However, as an intervention, it runs contrary to the problem-solving, root cause, and typical strategic planning models of identifying failures within an organization that need remediation. Likewise, it runs directly contrary to the deficit model (Cooperrider et al., 2003) that has dominated special education thinking since Public Law 94 -- 142.

Appreciative Inquiry can be used for organizational and team development, as a frame for enhancing personal and institutional change, as a mediation or problem solving tool, and as a methodology for action research. It has been applied in corporate, religious, government, non-profit, family, and therapeutic venues with significant results. The use of Appreciative Inquiry improved performance at the Group Health Cooperative (Magrunder-Watkins, 2001, pp. 169-175), built a more inclusive and responsive culture

at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (Magruder-Watkins, 2001, pp. 107-109) and promoted gender equity at AVON Mexico (Magruder-Watkins, 2001, pp. 123-126). Appreciative Inquiry can take anywhere from two hours to four days to complete with any number of participants from 1 or 2 to 1,000 (Chandler, 1999).

As a structured system of envisioning the future, Appreciative Inquiry has been applied as a process for change in several studies. When used in health care organizations (Cooperrider, 1986; Hopper, 1991) to study organizational and team functions, results indicated that changes called "positive" had begun to take place ancillary to Appreciative Inquiry itself. Miller (2000) compared results using Appreciative Inquiry as an intervention to build collaboration in a non-governmental organization to another management intervention. Using interviews and a post-intervention survey, this study revealed that Appreciative Inquiry created significantly more relational bonds among participants who also increased their levels of collaboration. Analyzing Appreciative Inquiry's effect in a small non-profit company using qualitative means, Wilmot (2003) argued that the process challenged habitual assumptions about organizational change and saw to the development of new management structures. Much like Fredrickson (2003b), Sekerka (2002) focused her study of Appreciative Inquiry on its psycho physiological outcomes such as favorable shifts in heart rate variability and increased idea generation at a government medical center. The IMAGINE CHICAGO project (Cooperrider, 1997) utilized an inter-generational framework which empowered children as researchers to help plan urban renewal. Based on three case studies of involving children in the process of social change, Markova and Holland (2005) have

recommended Appreciative Inquiry as a method for visioning and planning to school leaders.

Appreciative Inquiry as an intervention has been used in different capacities. Richer (2007) reported mixed results in her study of Appreciative Inquiry as an intervention to investigate innovation and to promote nurse retention on two oncology units. According to this qualitative study, although Appreciative Inquiry engendered greater innovation on the nursing units, it failed to bring about the likelihood of greater retention among nurses. Sperduto (2007) used Appreciative Inquiry as a method to consolidate two different corporate cultures following the merger of two banks. His mixed methods study found that Appreciative Inquiry engendered positive rather than negative interactions among the banks' employees and helped unify the enterprises around common goals.

Furthermore, Appreciative Inquiry has been used more often recently to affect the life and functioning of schools and school districts. Studies by Radner seem to indicate that when Appreciative Inquiry was utilized as a curricular intervention in 13 Chicago city public schools to teach social studies, student achievement improved in other curricular areas as well in comparison to controls (Cooperrider, 1997). At the classroom level with middle school students, Doveston and Keeneghan (2006) employ Appreciative Inquiry regularly in their inclusion classroom during morning meeting in Northampton, England to support the need to develop cooperation among children and to capitalize actively on student diversity. They report, over the seven year life of the project, students develop a greater acceptance of one another and of children with disabilities.

Team Development

As an organizational development tool, Appreciative Inquiry lends itself naturally to the life and learning of teams and as a method of team development. By focusing attention on the positive aspects of team membership, for example, Appreciative Inquiry can foreshorten the process by which teams coalesce and begin successfully functioning (Bushe, 1998). Since Appreciative Inquiry creates whole group as well as smaller team unit transformation, participants emerge from the experience with stronger social bonds and the ability to work together more effectively (Magruder-Watkins & Mohr, 2001). Instances of team building using Appreciative Inquiry include Star Island, a hospitality organization headquartered in Maine that developed and implemented regular meetings among staff, customers, and its board of directors to discuss strategic initiatives. Also, McDonald's Corporation of Illinois restructured its human resources department to focus on progressive employment practices such as creating increased collaboration with employees (Magruder-Watkins & Mohr, 2001). Bushe's (1998, 1999) case studies document improvements in team functioning using Appreciative Inquiry including reduced incidents of sexual harassment in a co-gender workplace at AVON Mexico. During the process of Appreciative Inquiry, individuals find themselves in teams of 6 to 8 people functioning cooperatively. Collaboration of teams, particularly IEP teams involved in creating the transition process for a student with disabilities, is an important factor for successful outcomes (Clark, 2000; Malian & Nevin, 2002).

Team development requires trust and accountability (Sax, 2002). Bushe (1998) found that, by focusing attention on the positive aspects of team membership, for example, Appreciative Inquiry can foreshorten the process by which teams coalesce and begin

successfully functioning. In addition, Appreciative Inquiry created a sense of loyalty because of the positive and powerful shared experience (Bushe, 1998). In a study of fast food industry workers who can normally experience turn-over rates of 60%, Jones (1999) used Appreciative Inquiry to reduce the turnover rate by 12% over one year. Since Appreciative Inquiry creates whole group as well as smaller team unit transformation, participants can emerge from the experience with much stronger social bonds and the ability to work together more effectively (Magruder-Watkins & Mohr, 2001). For Peelle (2006), Appreciative Inquiry increased group identification mid-task and increased team effectiveness post-task when compared to a traditional problem solving method and gap analysis. In addition, Appreciative Inquiry had an immediate impact on team members' feeling positive about becoming involved in problem-solving.

IEP teams are unique in their duration and in their charge. Importantly for IEP teams, Appreciative Inquiry allows teams to orient quickly around a common set of questions (Peelle, 2006). Shendell-Falik, Feinson, and Mohr (2007) described an intervention using Appreciative Inquiry to improve patient hand-off during nursing change of shift, a process that requires effective thinking and quick timing. After an Appreciative Inquiry investigating nurses' experiences with successful patient hand-offs, medication errors at change of shift dropped 82% at a cost savings of 67.5 hours of nursing time per month (Shendell-Falik et al., 2007). Nutrimental Foods, Inc. witnessed a profit increase of 65% over 4 years following the initiation of Appreciative Inquiry as a two year training for teams in the company in 1997 (Barros & Cooperrider., 2001).

Positive Outcomes

Because the experience of Appreciative Inquiry can be positive, it often encourages outcomes that are positive. Lockwood and Kunda (1999) argue for the interconnection between positive affective interactions and positive goals. Positive interactions during IEP meetings, as in other educational venues, can be cultivated. If, through Appreciative Inquiry, there evolves conscious, positive imagery, the outcome of changing the system for the good, Bushe (1999) and Cooperrider et al. (2003) argue, is maximized.

Frederickson (2003a) argues positive thinking and positive knowledge potentially generate positive emotions which broaden and build people's modes of thinking and action. This broadened thinking makes people more open, more creative, and more able to problem solve. This momentary broadening, brought about by joy, personal or collective efficacy, or a shared positive vision can help discover new ideas, actions, and social bonds (Frederickson, 2003b). Clearly, the expression of positive emotions can and should be facilitated (Schwartz & Begley, 2002). In groups, community transformation becomes possible because of the links that are formed through the display and sharing of positive emotions (Frederickson, 2003a).

Appreciative Inquiry helps to amplify whatever positive stories of success can be found in an organization or team's life. (Bushe, 1999). In a study of 185 undergraduate students, Burns, Brown, Sachs-Ericsson, Plant, Curtis, Frederickson, and Joiner (2008) found that positive affect among individuals led to increased feelings of personal trust. IEP teams can potentially increase their efficacy by focusing on positive events, activities, and emotions. In writing about effective teams that exhibit collaborative efficacy, Bandura (2000) notes that conscious and unconscious environmental cues can

create efficacious, thus positive, behaviors. In Appreciative Inquiry, the questions that start the process seek positive narratives and interactions which can help with planning and implementation. IEP teams, therefore, may be able to increase their efficacy by focusing on positive events, activities, and emotions. It has been noted, however, that what is "positive" is not universally shared (Van der Haar & Hosking, 2004). If leader defined forms of goodness are imposed, the results may be binding or debilitating to team members (Barge & Oliver, 2003).

Vision and Planning

According to Whitney and Trosten-Bloom (2003), Appreciative Inquiry in itself is transformational. Because it validates the aspirations and wishes of each member of the group, it potentially changes how participants feel and think about the future (Randolph, 2006). Appreciative Inquiry is focused on the development of plans for the future through an exploration of the past successes of individuals. As such, it seems to be a tool well suited for helping students with disabilities envision positive futures and plan the means to achieve them. As Marshak (2005) points out, Appreciative Inquiry changes the way people think rather than focusing exclusively on what they do. Thus, the process has an improvisational cast, one that is self-organizing and therefore self-sustaining rather than planned or controlled. Through an ethnographic study, Ryan, Soven, Smither, Sullivan, and VanBuskirk (1999) documented an entire high school's creating a vision of the future for itself. Using questionnaires and interviews, students at Cardinal Dougherty High School in Baltimore proposed changes to be enacted that resulted in a renewed sense of possibility in the school's mission such as increased extra-curricular opportunities.

Although long-term data was unavailable, the authors, using surveys and student interviews, found that, unique to the process, students felt a sense of community membership rather than the typical disconnect of other reform efforts (Ryan et al., 1999).

Practitioners and researchers using Appreciative Inquiry remark on the process's ability to be generative (Magruder-Watkins & Mohr, 2001). Out of an Appreciative Inquiry with the Human Resources Department at MacDonald's Corporation, six distinct strategies for improving staff relations and recruitment were generated (Magruder-Watkins, 2001). Recently, Appreciative Inquiry assisted in the transition in the country of Nepal from a monarchy to a representative democracy (Odell, 2006). Through metaphors of organizational and group life, Appreciative Inquiry can create a blueprint for the possibility of change. Using several case studies of Appreciative Inquiry with non-governmental organizations and not-for-profits, Finegold, Holland, and Lingham (2002) pointed out that, because of its dialogic nature, Appreciative Inquiry can relax one group seeking a vision as much as it can excite another. Because it depends on a reversal of expectations, the limitations found in traditional strategic planning processes such as fragmentation among group members and lack of implementation may not always apply to Appreciative Inquiry (Finegold et al., 2002). Differences are valued, and Appreciative Inquiry can create social bonding and thus develop follow-up to a group's plans (Finegold et al., 2002). Barrett (1995) compared Appreciative Inquiry to other, more traditional forms of problem solving in documenting organizational change at the Department of the Navy. Whereas traditional problem solving like root cause analysis engendered a deficiency world view, a fragmented orientation, and emphasized the differences among participants, Appreciative Inquiry seemed to do the opposite. It

fostered an affirmative mindset, created expansive thinking, and developed a collaborative network (Barrett, 1995).

Finally, Cooperrider and Srivasta (1987) emphasize that there is no one true image of an organization. Jones (1999) suggests that, as originally conceived, Appreciative Inquiry was a research method designed to uncover multiple, alternative perspectives on an organization. It was meant, somewhat modestly, to focus specifically on the academic process of inquiry, asking questions with the recognition that the question asked began a process of change in the direction of the question. It has through practice in the field evolved into an organizational development tool (Peelle, 2006).

Benefits of Appreciative Inquiry for Students with Special Learning Needs

The potential benefit of Appreciative Inquiry for students with disabilities is in helping to generate a vision of the future based on their potential in the present and then developing plans to reach that future (Magruder-Watkins & Mohr, 2001). These benefits coincide favorably with the purposes behind IEP meetings and transition plans for students with disabilities.

In the first place, the IEP team meeting is important to the development of a viable education program and viable transition plan for a student with disabilities. Barriers to the success of the team are abundant and range from the roles and places of power exercised by participants (Rogers, 2002), to intransigence (Burns, 2006) to lack of collaboration (Stroggilos & Xanthacou, 2006). Meetings that are observed are often characterized as negative (Sax, 2002), and as lacking relevance in the discussion or preparedness on the part of professional staff (Childre & Chambers, 2005). While the

research community emphasizes the importance of students' exercising self advocacy, students often remain silent (Mason et al., 2004), often do not attend their IEP meetings (Test et al., 2004), and fail to speak proportionately to other team members (Martin et, al., 2004).

Given that IEP teams struggle to comply with the law, let alone develop a worthy educational plan with input from all stakeholders, Appreciative Inquiry has the potential to have a positive effect on the team development (Bushe, 1998). Because its focus is positive and collaborative (Barrett, 1995; Cooperrider et al., 2003), the potential exists for Appreciative Inquiry to broaden the mindset of IEP team meeting participants and build their capacity for exchange and decision making (Fredrickson, 2003a; 2003b). More participation by students may develop as part of the process (Martin et al., 2006a) as may more positive interactions (Waugh & Fredrickson, 2006) and fewer negative interactions (Fredrickson & Losada, 2005) on the part of the team. As an intervention designed to envision the future, Appreciative Inquiry could increase the number of exchanges the team has about transition. In the process, given Appreciative Inquiry's emphasis on narrative and its sensitivity to the present state of a team (Magruder-Watkins & Mohr, 2001), it may be that the IEP team will exchange more information (Argyris, 1970), more observational data (Goodman, 1982; Doctoroff & Arnold, 2004), and less opinion (Paglieri, 2002; Clark, 2000).

Besides the IEP process itself, transition planning overall is complex. It is acknowledged that transition plans are weak for students with disabilities (Grigal et al., 1997; Johnson et al., 2002; Powers et al., 1999). The several components with which the transition plan must comply include goals and action steps (Carter & Hughes, 2005),

post-school outcomes (Brown et al, 2003), vocational education and integrated employment (Benz et al., 1997; Harvey, 2001), student desires (Flexer et al., 2005; Mason et al., 2004), independent living (Page et al., 2007; Wehmeyer & Bolding, 2001), and community participation (Lehman et al., 2002; Sitlington, 1996). Several best practices to reflect in transition plans include: person-centered planning (Robertson et al., 2007), self-determination (Mason et al., 2004; Wehmeyer, 2001), employment aspirations (Cook et al., 2007), and cultural beliefs and values (Fabian, 2007; Geenan et al., 2001; Martin & Williams, 1999; Yuen & Shaughnessy, 2001). The outcome for each of these indicators may be improved since Appreciative Inquiry, through its questions, begins to provide vision and to plan for the future.

Given the complexity and the difficulty of plotting a future for a student with disabilities, because of its emphasis on vision and planning, Appreciative Inquiry seems a reasonable intervention to apply to try and improve transition plans (Barrett, 1995; Marshak, 2005; Ryan et al., 1999). Appreciative Inquiry has been attempted in different venues to improve outcomes for students with disabilities. Gioncerelli (2002) used Appreciative Inquiry to develop classrooms where youngsters with Down Syndrome are fully included. Doveston and Keenaghan (2006) documented their use of Appreciative Inquiry to develop inclusion as a principle among their third grade students. The literature seems to support the use of Appreciate Inquiry as a viable intervention to improve potentially the quality of IEP meeting interactions and the quality of transition plans. However, until now Appreciative Inquiry has yet to be applied to the IEP meeting or transition planning process.

CHAPTER THREE: METHOD

The purpose of this study is to describe the effect of Appreciative Inquiry on the quality of IEP meetings and to measure the effect of Appreciative Inquiry on the quality of transition plans. This study hypothesizes that Appreciative Inquiry as an intervention would positively affect the quality of the IEP meeting process and content and the quality of transition plans based on IDEA 2004 definitions and best practices.

The research methods utilized in this study are detailed in this chapter. The chapter begins by describing the participants in this study. Following that, the chapter describes the intervention and the development of a protocol used during IEP meetings in this study. Then, after focusing on the development of the two instruments used to gather data and a discussion of the procedure in this study, the chapter concludes by relating the experimental design to the hypotheses of this study and focusing on data evaluation.

Participants

This study took place in three rural public school districts in New York State, designated P, E, and C. The three districts were chosen because of their similarity on several key indicators of school demographics such as ethnicity and because of the similarity of their reported levels of student inclusion. While their enrollment varied, their ratios of white students to other minorities were similar (Appendix A). Annual attendance rates matched well as did their suspension and drop out rates, indicating similar district environments (Appendix B). Needs to resource capacity, a measure of a district's capability to adequately fund the education of its students, matched exactly. These three districts' combined wealth ratios, the combination of taxable property with

residents' reported annual incomes, matched almost exactly. Similarities held true for their census poverty indices, the percentage of children living in poverty, as well as their free and reduced lunch rates (Appendix B). The number of students enrolled in special education programs varied due to the overall size of each district, and the percentage of students with disabilities ranged from 9 to 13.2%. Finally, the amount of time each school district's students spent outside the general education curriculum matched well (Appendix C) with 2 to 3% of students with disabilities involved in separate settings outside their home school.

Participants in the Appreciative Inquiry training in school district E were special education staff. Participants at the IEP meetings in all three school districts included professionals, students in all disability categories, and their parents. The professionals in these three school districts included special education teachers, general education teachers, guidance counselors, teaching assistants, school psychologists, related service providers and special education administrators numbering approximately 45 individuals for the 78 recorded meetings. In District E, all the Special Education professionals who had participated in the Appreciative Inquiry training were present throughout the IEP meetings. 49 parents or parent sets participated in these IEP Meetings. Of the 78 students grades 8 to 12 whose IEPs were discussed, 42 were male, 36 were female. Of these, 40 students were present for these meetings. Of these 40 students, 21 were male (53%) and 19 (47%) were female. All of the students were 14 years of age or older and all of them had transition plans in place at the time of their meetings. Because data on the disability categories of the students could not be kept with any degree of accuracy due to the infrequent mention of their disabilities in the meetings themselves or the inability

to confirm the student's disability, percentages of the disabilities represented were unavailable for this study. Only district P carried enough disability information on the IEP-Transition plans to warrant cross referencing disability categories on the IEP with the student's identity at the IEP meeting.

Finally, for purposes of this study, the school districts are designated according to the intervention utilized in each case. District P utilized a Protocol based on Appreciative Inquiry developed for use during IEP meetings. For this study, District E is characterized as an Experimental district, having received the full intervention of being involved in both a six hour Appreciative Inquiry in addition to the use of the protocol. District C functioned as a Control for the study.

Description of Intervention

This study focused on changes in IEP meeting process behaviors and content as observed during IEP meetings as a result of Appreciative Inquiry. In addition, this study focused on changes in transition plans regarding IDEA 2004 definitions and best practices as a result of Appreciative Inquiry. To foster these changes, Appreciative Inquiry was provided to professional special education staff in school district E as a 6 ½ hour intervention (Appendix D). School district E also received a written protocol to use during IEP meetings as explained in the next section. The protocol consisted of a scripted set of questions to follow during the IEP meeting that were developed in the Appreciative Inquiry training session in school district E. In school district P, Appreciative Inquiry was implemented as the same protocol developed from the Appreciative Inquiry in school district E (Appendix E).

The Appreciative Inquiry in school district E focused on student centered instruction and community relations and on personal and professional experiences of collaboration and team building. The Appreciative Inquiry took place in school district E in November, 2006 before observations of IEP team meetings in school districts P, E, and C began. The author/researcher for this study facilitated this training.

Appreciative Inquiry

The Appreciative Inquiry in school district E focused on "Working Together to Improve Student Achievement." This focus for the Appreciative Inquiry training was developed by the researcher after conversations with district E's Director of Special Education who outlined the need to improve the collaborative spirit in the special education department. The Appreciative Inquiry training in school district E examined the relationship among adult professionals and developed methods for a student-centered approach, as well as for communicating as teams and with parents and the community. The four phases of Appreciative Inquiry as described in the Chapter Two, namely, Discover, Dream, Design, and Deliver, were completed during a six and ½ hour session for all 35 staff of district E's special education department. Present during the session were K-12 special education teachers, school psychologists, school social workers, related service providers, the special education chairperson, teaching assistants, and the secretaries for the special education department at the district. During each of the observed IEP meetings for this study in school district E, there were at least three and as many as six staff members present who had been through the Appreciative Inquiry training.

The intervention held in school district E reflected the structure of Appreciative Inquiry and focused on successful personal and professional experiences with students with disabilities (Appendix D). The session began with an overview of Appreciative Inquiry, describing the theory behind the model and helping participants anticipate the course of the day. Next, participants broke into pairs to answer five questions within an hour about their involvement with students with disabilities. Participants were asked by their partners to focus on their own stories of their motivation to work with students with disabilities and the most meaningful experiences they enjoyed in this work. In addition, the questions focused on experiences of team collaboration, peak professional experiences, and 3 wishes to improve the special education department at school district E.

Following this "discover" phase of the process, participants gathered in groups of six to eight to begin the "dream" phase (Cooperrider et al., 2003). During this phase, the groups listened to the stories of each participant told to the group by the participant's partner. Following this, the groups were asked to decide on important and common themes that seemed to weave through all of the stories they heard. These themes were then collected on colored cards and displayed on a nylon five by twelve foot "sticky wall" to which they adhered. Participants gathered at the "sticky wall" and each participant distributed five colored markers among the themes to designate the ones that he or she found most important. All five of the markers could be placed on one theme or one marker each could be placed on five different themes, and the potential distributions included all the variations in between.

The “design” phase followed (Cooperrider et al., 2003). Based on the most recurrent themes displayed, the groups worked on creating “provocative propositions” to try and capture a vision for school district E given the prompt: “In order for school district E’s special education department to inspire the best in student achievement…” Participants were then asked to create physical approximations as metaphors of their “provocative propositions” using markers, clay, pipe cleaners, poster board, feathers, glue, sparkles, etc. or composing songs or skits to this end. Each group presented or performed its metaphor for all the participants.

The Appreciative Inquiry process then moved into the final “deliver” phase (Cooperrider et al., 2003). The researcher asked participants to develop plans, individually and collectively, for carrying out the “provocative propositions” that had been presented. In doing so, participants focused on their professional relationships as well as on greater student centered planning and community and family support. Participants were asked to speak individually to their commitments to these plans. Finally, the researcher asked for the participants to specify how, through the IEP process, outcomes for students could be improved.

Dozens of ideas for improving special education services in school district E were generated and documented as a result of the Appreciative Inquiry. Among them, first, the special education staff in school district E committed to serving students with disabilities as effectively as possible. Documents from the “design” phase of the Appreciative Inquiry indicated “provocative propositions” that focused on developing “trust, respect, and high expectations that “empowered all students to learn.” The staff developed plans to celebrate actively student success and to focus on individual and child-centered

teaching. The staff also committed to abandon traditional mindsets of what students with disabilities could achieve by working to try and eliminate the "stigma" of special education from the thinking of teachers and professionals outside the department.

Second, the staff acknowledged the importance of transition and committed to actions to facilitate transition. The documentation indicated this would be accomplished by organizing plans to map the delivery of special education services K-12. In addition, special education staff committed to raising expectations for what students could achieve upon graduating, and to initiating the design of stronger vocational and work-study opportunities for students. Although these commitments to transition emerged organically from the process, had there been no mention of transition, the researcher in charge of the training would have refocused the process on transition planning.

Third, the staff renewed its efforts to communicate effectively and to support teachers, students, and families' needs involved in the IEP process. This was indicated in plans to exchange e-mails among staff highlighting observed teacher behaviors that were positive and effective as well as sending positive notes home with students. Fourth, by encouraging positive and open discussion and by valuing and respecting the unique and individual contributions of the members of the department, staff dedicated themselves to collaborating more closely with one another. This was indicated in the documentation by an expressed commitment to create quarterly strategy meetings among staff and regular informal gatherings to connect with one another and to discuss progress.

Finally, from the results of this Appreciative Inquiry training, the six question *AI-IEP Protocol* was developed to guide IEP team members during meetings in school districts P and E, using the principles of Appreciative Inquiry. The protocol reflected the dominant

themes of the Appreciative Inquiry training. The same protocol was then applied in district P.

Instrumentation

Three instruments were developed to create and to gather data for this study: the AI-IEP Protocol, the IEP Meeting Interaction Measure, and the Transition Plan Quality Measure.

AI-IEP Protocol

As indicated above, the AI-IEP Protocol was developed from the outcomes of the Appreciative Inquiry held in school district E. As an evaluation of the day's activities, participants were asked to reflect on their learning through Appreciative Inquiry and to suggest the means to improving CSE meeting outcomes and their own team experiences. As a result of the group's discussion during Appreciative Inquiry's "delivery" stage, special education staff focused on student centered meetings that encouraged positive results and team-work through open and direct communication. They also emphasized the need for involving families and the community more closely in the special education process in school district E.

As a result of this evaluation, the AI-IEP Protocol (Appendix E) was developed as a script out of the written and posted results of the Appreciative Inquiry for use by the CSE Chairperson at IEP meetings. Used in school district P to 25% fidelity and in school district E to 75% fidelity, the AI-IEP Protocol included a scripted set of six questions focused on stories of student success, a vision for the student's future, and then on

support for the student's plan. The AI-IEP Protocol followed the structure and order of an Appreciative Inquiry reflecting the Appreciative Inquiry stages of "discover" by understanding student strengths and "dream" by capturing student aspirations. The AI-IEP protocol utilized the stages of "design" by focusing on student goals and "deliver" by describing school, community, and family commitments to support the student's transition. It asked the questions designed to elicit the positive core of an IEP team's process (Cooperrider et al., 2003).

Specifically, following introductions, the AI-IEP Protocol focused on eliciting stories of the student's success from different perspectives: the student first, the parent next, and the teachers and service providers after that. Therefore, the script included the following prompts:

1) Address(ing) the student first by asking:

   Tell us about some of your successes this year. (Add: What have you done well and what has worked well for you? What's been happening to make you successful?)

2) Address(ing) the parent next by asking:

   What successes have you seen your child enjoy this year? (Add: Tell us about what's been happening to help make your child successful?)

3) Address(ing) the teachers and service providers next by asking:

   What successes have you seen for (this student)? (Add: Tell us about what's been happening to help make him/her successful?)

Next, the AI-IEP Protocol asked IEP meeting participants to "dream" the design of a better program to support this student's success and to invite the student to create a vision for the future. The prompts included:

4) Address the whole group next by asking:

   What suggestions or changes can you think of to make _____'s program work even better?

5) Address the student finally by asking:

   What do you think you'd most love to do when you grow up? (What is your goal?)

   And

   What do you think you'll need to do to get to do what you love most?

   And

   What have you done so far to get to do what you love most?

Following this, the protocol asked the entire group of IEP meeting participants to commit to the means to support the student with concrete ideas about his or her vision of the future:

6) Address the whole group by asking:

   What kinds of support and help can you provide to make _____'s program work toward the goals he/she's set for him/herself?

The questions were developed from the Appreciative Inquiry training held in school district E. The notion of student success, "empowering all students" and raising

expectations for them, was expressed in the first question on the protocol, a description of the student's successes. Special education staff had expressed the need more thoroughly to involve parents and one another in the process of IEP service delivery. Therefore, the first question about successes was refocused to query the child's parents and teachers in the next two questions on the protocol. The staff's commitment to improving the delivery of transition services to students was expressed in the fourth question on the protocol, asking for improvements in the student's program. The importance of transition as it was recognized by special education staff in school district E was reflected in the fifth question focused on the child's future goals. The sixth question on the protocol is derived from the commitment of special education staff during the "delivery" phase of the Appreciative Inquiry training to supporting students, teachers, and families in the IEP process. Finally, the format for the questions and their number was the result of the protocol's needing to be accessible quickly and conveniently on a single type written page to minimize the distraction of turning pages during the IEP meetings.

The purpose of implementing an Appreciative Inquiry protocol as a set of questions in school district P was to guide the format of the meeting without Appreciative Inquiry training. Utilizing the AI-IEP meeting protocol helped to determine the efficaciousness of Appreciative Inquiry training itself in changing the quality of the IEP meeting and the design of student transition plans.

The reasons for utilizing the AI-IEP Protocol in school districts P and E using a design reflecting the steps in the Appreciative Inquiry process were several. In the first place, soliciting stories from the participants at the IEP meeting provided the student an opportunity to direct the conversation toward his or her strengths and toward the events

and activities about which he or she was most proud. Second, hearing stories of success from parents and teachers seated around the table provided the student the means to evaluate his or her progress and to understand his or her story from different viewpoints. Simply casting the questions as positive and eliciting stories of success, as well as probing the student's wishes for him or herself, may affect the descriptive variables of IEP meeting process and content and the dependent variables of transition plan IDEA 2004 definitions and best practice. Besides contrasting the AI-IEP protocol only (school district P) with AI-IEP training and protocol (school district E), the descriptive variables i.e. student turn-taking, self-advocacy, the percentages positive remarks, negative remarks, and informational, observational, and opinion remarks were measured against the data collected for baseline (2006) results in school district P. The percentages of these same descriptive variables were measured against the control (school district C) where data reflected normal or average meeting results. Likewise, the dependent variables of IDEA 2004 definitions such as post-school outcomes, vocational education and integrated employment, community participation, etc. and transition best practices such as person-centered planning, self-determination, cultural values and beliefs, etc. were measured against the data collected as baseline (2006) results in school district P and against the data from the control district.

IEP Meeting Interaction Measure

The second instrument for gathering data, the IEP Meeting Interaction Measure modified a form developed and implemented by Martin et al. (2006a) for the purpose of capturing the role of the speaker and the remark category at 10-second intervals during

IEP meetings. The original instrument was designed to record meeting roles (CSE Chair, special education teacher, student, etc.), remarks about assistive technology, and comments about transition at 10-second intervals during IEP meetings. The instrument was used to record 109 middle school and high school IEP meetings. The study discovered that students participated for 3% of the 17,804 intervals recorded, and the results were supported through follow up use of a survey instrument completed by 90% of IEP meeting participants. The original instrument was expanded for this study for the purpose of capturing variables that might indicate changes as a result of the Appreciative Inquiry process (Appendix G). These added descriptive variables included student self-advocacy, positive remarks, negative remarks, and informational, observational, and opinion remarks.

The IEP Meeting Measure consisted of a packet of paper prepared lengthwise in landscape form which included a code to identify each individual at the meeting and a key across the top to identify coded categories. Below that, lengthwise across the page, were sets of numbered boxes each representing a ten second interval. In each box, the observer marked the code for the person speaking and indicated whether the remark was positive or negative, whether it imparted information, opinion, or observation, whether the remark was about transition and whether it indicated self-advocacy. The boxes were numbered 1 to 712 over 10 pages. At the end of the instrument there was a glossary of terms for reference (Appendix H).

The reasons for utilizing this instrumentation and data gathering design are several. The 10-second sampling technique can yield data against which similar samples can be compared. Hence, the descriptive quality of this data is high. The use of 10-second

sampling to test an intervention with a control group was the preferred method in Martin et al. (2006b) when it was used to distinguish the effect of self-directed IEP meetings on turn-taking and student self-advocacy. Unlike self reported surveys (Martin et al., 2004), the addition of observer information at IEP meetings captures data on who was speaking and to what extent there was any student involvement. In addition, in describing future research, Martin et al. (2004) suggested using the 10-second sampling technique as a useful tool to capture data on transition information and IEP related topics.

The IEP Meeting Interaction Measure was utilized for meeting observations during which participant interactions were recorded in 10-second intervals (Martin, 2006a) by the researcher in this study and by an undergraduate research assistant. In the psychology literature, the 10-second interval sampling technique is the most frequently used method of variable testing and multi-element designs (Rapp, Colby, Vollmer, Roane, Lomas, & Britton, 2007). The results of the technique of recording events in momentary time sampling observation of between 10 and 15 seconds has been found to be consistent with continuous duration recording (Rapp et al., 2007).

Pilot of the IEP Meeting Measure. A pilot study was undertaken in school district P on IEP meetings from January to May, 2006, gauging interaction among team members and the content of IEP meetings and developing the instrument to capture IEP team meeting interaction. The pilot study determined the reliability of the IEP Meeting Interaction instrument for capturing IEP meeting interactions and for coding descriptive variables in the study. It also yielded baseline data for the study in school district P, conducted before the protocol was given in 2007. These completed pre intervention

observations of these IEP meetings sought to measure process: turn taking during the meeting, student self-advocacy, as well as the ratios of positive and negative interaction. In addition, the pilot measured IEP meeting content, namely, the types of remarks shared (information, observation, opinion), and whether the remarks dealt at all with student transition. A total of 46 IEP meetings were observed in school district P by the author/researcher during the pilot study, once the instrument had been tested for reliability, for use as a comparison in this study.

For the pilot, the researcher and the research project were introduced by the Committee on Special Education Chairperson to the participants at each IEP meeting. In each introduction, it was emphasized that none of the discussions among participants were being recorded. All participants were asked to sign consent forms (Appendices I, J, K) depending on their roles in the IEP team process as educator, student, or parent. Once this was complete, the meeting began with introductions while the observer, seated off to the side away from the table around which the participants were gathered, marked the instrument.

The author/researcher for this study measured responses during the pilot in school district P. Every ten seconds, a tone sounded in the researcher's ear at which point, the researcher marked a consecutively numbered box beginning at 1. In marking the box, the researcher denoted who was speaking; whether the remark was positive or negative; whether the remark was information, observation, or opinion; whether or not the statement dealt with the student's transition to post-secondary opportunities; and whether or not the remark reflected self-advocacy, defined on the instrument as any remark in

which the student speaks up for his or her preferences, needs, or desires, or requests help or support in some form (Test et al., 2005).

Before the 46 meetings used for this study, the instrument underwent several changes during the course of ten initial meeting observations in January, 2006. Several more participant classifications were added, a notation added specifically to capture references to transition and transition services, and the addition of a category marked "observation" ("B" in the boxes on the instrument, [Appendix G]). This was done to distinguish the nature of the conversation among participants still further from "information" (I) based on performance measures (i.e. test scores, IQ, grades, and quantitative measures) and "opinion (O), broad judgments. "Observation" (B) meant fact based on what was recorded as "seen" ("I noticed that Johnny kept his head down during the discussion." "I knew Suzy was getting frustrated because she began pacing around the room."). "Opinion" (O) referred to what was sensed, thought, implied, or interpreted without any correlative evidence ("Johnny's lazy." "She always liked working with her hands.") Ten more IEP meetings were observed in February, 2006 to test the use of these changes on the IEP meeting interaction measure.

After this first round of ten meetings with the completed instrument, the instrument's reliability was next tested over 12 additional meetings. The researcher-observer was joined by a second observer, an undergraduate research assistant, who followed a process identical to the one previously established in the first ten meetings. At a tone every ten seconds, the second observer marked the speaker, whether or not the remark was positive or negative, whether or not the remark indicated self-advocacy on the student's part and whether it was information, opinion, or observation and if the remark reflected the

subject of transition. The results of these simultaneous observations were then compared for how closely they matched.

According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2000), a percentage match of 80% on a given instrument is necessary to establish the instrument's reliability. The number of actual matches was divided by the number of possible matches to ascertain the percentage match. After six such observations, there existed a 57% match in the results documented by the two observers. In other words, 57% of the notations on the instrument matched identically. The data were then discussed, item by item, recalling the points in the IEP meeting which were under scrutiny at the time, to understand distinctions and to clarify observers' results. Six more IEP meetings were attended and observed and the results again were gathered and compared. At this point, the data gleaned by the two observers yielded matched results of 90%, indicating that the instrument had achieved inter-rater reliability and was suitable to document IEP meetings for the parameters established. Forty-six additional IEP meetings were observed by the researcher using the final instrument in school district P (Appendix W). The baseline data from these forty-six additional meetings was compared to post-intervention data gathered during meetings using the AI-IEP meeting protocol in the same school district P in 2007.

Observer Training. The training of an observer for the second set of IEP meetings, another undergraduate research assistant in the spring, 2007 became necessary. Changing personnel schedules from one year to the next demanded that a different observer, an undergraduate research assistant, be trained. Unlike the pilot study which yielded a reliable instrument over the first forty-six meetings (2006), the researcher began the process of observer training with direct instruction on identifying the variables on the

measure. This instruction included information on what each of the roles during IEP meetings entailed and how they could and would be identified. In addition, direct instruction focused on IEP meeting process and content, describing the nature of positive and negative remarks and student self advocacy as well as the identification of remarks mentioning transition, information, observation, and opinion. Methods for marking the IEP Meeting Interaction Measure were described and discussed. The observer was introduced to CSE Chairpersons as well as to school personnel in charge of security at school entrances in districts P and E. Once the information described by the researcher was utilized with the IEP Meeting Measure in actual meeting venues by the observer, discussion continued focused on the inter-rater agreement of the results. When checking inter-rater agreement, the completed IEP Meeting Interaction Measures were discussed using item by item analysis. Discussions about inter-rater agreement continued until agreement was met. Neither the first nor the second research assistant in this study had any idea of the study's hypotheses.

Inter-Observer Agreement. Before the research assistant began to observe IEP meetings independently, the researcher and the research assistant attended and observed three IEP meetings in school district P in February, 2007. They discussed the categories on the IEP Meeting Interaction Measure and the method of marking individual 10-second intervals beforehand. The observation results for the researcher and the research assistant's first round of IEP meetings were 79%, 73%, and 85% respectively for a 79% match overall. Further discussion of the IEP meetings between the researcher and the research assistant followed. Given that an 80% level of inter-rater reliability was necessary to be reasonably certain of the intended results (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2000), a

second set of three IEP meetings was observed, rated, and matched by the researcher and the research assistant. In other words, each 10-second interval on the measure was compared for the researcher and observer's results on each dependent variable. The number of actual matches was divided by the number of possible matches to ascertain the percentage match. These three meeting records yielded matched results of 81%, 93%, and 87% for an average of 87%. The research assistant then continued attending and observing all IEP meetings until the observations were completed.

Continued Reliability of the Observations and Fidelity to the AI-IEP Protocol. During the administration of the AI-IEP protocol at IEP meetings in school districts P and E, fidelity to the AI-IEP protocol came into question. After one set of observations in school district P during 2007, the research assistant described that the AI-IEP protocol was minimally followed if at all. The researcher arranged to join the observer in school districts P and E for three IEP meetings at each, first, to test the continued reliability of the IEP team meeting instrument across raters and the research assistant's results and second, to record the fidelity of the meeting procedure to the AI-IEP protocol. These probes took place during three meetings in the second week of observations in school district P and during three meetings in the fourth week of observations in school district E. The result of these probes was 85% agreement on adherence to the IEP team meeting instrument.

These probes permitted the researcher and research assistant to test a means to record IEP meeting fidelity to the AI-IEP protocol in school district P and E. As a result, the fidelity instrument (Appendix F) became part of the observation protocol to measure the percentage of the AI-IEP protocol used during the course of the IEP meetings in both

school districts. In school district P, the first eight meetings observed before the use of the fidelity instrument were eliminated because no measure of fidelity was available. The remaining IEP meetings in school district P, totaling 25, recorded at least 25% fidelity to the AI-IEP protocol. These 25 IEP meetings in school district P were included in the data set. In other words, for those meetings in the data set in school district P, an average of 1 or 2 questions were asked from the protocol. In school district E, at least 75% fidelity or, 4 to 5 questions, to the AI-IEP protocol was recorded for all 23 meetings included in the data set. Although fidelity to the AI-IEP Protocol was tracked, the connection between the percentage of questions asked and answered and the study's results meeting by meeting was not established.

Transition Plan Quality Measure

A second instrument for gathering data was developed based on the *Statement of Transition Services Protocol* or STSRP which had been utilized in several studies to measure transition plan quality (Everson, Zhang, & Guillory, 2001; Grigal, Test, Beattie, & Wood, 1997; Lawson & Everson, 1993; Powers, Gil-Kashiwaraba, Geenan, Powers, Balandran, & Palmer, 2005). The protocol was originally designed to assess transition services for 52 students who had deaf-blindness in a national survey of 22 states (Lawson & Everson, 1993). Lawson and Everson's protocol underwent scrutiny and revision by seven outside reviewers for their study from a variety of educational service providers and state level policy makers. Grigal et al. (1997) modified the original protocol to use with all disability categories and to reflect full compliance with IDEA mandates such as vocational education, integrated employment, independent living, and community

participation. Their study evaluated 94 high school transition plans. The protocol was used again to evaluate 329 transition plans in a Louisiana State study (Everson et al., 2001). Powers et al. (2005) modified the STSRP further to capture goal areas identified in IDEA (2004) such as recreation and leisure activities. Also, these researchers added rating scales for two quality indicators. The first quality indicator was "implementation," defined as the level of detail in the written transition goals to maximize fidelity to the student's program. The second quality indicator was "utility," defined as the level of relevance and the potential for the goal to actually assist the student. This last version of the STSRP was used in Powers et al.'s (2005) study to evaluate 399 IEP transition plans. This last version was modified for this current study to include those categories of goals that would seem to be reasonably affected by Appreciative Inquiry (Appendix L). Hence, categories such as adult services, recreation and leisure activities, health and medical needs, and mentoring were eliminated from the instrument because these categories were deemed too specialized to be affected by the more general questions included on the AI-IEP protocol.

The Statement of Transition Services Review Protocol (STSRP) modified by Powers et al. (2005) was edited for the purposes of capturing this study's relevant variables. The instrument used for this study consisted of a two page document on which the transition plan being read was coded and the student's projected diploma type was indicated. Following this, in boxes set lengthwise across the page, the goals under IDEA compliance (post-secondary education, vocational education, integrated employment, independent living and community participation) were included. Beside them, a space was included to rate the goals listed as follows: 0 = absent; 1 = minimal detail and/or

nonspecific; 2 = adequate detail; 3 = specific detail for implementation as part of the plan. The instrument answered whether or not the goals were tied to anticipated post-school outcomes and reflected the desires of students, assessed by explicit statements of student desires on the transition plan document, with yes – no responses. The number of action steps associated with the goal were tallied next. Following that, continuing lengthwise across the page, boxes with Likert scales ranging 0 to 3 were included for implementation and for utility (0 = the *absence of activities related to the goal*; 3 = *an applicable action step or one that is likely to be carried through*). Finally, a set of questions was included to which the rater responded yes – no. These yes-no questions measured whether or not the skills of self determination or self-advocacy had been coached, assessed for this study by the words "self-determination" or "self-advocacy" appearing specifically on the transition plan document. In addition, these questions focused on best practice and were designed to discern whether person-centered planning had occurred, evident in the documentation of who had participated in discussions about the child's future. Whether or not a student's career or employment aspirations were documented was noted by expressions of the child's desire for future work not the school staff's desire the child. If cultural values and beliefs had been acknowledged and at all accommodated in the transition plan, these were evident in the mention of how the school is sensitive to the child's ethnic preferences, religious practice, or volunteering with ethnic or religious organizations (*Coding Manua*l, Powers et al., 2005).

No comparisons between data sets before and after an intervention had been used with the STSRP prior to this study. Transition plans had previously been rated using the STSRP to ascertain their quality relative to standards of compliance to IDEA (2004) and

best practices in transition. The first modified version of the STSRP used by Grigal et al. (1997) contained 25 questions. This instrument was found reliable through an evaluation by an independent observer (Grigal et al., 1997). The version modified further by Powers et al. (2005) contained 35 questions and included questions about the student's work history and an evaluation of IEP components. To assist with the reliability of this instrument, a coding manual was provided for this study by the lead researcher on the 2005 study (Powers et al., 2005). The version used for this study included 13 questions aimed at those indicators that Appreciative Inquiry might reasonably affect. Housing, transportation, health and medical issues, recreation and leisure activities, adult services, mentoring opportunities, extracurricular activities, individualized financial resources such as stipends, and coaching about accommodations provided to students after high school were eliminated as indicators to be rated. Information specific to IEPs and not found on transition plans such as present accommodations, type of diploma anticipated, and standardized test results were also eliminated from the instrument.

The use of the modified STSRP on archived (2006) and on newly written (2007) transition plans yielded data that could be easily compared for purposes of this study. The modified and edited STSRP provided flexibility and ease with which to locate relevant information on transition plans. In school district P, the transition plans were part of the IEP documentation. In school district E, the transition plans were available as separate documents. In school district C, the transition plans were kept separately as documents in three ring binders each identified by student. Because the instrument yielded data primarily as tallies quantifying the quality of the plans themselves, subsequent analysis was with t-tests and chi square. Finally, because the instrument

distinguished between compliance components and components of best practice, the relative strength of Appreciative Inquiry's effect in each of these areas could be evaluated.

The researcher completed the transition plan ratings in May and June, 2007 without sharing the instrument with the school districts in the study. The modified STSRP instrument was applied to transition plans in school district P pre and post AI-IEP protocol, in school district E pre and post Appreciative Inquiry and AI-IEP protocol, and through a pre-post time frame to transition plans in school district C.

Procedure

IEP Meeting Observations

Once the reliability of the IEP meeting interaction measure had been established, IEP meetings in school districts P, E, and C were observed and the interactions recorded. In 2007, IEP meetings began in both school districts P and E in late February and continued through early May. Twenty-five IEP meetings were observed in school district P. Twenty-three IEP meetings were observed in school district E. These were observed by the research assistant. In the control school district C, 30 observations by the researcher were completed of IEP Meetings held from late May to mid-June, 2007.

The participants involved in the meetings were informed of the presence of an observer and introduced to her by the CSE Chairperson in charge of the meeting. Her purpose in marking IEP team meeting interactions was briefly explained. All participants were assured that the specific content of meeting interactions was not being transcribed or recorded in any way. The IEP meetings were not tape recorded because this would

have added an additional consideration to the informed consent of participants which may have resulted in fewer participants agreeing to be part of this study. No verbal mention was made of the nature of the Appreciative Inquiry interventions themselves, Appreciative Inquiry's utilization in a scripted protocol form, or prospective results of the study. In 2007, each participant was asked to sign an informed consent for the meetings to be observed and, in the cases of parents and students, for transition plans to be read in school districts P, E, and C. One family in school district E opted not to be included in the study and to disallow the study's observer from attending the meeting. Therefore, of the potential 79 meetings observed and transition plans read, 78 were completed for a 98.7% participation rate.

The observer for all of the IEP meetings remained as unobtrusive as possible, always sitting in a corner of the room where the meeting was taking place. As the meeting began, the observer marked the meeting code on the IEP meeting interaction measure signifying the students age, grade level, gender, and, if available, the type of disability of the student in addition to the date of the meeting. Following this, the observer started a tape recorder. A pre-recorded tone sounded in the observer's ear every ten seconds during the course of the meeting. When the tone sounded, she wrote a one or two letter code on the IEP team interaction measure to signify who was speaking at that moment during the meeting. A person was observed as speaking if that person was the first to speak at all during the 10-second interval between pre-recorded tones. If multiple conversations occurred during an interval and the observer was unable to distinguish who spoke first, if the conversation became incomprehensible, or if no one spoke, the entire interval on the measure was left blank. Then, she drew a hash mark (/) through a plus

sign (+) or minus sign (-) to indicate whether or not the spoken comment was positive or negative. There was no distinction made between a positive remark like passing a test and a remark that cast the student in a positive light; nor was there any distinction made between the description of a failed test and a disparaging remark. In addition, she drew a hash mark through whether or not the spoken comment provided information (I), observation (B), or opinion (O). She then drew a hash mark through whether the comment indicated self-advocacy on the part of the student (SA), i.e. whether it indicated a student's preferences, desires, or requests for support, and whether it dealt with the student's transition from high school (F). Finally, she drew a question mark (?) next to the interval number to signify if the comment came in the form of a question. Once the CSE chairperson called an end to the meeting, the observer drew an "X" through the ending interval.

Rating Transition Plans

To measure changes in transition plans, the IEPs of those students represented in both districts P, E, and C were read, rated and compared for the quality of the transition goals pre-intervention and post-intervention. This was completed by the researcher in June, 2007 over the course of three six hour days each in school districts P and E and two six hour days in school district C. In each district, each transition plan for the 78 students represented at IEP meetings was read through once and the goals and activities counted and rated for the transition plans created in 2006 pre-intervention. Following this, the transition plans were put aside. Each transition plan was then read again with the goals and activities counted and rated for plans created in 2007 post-intervention.

Hypotheses and Experimental Design

Hypotheses regarding the effect of Appreciative Inquiry on the quality of IEP meetings were tested using a pre post intervention experimental design in school district P. IEP meeting interaction results in district P and E were also compared to results in the control district C. Hypotheses regarding the quality of transition plans were tested using a pre and post intervention experimental design in all three districts. IEP meetings were observed and the results were calibrated as percentages of total student interactions in the case of self advocacy and of total meeting interactions in the cases of positive and negative remarks and remarks reflecting information, observation, opinion, and transition. These percentages were then compared for school districts P, E, and C. Transition plans were read and rated and the results, calibrated as raw scores from which means and standard deviations could be calculated, were compared for school districts P, E, and C. School district P provided baseline data in 2006, having tested the IEP Meeting Interaction Instrument, and received the AI-IEP protocol in 2007. School district E received the full scale Appreciative Inquiry and received the AI-IEP protocol in 2007. School district C received neither the Appreciative Inquiry nor the AI-IEP protocol. Hypotheses and data sources are indicated in Appendices M through S.

Data Evaluation

The data gathered for this study was descriptive and quasi-experimental. Data for the observations of IEP meetings described the effect of Appreciative Inquiry on the quality of IEP meetings. Therefore, data were analyzed and evaluated using direct comparisons between cross condition percentage increases and decreases on the study's variables.

Data for the quality of the transition plans were analyzed and evaluated using pre post cross condition means.

Because only partial control is possible in this study, its quasi-experimental nature is clear. The analysis of the transition plan results was performed using one tailed t-tests of independent means and chi-square tests of independence (Aron, Aron, & Coups, 2006). Questions that were answered yes or no were compared using chi-square for pre and post-intervention results for school districts, P, E and C. The chi-square test for independence is the preferred method of analysis for questions involving non-continuous data such as yes-no responses (Isaac & Michael, 1997). The rating of goals as well as the number of activities and the Likert scale results for implementation and utility were compared using single-tailed t-tests for the pre and post-intervention results for school districts P, E, and C. In order to answer questions about whether or not the difference between two sample means is statistically significant in a predicted direction, a single-tailed t-test is the preferred method of analysis (Isaac & Michael, 1997).

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

The results of using Appreciative Inquiry as a training and a protocol in one school district and as a protocol alone in another school district to improve the quality of IEP meetings and the quality of transition plans are presented in this chapter.

For this study, using the IEP Meeting Measure, 3,752 interactions were recorded in school district P; 3,956 interactions were recorded in school district E; 1,452 were recorded in the control, school district C. The baseline total interactions in school district P was 5,573. 14,733 total interactions were observed for this study. Overall, the percentage of IEP meetings attended by students in school districts P and E were 72 and 70 respectively. This percentage matches the percentage documented by Martin, et al., (2004). The percentage of meetings attended by students in school district C was 17 (Appendix Y).

This study attempted to test several hypotheses regarding the affect of Appreciative Inquiry on the quality of IEP meetings' process and content and the quality of transition plans based on IDEA 2004 definition and best practices. Analyzed using changes in percentages of meeting interactions in school districts P, E, and C (Appendices T, U, V) and with baseline (Appendix W) and post-intervention data in school district P, this study tested several hypotheses. Using Appreciative Inquiry as a protocol in one district, as a training and a protocol in a second district, and using a third district as a control, the hypotheses to be tested are the following:

1) As measured by the IEP Meeting Interaction Measure, that Appreciative Inquiry will increase the percentage levels of

    a) student turn taking and

b) self advocacy behaviors during IEP meetings;

2) As measured by the IEP Meeting Interaction Measure, that Appreciative Inquiry will increase the percentage of

a) positive remarks

b) and decrease the percentage of negative remarks

c) and increase the ratio of positive to negative remarks during IEP meetings;

3) As measured by the IEP Meeting Interaction Measure, that Appreciative Inquiry will increase the percentage of

a) informational and

b) observational remarks as opposed to

c) opinion

d) and increase the percentage of remarks regarding transition

. during IEP meetings.

Analyzed using single tailed t-tests comparing independent means to compare transition plan results in school districts P. E, and C, this study tested the hypotheses:

4) As measured by the Transition Plan Quality Measure, that Appreciative Inquiry will significantly increase the:

a) quality of goals and

b) the number of action steps in transition plans for definitions according to IDEA 2004 and

5) As measured by the Transition Plan Quality Measure, that Appreciative Inquiry will significantly increase the levels in transition plans of:

a) implementation of action steps,

b) utility of action steps.

Analyzed using chi-square tests of independence for transition plan results in school districts P, E, and C, this study tested the hypothesis that Appreciative Inquiry will significantly increase:

c) goals tied to post-school outcomes, and

d) documentation of student desires; and

6) As measured by the Transition Plan Quality Measure, that Appreciative Inquiry will significantly increase the use of best person-practices in transition plans such as:

a) person - centered planning,

b) student self-determination,

c) student employment aspirations,

d) student cultural values and beliefs.

Tables follow that address the results of each hypothesis tested.

Effect of Intervention on IEP Meeting Process and Content: Comparison of Data for School Districts P, E, C on Indicators of IEP Meeting Quality.

Table 1

Hypothesis 1a. Percentage of Students Taking Turns Speaking During IEP Meetings in School Districts P, E, and C for Meetings with Students Present (2007 Data)

School district	Total interactions	Student interactions	% Student interactions
P	2334	225	9.6
E	2662	332	12.5
C	392	16	4

The number of times students spoke during IEP meetings in 2007 at school district P and E were greater by factors of 2.4 and 3.1 respectively over school district C (control) results. The number of times students spoke was greater by a factor of 2.9 in school district E over school district P.

Table 2

Hypothesis 1b. Percentage of Student Self Advocacy Behaviors Exhibited During IEP Meetings in School Districts P, E, C (2007 Data)

School district	Student interactions	Self-advocacy interactions	% Self-advocacy interactions
P	225	151	67.1
E	332	300	90.3
C	16	11	68.7

The number of times when students who spoke self-advocated during IEP meetings in 2007 was greater at school district E by a factor of 1.3 over school district C (control) results. The percentage of student self-advocacy behaviors in school district E over school district P was greater by a factor of 1.3. The percentage of student self advocacy behaviors in school district C was greater than in school district P by a factor of 1.02.

Table 3

Hypothesis 1b. Student Self-advocacy Behaviors Exhibited by Students as a Percent of Total IEP Meeting Interactions in School Districts P, E, C (2007)

School district	Total interactions	Self-advocacy interactions	% Self-advocacy interactions
P	2334	151	6.5
E	2662	300	11.2
C	392	11	2.8

Student self-advocacy as a percent of total interactions during IEP meetings in 2007 was greater at school district P and school district E by factors of 2.3 and 4 respectively over the school district C (control) results. School District E saw a greater percent of self advocating behaviors over school district P by a factor of 1.7. The percentage of positive remarks in school district C was grater than the percentage in school district P by a factor of 1.4.

Table 4

Hypothesis 2a.. Percentage of Positive Remarks Recorded During IEP Meetings in School Districts P, E, C (2007)

School district	Total Interactions	Positive interactions	% Positive interactions
P	3752	392	10.4
E	3956	798	20.1
C	1452	215	14.8

The number of interactions among participants at IEP meetings that were positive in 2007 in school district E was greater by a factor of 1.7 over the School district C (control) results. Positive remarks were greater in school district E than in school district P by a factor of 1.9.

Table 5

Hypothesis 2b. Percentage of Negative Remarks Recorded During IEP Meetings in School Districts P, E, and C (2007)

School district	Total Interactions	Negative interactions	% Negative interactions
P	3752	141	3.7
E	3956	113	2.8
C	1452	296	20.3

The number of interactions among participants at IEP meetings that were negative in 2007 in school district P and school district E were fewer by factors of 5.5 and 7.3 respectively over the school district C (control) results. The number of negative interactions were fewer in school district E than in school district P by a factor of 1.3.

Table 6

Hypothesis 2c. Percent Ratios of Positive Remarks to Negative Remarks During IEP Meetings in School Districts P, E, C (2007)

School district	% Ratio positive to negative interactions	Difference positive negative interactions in %	Factor difference positive to negative interactions
P	10.4/3.7	6.7	2.81
E	20.1/2.8	17.3	7.19
C	14.8/20.3	(5.5)	(0.73)

The factor difference of the ratio of positive to negative interactions were greater in school district P and school district E in 2007 by factors of 3.5 and 7.9 respectively over school district C (control) results. The factor difference in the ratio of positive to negative remarks in school district E was greater than in school district P by a factor of 2.6.

Effect of Intervention on IEP Meeting Content: Comparison of Data for School Districts P, E, and C on Indicators of IEP Meeting Quality.

Table 7

Hypothesis 3a. Percentage of Informational Remarks Recorded During IEP Meetings in School Districts P, E, and C (2007)

School district	Total interactions	Informational interactions	% Informational interactions
P	3752	1714	45.6
E	3956	1502	37.9
C	1452	406	27.9

The percentage of informational interactions among participants at IEP meetings was greater in School District P and School District E in 2007 by factors of 1.6 and 1.3 respectively over the School District C (control) results. The percentage of informational remarks was greater in school district P than in school district E by a factor of 1.2.

Table 8

Hypothesis 3b. Percentage of Observational Remarks Recorded During IEP Meetings in School Districts P, E, and C (2007)

School district	Total Interactions	Observational interactions	% Observational interactions
P	3752	632	16.8
E	3956	615	15.5
C	1452	55	3.7

The percentage of observational interactions among participants at IEP meetings was greater in school district P and school district E in 2007 by factors of 4.5 and 3 respectively over the school district C (control) results. The percentage of observational remarks in school district E was greater than in school district P by a factor of 1.08.

Table 9

Hypothesis 3c. Percentage of Opinion Remarks Recorded During IEP Meetings in School Districts P, E, and C (2007)

School district	Total interactions	Opinion interactions	% Opinion interactions
P	3752	1342	35.7
E	3956	1793	45.3
C	1452	991	68.2

The percentage of opinion interactions among participants at IEP meetings was less in school district P and school district E in 2007 by factors of 1.5 and 1.7 respectively over the school district C (control) results. The percentage of opinion remarks in school district P was less than in school district E by a factor of 1.3.

Table 10

Hypothesis 3d. Percentage of Remarks Regarding Transition Recorded During IEP Meetings in School Districts P, E, C (2007)

School district	Total interactions	Interactions regarding transition	% Interactions regarding transition
P	3752	120	3.1
E	3959	216	5.5
C	1452	55	3.8

The percentage of remarks regarding transition among participants at IEP meetings was greater in school district E than in either school district P or in school district C (control) in 2007 by factors of 1.8 and 1.4 respectively. The percentage of remarks regarding transition in school district E was greater than in school district P by a factor of 1.8. The percentage of remarks regarding transition was greater in school district C than in school district P by a factor of 1.2.

In addition to data gathered among P, E, and C (control), baseline data were gathered in school district P during the pilot study in the spring, 2006. As a way to understand the descriptive data better, the P (2006) baseline data was compared to the P (2007) study data for the following indicators of IEP meeting quality: students present at IEP meetings, student turn-taking, student self-advocacy behaviors, positive remarks, negative remarks, informational, observational, and opinion remarks, and remarks regarding transition.

Effect of Intervention on IEP Meeting Process: Comparison of Data for School District P for 2006 [Baseline] and 2007 on Indicators of IEP Meeting Quality.

Table 11

Hypothesis 1a. Percentage of Students Taking Turns Speaking During IEP Meetings in School District P before and after Intervention (for meetings with students present) (2006 [Baseline], 2007 Data)

School district	Total interactions	Student interactions	% Student interactions
P (2006)	3969	233	5.8
P (2007)	2334	225	9.6

The number of times students spoke during IEP meetings in 2007 at school district P increased by a factor of 1.6 over the baseline (2006) results.

Table 12

Hypothesis 1a. Percentage of Students Silent at IEP Meetings in School District P before and after Intervention (2006 [Baseline], 2007 Data)

School district	Total no. of meetings with students present	Total no. of meetings when students silent	% Meetings when students silent
P (2006)	33	6	18
P (2007)	18	1	5

The number of meetings when students were present but silent decreased in 2007 in school district P by 72% or a factor of 3.6 over the baseline (2006) results.

Table 13

Hypothesis 1b. Percentage of Student Self Advocacy Behaviors Exhibited in School District P before and after Intervention (2006 [Baseline], 2007 Data)

School district	Student Interactions	Self-advocacy interactions	% Self-advocacy interactions
P (2006)	233	114	48.9
P (2007)	225	151	67.1

The number of times when students who spoke self-advocated during IEP meetings in 2007 at school district P increased by a factor of 1.4 over the baseline (2006) results.

Table 14

Hypothesis 1b. Student Self-advocacy Behaviors Exhibited by Students as a Percent of Total IEP Meeting Interactions in School Districts P before and after Intervention (2006 [Baseline], 2007 Data)

School district	Total interactions	Self Advocacy interactions	% Total interactions that are self-advocacy
P (2006)	5573	114	2.0
P (2007)	2334	151	6.5

Student self-advocacy as a percentage of the total meeting interactions increased in 2007 at school district P by a factor of 3.3 over the baseline (2006) results.

Table 15

Hypothesis 2a. Percentage of Positive Remarks Recorded During IEP Meetings in School District P before and after Intervention (2006 [Baseline], 2007 Data)

School district	Total interactions	Positive interactions	% Positive interactions
P (2006)	5573	338	6.0
P (2007)	3752	392	10.4

The number of interactions among participants at IEP meetings that were positive increased in school district P in 2007 by a factor of 1.6 over the baseline (2006) results.

Table 16

Hypothesis 2b. Percentage of Negative Remarks Recorded During IEP Meetings in School District P before and after Intervention (2006 [Baseline], 2007 Data)

School district	Total interactions	Negative interactions	% Negative interactions
P (2006)	5573	534	9.5
P (2007)	3752	141	3.7

The number of interactions among participants at IEP meetings that were negative decreased in school district P in 2007 by a factor of 2.6 over the baseline (2006) results.

Table 17

Hypothesis 2c. Percent Ratios of Positive Remarks to Negative Remarks During IEP Meetings in School District P before and after Intervention (2006 [Baseline], 2007 Data)

School District	% Ratio positive to negative interactions	% Difference positive to negative interactions	Factor difference positive to negative interactions
P (2006)	6.0/9.5	(3.5)	(1.58)
P (2007)	10.4/3.7	6.7	2.81

The percentage ratio of positive to negative interactions among participants at IEP meetings increased in school district P in 2007 by a factor of 4.4 over baseline (2006) results.

Table 18

Hypothesis 3a. Percentage of Informational Remarks Recorded During IEP Meetings in School District P before and after Intervention (2006 [Baseline], 2007)

School district	Total Interactions	Informational interactions	% Informational interactions
P (2006)	5573	1647	29.6
P (2007)	3752	1714	45.6

The percentage of informational interactions among participants at IEP meetings increased in School District P in 2007 by a factor of 1.5 over baseline (2006) results.

Table 19

Hypothesis 3b. Percentage of Observational Remarks Recorded During IEP Meetings in School District P before and after Intervention (2006 [Baseline], 2007)

School district	Total interactions	Observational interactions	% Observational interactions
P (2006)	5573	206	3.7
P (2007)	3752	632	16.8

The percentage of observational interactions among participants at IEP meetings increased in school district P in 2007 by a factor of 4.6 over baseline (2006) results.

Table 20

Hypothesis 3c. Percentage of Opinion Remarks Recorded During IEP Meetings in School District P before and after Intervention (2006 [Baseline], 2007)

School district	Total interactions	Opinion interactions	% Opinion interactions
P (2006)	5573	3527	63.2
P (2007)	3752	1342	35.7

The percentage of opinion interactions among participants at IEP meetings decreased in school district P in 2007 by a factor of 1.6 compared to baseline (2006) results.

Table 21

Hypothesis 3d. Percentage of Remarks Regarding Transition Recorded During IEP Meetings in School District P (2006 [Baseline], 2007 Data)

School district	Total interactions	Interactions regarding transition	% Interactions regarding transition
P (2006)	5573	212	3.8
P (2007)	3752	120	3.1

The percentage of remarks regarding transition among participants at IEP meetings decreased in school district P in 2007 by a factor of 1.2 compared to baseline (2006).

Effect of Intervention on Transition Plans: Comparison of Data for School Districts P, E, and C on IDEA 2004 Definitions and Best Practices

Hypothesis 4a. No differences of any significance were found in the quality of the goals for any of the definitions in IDEA 2004 in the categories of post-secondary education, vocational education, integrated employment, independent living, and community participation in the transition plans in school districts P, E, and C. Results of single tailed *t*-tests of these variables pre and post intervention ranged from 0 to 1.475 (Post-secondary education in school district P to integrated employment in school district C). [pre M = .739, post M = .739, pre SD = .619, post SD = .619; pre M = .714, post M = 1.231, pre SD .469, post SD = .439 < .05] (Appendix Z)[1]

Hypothesis 4b. No differences of any significance were found in the number of action steps for any of the definitions in IDEA 2004 in the categories of post-secondary education, vocational education, integrated employment, independent living, and community participation in transition plans in school districts P, E, and C.
Results of single tailed *t*-tests of these variables ranged from 0 to 0.673(Post-secondary education in school district P to vocational education in school district E). [pre M = .478, post M = .478, pre SD = .994, post SD = .994; pre M = 1.727, post M = 2.132, pre SD = 1.120, post SD = .888 < .05] (Appendix AA)

[1] School district P transferred identical transition plan information from one year to the next, hence the "0" rating.

Hypothesis 5a. No differences of any significance were found for the levels of implementation for any of the definitions in IDEA 2004 in the categories of post-secondary education, vocational education, integrated employment, independent living, and community participation in transition plans in school districts P, E, and C. Results of single tailed *t*-tests of these variables ranged from 0 to 1.363 (Post-secondary education in school district P to post-secondary education in school district E). [pre M = 1.903, post M = 1.903, pre SD = .539, post SD = .539; pre M = 1.826, post M = 2.347, pre SD = .796, post SD = .752 < .05] (Appendix BB)

Hypothesis 5b. No differences of any significance were found in the levels of utility for any of the definitions in IDEA 2004 in the categories of post-secondary education, vocational education, integrated employment, independent living, and community participation in transition plans in school districts P, E, and C. Results of single tailed *t*-tests of these variables ranged from 0 to 1.307 (Post-secondary education in school district P to independent living in school district E). [pre M = .957, post M = .957, pre SD = .878, post SD = .878; pre M = 1.421, post M = 2.157, pre SD = 1.070, post SD = .602 < .05] (Appendix CC)

Hypothesis 5c. No significance was detected using chi-square for goals tied to post-school outcomes in post-secondary education, vocational education, integrated employment, and independent living when pre and post intervention results were compared in transition plans in school districts P, E, and C. Chi-square results ranged from 0 to 3.287 (Post-secondary education in school district P to post-secondary

education in school district E). [X^2 (1, n = 21), p = .05; X^2 (1, n = 23), p = .05] (Appendix DD)

Hypothesis 5d. No significance was detected using chi-square for student desires reflected in IDEA 2004 definitions in vocational education, integrated employment, independent living, and community participation when pre and post intervention results were compared in transition plans in school districts P, E, and C. Chi-square results ranged from 0 to 0.410 (Post-secondary education in school district P to vocational education in school district E). [X^2 (1, n = 21), p = .05; X^2 (1, n = 22), p = .05] (Appendix EE)

Hypothesis 6a. No significance was detected using chi-square for the best practice of person-centered planning when pre and post intervention results were compared in transition plans in school districts P, E, and C. Chi-square results were 0. (Appendix FF)

Hypothesis 6b. No significance was detected using chi-square for the best practice of coaching for self-determination when pre and post intervention results were compared in transition plans in school districts P, E, and C. Chi-square results were 0. (Appendix GG)

Hypothesis 6c. No significance was detected using chi-square for the best practice of including student employment aspirations when pre and post intervention results were compared in transition plans in school districts P, E, and C. Chi-square results ranged

from 0 to 1.244 (School district P to school district E). [X^2 (1, n = 25), p = .05; X^2 (1, n = 23), p = .05] (Appendix HH)

Hypothesis 6d. No significance was detected using chi-square for the best practice of acknowledging student cultural beliefs and values when pre and post intervention results were compared in transition plans in school districts P, E, and C. Chi-square results ranged from 0 to .356 (School district P to school district E). [X^2 (1, n = 25), p = .05; X^2 (1, n = 23) p = .05] (Appendix II)

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

Several hypotheses of this study were supported. Under the conditions of Appreciative Inquiry, there may be an effect on the variables having to do with IEP meeting process and content in directions that can help create quality IEP meetings. Factor differences as large as 7.9 over the control and 4.6 over baseline were recorded in this study. Appreciative Inquiry did not have a statistically significant effect on the quality of transition plans either among the IDEA 2004 definitions or among the best practices for transition planning. The importance of this study is that for the first time, Appreciative Inquiry has been used to attempt to affect IEP meeting interactions and transition planning. The study gathered descriptive data in quantitative form on the effects of Appreciative Inquiry, which add to an understanding of this organizational intervention. It appears from the data that some aspect of Appreciative Inquiry might enhance meeting dynamics. This chapter describes and discusses the results for specific hypotheses and describes and discusses the impact of the two interventions used specifically. The chapter ends by discussing implications for practice, the study's limitations, and directions for future research.

Overall, in school district E, the study found that Appreciative Inquiry training and the protocol together may have increased student turn-taking, student self advocacy, positive remarks, and informational and observational remarks over the control condition, indicating greater meeting quality. The combination of Appreciative Inquiry and the protocol mat also have affected the ratio of positive to negative remarks favorably while decreasing the percentage of negative remarks and opinion. There was no difference in remarks regarding transition or in the variables tested on the transition plans. In school

district P, the protocol only may have increased student turn-taking, informational and observational remarks while reducing the number of negative remarks and opinion over the control. The ratio of positive to negative remarks was also favorably affected in school district P over the control condition. A comparison of school district E with school district P indicates a greater value added when the Appreciative Inquiry training is conducted for student turn-taking, student self-advocacy, positive remarks, and favorable positive and negative ratio. When comparing E with P, there is no value added for negative remarks, informational or observational remarks, or opinion.

Hypothesis 1

Appreciative Inquiry appears to have moved the IEP meeting variables of the first hypothesis, student turn-taking and student self advocacy, in directions that indicated greater meeting quality. Because the protocol began the meeting by initiating a conversation with the student in a positive manner, it may have been that the student was drawn into the meeting in a very direct way. Because the conversation's focus was on student success, the student may have immediately participated in the meeting from a position of strength. This initiation was likely different from anything the student or the meeting's participants had been accustomed to in past meetings. Hence, the novelty of the circumstance may also have encouraged greater student participation. Additional questions in the protocol were directed to the student as well which may have kept the student active and speaking as the meeting continued.

Likewise, the percentage of meetings at which the student remained silent in school district P decreased by a factor of three from baseline results, meaning that students

participated and took turns more often. Making the student and the student's success the immediate and complete focus of the IEP meeting may have benefited student's speaking up more than they had done in the past.

Conceivably, by virtue of the protocol's focus on the student's story, it appears that student self-advocacy was encouraged. Meeting participants were encouraged to share stories of the student's successes and to offer support for the student, this may have created a climate at the meeting within which a student felt more comfortable and confident to speak for him or herself about what he or she wanted. In addition, because students were asked to envision their futures, there was an emphasis during the meeting on planning and support which may have encouraged students to describe and request help. Sensing that their input was encouraged by the IEP meeting protocol, students may have discerned a greater opportunity to be heard and a greater willingness on the part of meeting participants to be open to their ideas.

Having engaged in Appreciative Inquiry training, school district E may have experienced greater gains in student turn taking and in student self advocacy because the protocol was understood in better context. The focus of the Appreciative Inquiry, in part, was on student success. Professionals involved in the Appreciative Inquiry discussed the student centered delivery of services by the special education department. There was, generally, strong encouragement using the protocol, too, in school district E, largely due to the CSE Chairperson's understanding of the protocol in the context of Appreciative Inquiry and commitment to its use at a level of 75%.

Hypothesis 2

Regarding the second hypothesis, Appreciative Inquiry appeared to move the IEP meeting variables of positive remarks, negative remarks, and their ratios in directions that indicated meeting quality by factors of as much as 7.9 over the control. Both Appreciative Inquiry and the AI-IEP protocol focused specifically on the positive themes of success and support; hence these interventions may have engendered a greater focus on positive remarks during meetings. The successes described and discussed during meetings were the students' as meeting participants provided stories that were positive about the student's career plans and possible future. The protocol in particular served to guide the conversation during IEP meeting in positive directions. Participants were encouraged to voice their support for the student and the student's future. Changes to the student's program were expressed in terms of improvements that could be made not in terms of failings.

School district E's higher ratio of positive to negative remarks (7.91) fits comfortably within the parameters of maximum human functioning of 2.9 to 11.6 as defined by Fredrickson and Losada (2005) indicating that meeting interactions in E met this measure of quality. School district P's ratio of 2.81 is just outside the parameter of optimal functioning, up from (1.58) the year before.

The Appreciative Inquiry training in this study focused on optimum experiences for professionals working with students with disabilities. Again, it should be noted that school district E, whose professionals participated in Appreciative Inquiry as well as utilized the protocol, seemed to have experienced the highest percentages of positive remarks and the lowest percentages of negative remarks. This is true even when

compared to a robust control in school district C with no intervention which displayed higher percentages of positive remarks than school district P. C, however, had a significantly higher percentage of negative interactions by a factor of 5.5 over P. It is conceivable that the positive benefit of a strength based intervention like Appreciative Inquiry could have carried over to the IEP meetings in school district E in such a way that the tone of these meetings was consistently positive. The results suggest that the positive questions in the AI-IEP protocol set a positive tone for the IEP meeting. This tone may have reinforced whatever positive perspective may have emerged and continued from the Appreciative Inquiry in school district E. It should be noted, too, that the outcomes of the Appreciative Inquiry afforded participants the opportunity to describe what improvements needed to be made in the form of wishes and "provocative propositions" and what barriers existed to success, much as the protocol elicited.

Hypothesis 3

As a result of the interventions for the third hypothesis, it appears that the IEP meeting variables of the percentages of informational and observational remarks increasing and the percentage of opinion remarks decreasing moved in the direction of greater meeting quality. Although some increases were modest in comparison to other variable percentages in the Appreciative Inquiry school districts, the balance of the variables observed under hypothesis 3 moved toward greater percentages of information and observation and less of opinion. It may be true that increases in informational remarks, defined for this study as "…remarks that provides some fact or objective measure of a student's progress, grades, test grades…" may have been due to proportionately more

students taking Graduate Equivalency Diploma (GED) entrance tests to qualify for alternative diplomas and having their scores reported. Because there was no protocol followed in school district C, the conversation in this district may have more easily ranged to opinion rather than to observable behaviors.

The protocol focused on actual events and stories in describing student success and in developing a vision for the future; hence, it seems as though there was a greater emphasis on informational and observational remarks. The protocol asked specifically, for example, for what IEP meeting participants had "seen" as success for the student and what the student had "done" to be successful. Likewise, descriptions of support were focused on concrete means of providing for student success. The Appreciative Inquiry training in school district E focused in part on the development and timely sharing of important information with colleagues and with students' families, and some carryover may have existed during the IEP meetings. The structure of Appreciative Inquiry in its "Deliver" phase focused on actions that were verifiable and for which participants were accountable and bore witness. Again, it is possible that some of these developments in the Appreciative Inquiry intervention carried over into participant thinking during meetings. Both the AI-IEP protocol and the Appreciative Inquiry focused on narratives of success and corroborating evidence; hence, opinion remarks were less prevalent in districts P and E than in district C. Similarly, the percentage of opinion remarks was reduced from pre intervention to post intervention observations in school district P. Neither the AI-IEP protocol nor the Appreciative Inquiry encouraged participants to comment or express opinions about the stories they had heard. The focus in both cases

was directly on the evidence provided by the stories of success and support, not on the stories' merit.

Several reasons may exist for the comparatively low percentages of remarks regarding transition experienced in this study. With school district P at 25% average and school district E at 75% average fidelity to the protocol, it is conceivable that the portion of the AI-IEP protocol dealing with transition directly, i.e. the student's vision of his or her future, may have been covered indirectly or not at all. In the three meetings in school district P that the researcher attended as probes, the fifth question on the protocol: "What do you think you'd most love to do when you grow up?" was the one most frequently asked. Martin, et al. (2006b) found that, frequently, issues of transition were discussed toward the very end of IEP meetings indicating that these discussions routinely receive shorter shrift in the process than is necessary to ensure changes in student transition. Because school district P was resistant to the use of the protocol or because school district P did not understand or value the protocol due to lack of training, remarks about student transition may not have been expressed. The guiding questions, in other words, were asked less often, less intentionally as written, or not asked. Finally, the percentage of transition remarks in school district P actually declined by a factor of 1.2. The district resistance to the AI-IEP protocol, described in the limitations section of this chapter, may have prevented more substantial conversations about transition from occurring.

Hypothesis 4

Appreciative Inquiry, either in the form of the protocol or in the form of the fuller scale intervention, did not affect the dependent variables of the quality of transition plan

goals or the number of action steps in the direction of greater quality. Was this due to the special education teachers responsible for documenting these transition plans working outside the IEP meeting process to create those plans? There was indication based on dates on which the transition plans had been developed that meetings in school districts E and C had occurred to discuss transition outside the annual reviews that were being observed. This may explain why documents were unaffected by Appreciative Inquiry and by the discussions during the IEP meetings. Likewise, the language for the types of goals and action steps in the transition plans in all three districts varied little from one year to the next. Goals and action steps were added, but their descriptions remained "boilerplate" (Powers et al., 2005) and failed to reflect students as individuals which is mandated by law as the educational program is individualized for "each child" (20 U.S.C. 1414 sec. 614 (1)(A)) . The AI-IEP protocol did not specify that the target objective was improving the quality of written transition plans; hence, no improving in the quality was discerned. Also, conversations about transition showed the weakest results among the IEP meeting content variables which is consistent with a lack of change on transition plans.

Hypothesis 5

The dependent variables of implementation and utility for the action steps and ties to post school outcomes and student desires did not change significantly, indicating no greater quality in the transition plans as a result of the interventions. Fundamentally, Appreciative Inquiry targets specific aspects of individual and organizational life for improvement, particularly as the process evolves into creating a vision for the future and

committing to that vision. Either the protocol itself did not provide enough additional data of value to warrant including this data on the transition plans, or the special education teachers responsible for the plans did not change their approaches to creating the transition plans as a result of this intervention. School district P, in particular, transferred identical transition plan information from one year to the next with no attention paid to changes in potential implementation and utility. In school district P with some goals, one can assume, having been met over the course of a year, no change was evident in their documentation.

Hypothesis 6

The dependent variables under best practices, including person-centered planning, student self-determination, student employment aspirations, and student cultural values and beliefs did not change as a result of Appreciative Inquiry. It may have been that the interventions had no significant effect on these variables because the special education teachers responsible for developing and documenting the transition plans may have focused on issues of strict compliance rather than best practice. In several cases, as documented on the transition plans, the teachers met with students, caregivers, families, and other professionals to draft the plans. However, the language of the documentation remained largely unaffected by this collaboration and reflected instead language which the teachers felt complied with regulation. An entry such as “The student will be provided the opportunity to participate in career assessment inventories, interviews, or evaluations to assist in deciding on a career path of interest” was repeated without any indication of the action step’s having been completed. This language also did not change

from year to year, reflecting a situation among school districts already identified as poor practice in New York State (Geary, 2007). Finally, the dependent variables chosen as best practices for this study, although indicative of quality, require a deeper commitment to the transition plan process than is common among most school districts (Grigal et al., 1997). Neither the Appreciative Inquiry training nor the AI-IEP protocol targeted these best practices with any degree of precision.

Links between Findings and Theory

In several ways, the findings of this study link well to previous studies. Lehmer and Ruona (2004) writing about Appreciative Inquiry as a model in adult educational settings, call for Appreciative Inquiry to be investigated using a research model that includes a control. Martin et al. (2004) describe 72% of the 393 IEP meetings he and his team recorded as having students present. Between school districts P and E, 71% of the meetings observed were attended by students. Only school district C had students attend fewer meetings (17%) than might be expected (Appendices Y and Z). Also, as reported by Martin et al. (2004), special education professionals talk significantly more during IEP meetings than do other meeting participants. Paglieri and Grimshaw (2002) note that meeting chairpersons are responsible for 32% of the verbal interactions during meetings. In the case of this study, the focus was on student interactions specifically. However, special education chairpersons and special education teachers dominated these conversations, with CSE chair persons logging 28% of the total verbal interactions (Appendices T, U, V, W). Students, however, increased their levels of participation post-intervention over baseline and over control, speaking 9.6% and 12.5% of the time over

5.8% and 4% respectively.. Mason et al. (2004), through surveys of school district personnel, mostly special education teachers and administrators, report frustration with students' meaningful participation in the IEP meeting process. This was in spite of 66% of the survey respondents stating they taught related self management and goal setting skills to their students with disabilities. The increased self advocacy observed in the current study using the AI-IEP protocol may provide a foothold for creating more relevant and meaningful IEP results and encouraging more self determination as a result.

Based on a review of the literature on student involvement in IEP meetings, Test et al. (2004) postulate that students with widely varying disabilities can be successfully involved in their IEP meetings. Although Martin et al. (2004) report that a majority of students felt uncomfortable self-advocating during IEP meetings, increased proportions of self advocating behaviors among students in the current study suggest some potential remedy for this lack. Powers et al. (1999) indicate that students, overall, feel disconnected from IEP meetings. Although no qualitative or survey data were collected in this study to understand student perceptions, it would seem that, by virtue of their speaking more in school districts P and E, they were more engaged. Using a 10 second momentary time sampling instrument similar to the one in this study, Martin et al. (2006b) found that students spoke 3% of the time during IEP meetings. These results appear close to those observed at baseline (2006) in district P (5.8%) and school district C (4%) prior to and without either intervention's being applied. After the intervention, students in school district E spoke 12.5% of the time and students in school district E spoke 9.6% of the time, four times and twice as often respectively.

Martin et al. (2006b) argue that students will not, through serendipity, begin to speak up more during IEP meetings. Their research calls for beginning IEP meetings for secondary school students with disabilities with post-school visions akin to the AI-IEP protocol. The active engagement provided by the AI-IEP meeting protocol may indicate a means to improving Martin et al.'s outcomes. Martin et al. experimented with student led IEP meetings in their 2006(b) study, applying student led meetings as an intervention to a random sample of meetings in 5 school districts. The results of this intervention indicate students speaking at their meetings 12.8% of the time. That result compares favorably with results in this study in school district E (12.5%). The AI-IEP meeting protocol doubled the rate of student interactions in school district P, but not to the level of school district E with Appreciative Inquiry training. Finally, although issues of transition were discussed more (24%) across all 130 IEP meetings observed in Martin et al.'s study (2006b), this proportion failed to increase under conditions of student-led IEPs, much as in the present study where remarks about transition ranged from 3.1% to 5.5%. Martin et al. (2006b) acknowledge that teacher expectations limit their study.

The results of the current study regarding positive and negative valences extend further than IEP meeting participants feeling good about themselves and their experience. The deficit model in special education can be said to be a natural outgrowth of the "natural tendency to study something that afflicts the well being of humanity" (Fredrickson, 2003b, p. 330). Maitlis and Ozcelik (2004) after analyzing toxic emotions in three case studies conclude that the collective and systemic emotional experience within organizations is real and is important to understand. Although experienced individually, they argue, emotions "emerge significantly from organizational roles and

relationships" (p. 376). These researchers warn that, unchecked, negative emotions can be diffused quickly and widely within the life of a group. This diffusion can then affect decisions which can have subsequent emotional fall-out that can affect further decisions and on and on.

Developing a counterbalance through positive emotions can have several effects on group process. The ratio of positive to negative interactions described by Fredrickson and Losada (2005) of 2.9 to 11.6 to 1 circumscribe the ratios experienced in this study in school district E (7.8 to 1). The positive-negative ratio experienced in school district P post-intervention fell just outside the parameter (at 2.81) of maximum human flourishing as described by Fredrickson and Losada (2005) by .09, indicating the Appreciative Inquiry training was more effective than using the protocol alone. The presence of increased percentages of positive interactions in the current study may have added to the resiliency of the participants, including students (Tugade & Fredrickson, 2004), may have provided immediate health benefits (Tugade, Fredrickson, & Barrett, 2004), and may have predicted a more complex understanding of situations and of other participants (Waugh & Fredrickson, 2006). In addition, Tugade, Fredrickson, & Barrett (2004) argue that the benefits of positive emotions may affect "positive emotional disclosure" or an individual's telling of personal events from a positive viewpoint. This could account for the increases in positive as opposed to negative comments in the current study since feeling positive increases the likelihood that an individual will relate positive narratives about him or herself.

Furthermore, feeling positive has the effect of developing new and stronger relationships (Waugh & Fredrickson, 2006) and creating a more level playing field where

everyone's input is recognized as important regardless of differences (Johnson & Fredrickson, 2005). Enhancing team interactions in this regard is valuable to group life. Paglieri and Grimshaw (2002) in their study of medical decision making teams argue for the importance of this leveling effect that participants experience during meetings. The harm done sometimes by poorly conceived transition processes explored by Heal and Rusch (1995) may conceivably be mitigated by positive emotions. According to Fredrickson and Branigan (2005) "positive emotions broaden the scope of attention" and increase "thought action repertoires" (p. 104). Positive feelings amplify a person's ability to think, to think broadly and openly, and to react flexibly. Barrett's (1995) results, based on several case studies of Appreciative Inquiry, bear out its potential to develop expansive thinking and generative learning in organizations. These effects of positive emotions are important in IEP meetings and during transition planning when the outlooks of parents, professionals, and children can be strained by frustration and failure. The potential of these effects should not be underestimated in regard to developing quality IEP team meetings using Appreciative Inquiry.

Finally, this study indicates that well written transition plan results remain elusive. According to a survey of 186 transition planning participants, McMahan and Baer (2001) report that students were not allowed full participation in the decision-making leading to their transition plans. Grigal et al. (1997) report that the goals on 94 randomly selected transition plans in an 85,000 person school district were driven more by disability than by students' desires.

Lehman et al. (1999) indicate through their interviews with IEP meeting participants that any inquiries about student wishes for themselves and parent wishes for their

students prove helpful in designing transition plans. Johnson et al. (2002) point out that despite the growing research base about successful transition practices, transition service requirements, state by state, are slow to change. Among the recommendations as a result of Johnson et al.'s literature and policy review are focuses on student participation and participant and interagency collaboration. Transition plans are best which reflect these recommendations and eschew "repetitive" and "boilerplate" language (Powers et al., 2005) driven by compliance. Like the IEPs noted by Lignugaris/Kraft et al. (2001), transition plans are living documents that require continual updating and change. The failure in this study to increase the dependent variables of quality transition plans may be due to the phenomenon observed by Strogglios and Xanthacou (2006) of teachers working apart from the IEP meeting process to write plans.

It seems that the authors of student transition plans for this study may be too content to stop at the threshold of the school and bid their students goodbye on the next stage of their life's journey; or they may not see the written plan as vital. In keeping with the intent of Appreciative Inquiry, Steere et al. (1995) advocate for a planning approach dedicated to "control by the focus person, a positive personal profile, (and) an unrestricted vision of success…" (p. 218). Continuing to try and translate these factors into planning transition seems to have worthy potential. An Appreciative Inquiry focused on transition planning and documentation may yield beneficial results. That Appreciative Inquiry can focus and improve the transition process, given the fact that it develops successful effects mostly by maintaining open-ended results (Bushe, 2005), may still be a credible outcome. In the current study, the protocol addressed global program goals and supports, but did not specifically highlight component parts of transition plans. A

replication of this study explicitly targeting transition planning would help to assess the viability of Appreciative Inquiry to improve the quality of transition planning.

Impact of the Interventions

Neither school district P nor school district E chose to adhere to the AI-IEP protocol with 100% fidelity for every meeting, yet the indicators of IEP meeting quality moved in directions of greater quality in both districts. The 75% adherence to the protocol in school district E may likely have been related to Appreciative Inquiry training. Potentially, with complete adherence to the protocol, even stronger and more robust results could potentially be expected.

The most significant results with regard to the quality of IEP meetings occurred in school district E which received both the Appreciative Inquiry training and the AI-IEP protocol for use during meetings. A level of buy in may have existed for the CSE Chairperson in school district E regarding the protocol, a buy in which did not exist in school district P. This was perhaps due to the Appreciative Inquiry training which took place in E setting the context for using the protocol. School district E may have been invested in the protocol because they helped develop it.

While both interventions invite further study, the AI-IEP protocol may offer a much less expensive means to elicit positive meeting results and fruitful conversations about student success and conceivable community support. Even with diminished fidelity in the protocol's use in school district P, negative remarks, for example, decreased, and improvement in the indicators of meeting quality became evident. The protocol is designed to mirror the structure of Appreciative Inquiry beginning with narratives of

success, designing an ideal future next, and ending with commitments and support. The potential impact of the protocol is not only in the positive cast of its questions, but in that it may encourage meeting behaviors that focus on narrative, eliminating opinion and focusing instead on information and observation. Significant post intervention increases in the percentages of informational and observational remarks in school district P, using the protocol alone, coupled with decreases in the percentage of opinion and less negativity, may indicate some noteworthy shifts in meeting quality.

Interestingly, neither the Appreciative Inquiry training and the protocol used in school district E nor the protocol alone used in school district P had any significant effect on the quality of transition plans as reflected in their goals and action steps. Given the seamless nature, found in regulation (*Regulations of the Commissioner*, 200.4(2); 200.4(ix)(a-e)) and in research (Flexer et al., 2005; Sax & Thoma, 2002), of the IEP meeting leading to the formation of transition plan documents, the lack of change appears important. Thoma, Nathanson, Baker, and Tamura (2002) report that even when parents and teachers believe they are supporting self-determination, the transition planning team does not support student preferences and interests. There seems, therefore, to be a profound disconnect, evident in the current study, between discussions about a student's future during the IEP meeting and the description of plans for the student's future on the transition document. As noted above, one conceivable explanation, born out by the dates noted on the transition plans, of this disconnect is that teachers are completing their paperwork outside the context of the IEP meetings. In an effort to focus on compliance, the teachers' responses to new and complicated information may be to ignore it. The appearance of professionals paying lip service to important information disclosed at IEP

meetings, even if, as Grigal et al. (1997) report, 95% of the IEP meetings observed for secondary students included transition planning, is troubling.

Other research points to documentation that is unresponsive to student changes in the IEP/Transition plan process. After surveying 54 high school IEP documents, Cotone and Brady write that they found that 73% of IEP goals for children with reading disabilities remained the same from grades 3 to 9. The lack of change in the goals and action steps on the transition plans in the current study in three different districts may be problematic for the future success of the children with disabilities in these districts. As Benz, Lindstrom, and Yavonoff (2000) discovered from student focus groups, the completion of transition goals year to year in high school is important for students with disabilities to find gainful employment after high school. There needs, however, to be some documented evidence of student progress once these goals have been achieved and new goals have been established.

Implications for Practice

The results of this study mirror the outcomes experienced by school improvement teams implemented under New York State Commissioner's regulations (100.11) in 1990. These teams represented administration, teachers, parent and community members, and students and engaged in shared decision-making to affect areas of school procedures that would improve student achievement. Although these teams were initially regarded positively, their sustainability over time and their true impact on student achievement have been negligible. Similarly, this study failed to translate gains at the meeting table into the documentation necessary for improved student transition outcomes.

That Appreciative Inquiry can create an effect on the variables that indicate IEP meeting quality is supported in this study. Had the school improvement teams noted above been introduced to Appreciative Inquiry instead of to more traditional problem solving and strategic planning models, their trajectory may have looked different (Barrett, 1995; Magruder-Watkins & Mohr, 2001; Peelle, 2006). Translating success at the meeting table to successful implementation of policies and practices requires a sharp focus on the desired outcomes. Because Appreciative Inquiry, in the questions it initially asks, can provide that focus on outcomes, its potential for school improvement might be further explored (Cooperrider, 1997; Doveston & Keenaghan, 2006; Ryan et al., 1999).

Appreciative Inquiry fits well into the person-centered planning process described as best practice for transition (Powers et al., 2005). Through its structure of Discover, Dream, Design, and Deliver, it offers a framework for person-centered planning that may prove beneficial. Test et al. (2004) observe that high school may be too late a time to develop self-advocacy skills in young people. Wehmeyer (1999) argues that self advocacy can be learned at any age. As a process for change, Appreciative Inquiry has been utilized in reform efforts by children as young as ten (Cooperrider, 1997) and therefore could conceivably provide for greater self advocacy earlier and, consequently, more focused transition results.

Appreciative Inquiry, like any intervention, requires careful consideration. As Richer (2007) reported, the variable she hypothesized would change, the retention rate for nurses on an oncology unit, did not change after Appreciative Inquiry was applied as an intervention. Creative Problem Solving, tested in Peelle's (2006) study alongside Appreciative Inquiry, created equally reasonable and potent outcomes. Particularly for

specialists in organizational development and team building, continuing the process of deconstructing Appreciative Inquiry and analyzing the importance of intention and the stance of leadership may continue to help sharpen the process and improve results. In some sense, therefore, Appreciative Inquiry is one of many possible roads to developing more positive, more responsive IEP meetings and transition plans. There seems to be potential in pre-service teachers' being taught to identify and to encourage student strengths as well as to elicit narratives from students, families, and from one another about successes and wishes for the future. Teachers as authors of transition plans should recognize the "living" nature of these documents in that they must be written to reflect the changing nature and narratives of student success, family and community support and participation, and wishes for the future. Lehman et al. (2001) point to administrative ignorance about transition as being the most significant barrier to developing relevant and helpful transition related activities for students with disabilities. These researchers also report the underutilization of transition planning meetings in schools. Pocock et al. (2002) emphasize that school culture must be conducive generally to the promotion of self-advocacy skills in students. The development of administration knowledgeable about students with disabilities and about transition coupled with the potential change in climate offered by the implementation of Appreciative Inquiry in schools offers the potential for more realizable transition plans. Administrators need to participate in the living documentation of transition more fully as well. Professional development for school districts using the STSRP, the instrument from which the transition plan quality measure used in the current study was developed, in its full version as developed by Powers et al. (2005) should be considered.

Limitations

Several limitations exist for this study. There were two different observers for this study, the researcher himself and a research assistant. Although the observer for the IEP Meeting Measure's reliability and the observer for this study (2007) had no idea of the study's hypotheses, the researcher, as observer in school district C (control), could not escape some bias. The IEP meetings were not randomly selected, but were instead dependent on the availability allowed by the CSE Chairperson in each district where the study took place. CSE Chairpersons made decisions about the specific days on which the IEP meetings would be observed. The IEP meetings also did not necessarily represent the same population in school district P from one year to the next because a proportion of the baseline 2006 student participants were graduated and a proportion were older and therefore different. Other limitations included the variability in IEP meeting attendance from one district to the next and from one meeting to the next. There was less effort made generally by teachers to include students in the IEP meeting process directly, for example, in school district C where only 17% of the IEP meetings were attended by students as opposed to P and E. The discrepancy between the number of meetings attended by students in school districts P and E as compared to School district C could account for some of the variation in results rather than the treatment. The culture of school district C, one where students are less involved in their IEP meetings, may account for this discrepancy. In addition, little or no information was mentioned at the IEP meetings observed regarding the type of disability of each child. The transition plans in school districts E and C held no information on the type of disability of each child. Therefore, little information is tracked in this study as to types of disabilities encountered

during the meetings and on transition plans, somewhat limiting the usability of the results.

In addition, this study did not examine differences in meeting interactions or on transition plans in regard to gender, race, or socio-economic status. It should be noted that self-determination, a sought-for outcome in this study, is seen as a threat in some cultures (Yuen & Shaughnessey, 2001). Although Appreciative Inquiry is based on the principle of social construction, it should be noted, too, that disability is itself a social construction informed by the institution of school and therefore, the study and its results should be viewed in this context (Dudley-Marling, 2004). The potential for patronization of individuals with disabilities, even in otherwise positive remarks, exists in this study.

A further limitation in school district P was the resistance to using the AI-IEP protocol. The CSE Chairperson felt that the protocol was too scripted for her comfort. When the researcher described how the protocol followed the structure used by Appreciative Inquiry and the questions could be modified so long as they followed the structure and held the same gist as the questions in the protocol, the protocol was used to 25% fidelity. This means that, on average, only 25% of the questions were asked at IEP meetings in school district P, ranging from one to two questions. Out of the 33 meetings observed, the 25 meetings that were included in this study utilized either question 1, describing the student's success, or question 5, describing what the student wanted to do in the future. Given the tone set by these positive questions in the protocol, a better indicator of the district's fidelity to the protocol may have been discerning how many of the questions in the protocol were actually answered during the course of meetings, not just asked.

School district P also saw a change in leadership between 2006 and 2007 in the introduction of a new school superintendent. This change could easily have affected the comportment of IEP meetings and changed their tone in unpredictable ways. In addition, the CSE Chairperson in school district P remarked on her own impending retirement to the researcher, adding to the possibility that any innovation like the AI-IEP protocol might not be well regarded.

The limitations in school district E include the fact that no baseline data were gathered there. Although the school district's IEP meetings showed signs of quality given the use of both Appreciative Inquiry training and the AI-IEP protocol, its IEP meetings may well have already been functioning at significantly higher levels than either P or C prior to the study. No needs assessment was completed in school district E before the Appreciative Inquiry training was provided. Discussions with the CSE Chairperson/Special Education Director provided the focus for the training. Hence, whatever professional buy-in existed in school district E may have been strengthened and the study's results may have been enhanced, particularly in the area of transition, had a more general conversation about professional development needs taken place. The sustainability of the changes noted in this study was impossible to ascertain because of time constraints in the process of observation.

School district C had only 17% attendance rate or five students attend its IEP meetings. Clearly, in school district C, student participation in IEP meetings was much less of priority than it was in school districts P and E. Although it is hard to pinpoint the dynamic for this lack of participation, the letter and spirit of the law regarding student participation in IEP meetings focused on transition seems unmet in school district C.

Future Research

Future research should focus on the use of the AI-IEP meeting protocol to affect change during IEP meetings and in transition plans. Specifically, the AI-IEP meeting protocol should focus more keenly on transition either by stating the purpose of the protocol up front as having to do with transition and/or modifying or including question specifically designed for IDEA 2004 definitions or best practice. The protocol should be tested again to develop further an inexpensive yet potentially powerful means to improve meeting quality.

Likewise, any Appreciative Inquiry training should be focused more precisely on transition planning with the initial question focused on transition. Appreciative Inquiry should be extended to include all meeting participants, parents and students as well as professionals, to develop a broader base of understanding and support for the process and its potential effects for the good. Extending the AI-IEP protocol to different school district IEP meeting venues, particularly those that report high levels of impartial hearings and mediations, might ease otherwise costly litigation. Gathering qualitative and survey data should be undertaken to ascertain the deeper nature of any improvements in IEP meeting results as a result of using Appreciative Inquiry or the AI-IEP meeting protocol or both. Future research could focus on the use of Appreciative Inquiry as a guiding process for person-centered planning and thus, conceivably improve the quality of transition documentation and outcomes directly.

The STSRP, used for the first time in this study in an edited version to measure transition plan improvements, should be considered again for use as a means of developing and analyzing pre and post intervention data around transition planning. The

STSRP in its full version also provides useful transition outcomes from which the transition process can be "designed down" to the level of the IEP meeting and teacher coordination and development of transition plans. A longitudinal study of the sustainability of the changes in IEP meetings could be undertaken, as well as an assessment of the carryover for students with disabilities in program areas other than transition planning. Finally, given that the AI-IEP protocol provided different results at different levels of fidelity, researchers may want to consider affecting the valence of IEP team meetings with even one well constructed, positive question to begin.

Conclusion

It seems from this study that Appreciative Inquiry may increase student turn-taking, student self-advocacy, and positive remarks and improve their comparative ratios to negative remarks. Also, it seems that Appreciative Inquiry may increase informational and observational remarks, while reducing the number of negative and opinion remarks. Thus, Appreciative Inquiry seems to have affected IEP meeting quality for the good. We know, too, that Appreciative Inquiry's effect on transition planning is disappointing, affecting transition remarks during IEP meetings in less dramatic ways and having no effect on the quality of transition plans. Given the comparison of school district E over the control (C) and the changes in school district P over 2006 baseline data, these results suggest that even one question positively framed toward the beginning of an IEP meeting can have an effect on meeting quality. Overall, it appears that the AI-IEP meeting protocol and Appreciative Inquiry, separately or in tandem, may hold promise for

improving the quality of IEP meetings and, with explicit targeting of transition, may yet hold promise for improving transition plans.

Appendix A

Table 22

Need/Resource Capacity and Enrollment by Ethnicity in School Districts P, E, and C

School	Need/Resource capacity [1]	Enrollment	% White	% Black	% Hisp.	% Other
School District P	5	5013	98.9	0.4	0.2	0.6
School District E	5	1703	97.6	0.7	0.3	1.4
School District C	5	2045	97.9	1.0	0.2	0.8

Note. 1 Need/Resource Capacity: One of six categories into which districts fall based on their ability to meet the needs of its students with local resources, calculated by dividing its estimated poverty percentage by its Combined Wealth Ratio. 6 is high capacity. 5 is defined as average suburban/rural capacity.
(New York: The State of Learning – A report to the legislature on the educational status of the state's schools, 2005, pp. vi-vii)

Note. Hisp. = Hispanic

Appendix B

Table 23

Attendance, Comparative Wealth, Poverty and School District Climate in School Districts P, E, and C

Schools	Annual attendance	Combined wealth ratio[2]	Census poverty index[3]	% Free and reduced rate	LEP* rate	Susp. rate	Drop out rate
School District P	94.8	0.526	12	35.5	0.1	5.2	2.4
School District E	94.6	0.524	10	32.1	0.1	6.4	2.8
School District C	94.8	0.520	12	31.0	0.2	5.0	3.7

Note. LEP rate = Limited English Proficiency. Susp. = Suspension rate

Note. 2 Combined Wealth Ratio: Comparing district wealth to the State average defined as 1.0, a ratio based on weighted averages for K-12 attending pupils dividing total property value by gross income data. 3 Census Poverty Index: The number of children 5 – 17 living below the poverty level according to the 2005 census divided by the number of children 5 – 17 living in the district**.** (New York: The State of Learning – A report to the legislature on the educational status of the state's schools, 2005, pp. vi-vii)

Appendix C

Table 24

Pupil expenditures, Numbers and Percentages of Students with Special Needs and Levels of Inclusion in School Districts P, E, and C

School	K-12 Special education expenditures	# Special education students	K-12 Expenditures per pupil w/ & w/out disabilities	% School age w/ disabilities	Portion of school day outside gen. ed. classrooms			
					<20%	20% to 60%	60%<	%Separate settings
School District P	8184280	637	12848	12.6	57	33	9	2
School District E	2105711	162	12998	9.0	64	30	4	2
School District C	112300840	280	10931	13.2	57	33	8	3

Note. Gen. ed. = General Education

(New York: The State of Learning – A report to the legislature on the educational status of the state's schools, 2005, pp. vi-vii)

Appendix D

Lesson Plan for November, 2006 Appreciative Inquiry in School District E

Activity	Objective	Content	Resources	Time
Introduction: Working Together to Inspire Student Achievement **Opening:** Be deliberate and disciplined about learning about all the questions.	Brief introduction of educators for the day. Introduce the protocol for the day. Explain Appreciative Inquiry.	Discover Dream Design Deliver: What will I do in the next 1 month, 3 months, and 6 months to ensure and support these experiences, values, and dreams? Outcomes for the Day: 1) A Vision for each teacher and for the Special Education Department of how to be the best, using some or all of Appreciative Inquiry. 2) Sense of empowerment, using your experiences, values, and dreams and those of your colleagues. 3) The development of strong and fruitful working relationships focused on student achievement.	Power Point Candy on the tables in baskets Comfort Lunch arrangements (12 noon) Use of the space No break	9:15 (15”)
Discover Paired interviews	To understand each participants’ teaching experiences, experiences with teaching and learning, experiences of empowerment, success with change, success with decision-making, success with communication, his/her core values, and their dreams/wishes for the Special	For each question, the speaker should try and provide as much detail as possible; the listener should try to ask questions to discover the richness and truth of the experience and the answer. Each person in the pair interviews the other, asking: 1) Tell me about when you first discovered your passion for children with disabilities. What was	Pads of paper Pens Interview questions/scripts	9:30 (60”)

	Education department at District E.	it that motivated you? What do you find most rewarding? What do you value most about working with students with disabilities? 2) Tell me about a particularly meaningful experience you've had with students with disabilities? Who was involved? What was it about the experience that made it so meaningful? What have you learned about your own life through your experience? What is the significance to your own teaching and to the present day? 3) Describe a time when you were part of a team, any team, when you accomplished great things. What was your role on the team? What were the extraordinary qualities and dynamics of the team that made this achievement possible? 4) Every organization has its ups and downs, but, when the Special Education Department at District E is really humming, at its best, what is happening? What do you see? What do you hear? Who is there? How are they communicating/collaborating? 5) What are three wishes you have for the Special Education Department at District E? What would both challenge and support you at District E to make these wishes come true and these dreams a reality?		

Dream Small group discussions/ID themes	To come to common ground about the experiences of teaching and learning, about the values of the group, and about the wishes that each group shares for District E.	Pick a recorder. Interviewers introduce their partners and describe the experiences, values, and wishes they heard in the interviews Partners switch. Each small group decides on the 3 experiences, 3 values, and 3 wishes that best represent the group's thinking. These experiences, values, and wishes are affixed to the sticky wall.	Mixed groups Chart paper. Colored Half sheets Markers	10:30 (30+")
Break				(+10")
Scattergram	To understand and prioritize the experiences, values, and wishes at Jordan Elbridge. Mapping the core.	Participants will use five colored dots matching the colors to prioritize experiences, values, and wishes for District E.	Dots Colored paper on sticky wall.	11:10 (20")

Design Provocative Proposal	To isolate and proclaim the prioritized experiences, values, and wishes and to apply them to our work in the department and our work with young people.	With a group facilitator, using the prioritized skills, knowledge, and values from the sticky wall, create a possibility statement: "In order for District E's Special Education to inspire the best in student achievement…"	Chart paper Markers	11:30 (20")
Lunch (Design)			Music Conversation Discussion	11:50 (40")
Design Making the metaphor	To collaborate and develop consensus about the future for us and for our department; to appropriate our experiences, values, and dreams most fully.	Using the resources provided, create a Skit Song Sculpture Poem Picture Pantomime	Play-dough Pipe Cleaners Newsprint Markers Crayons Glitter Glue Tissue paper Paper Shapes Cards	12:30 (25")
Design Presentations	To anchor our dreams for us and for our department in our selves; to see and understand the varied thinking involved in our work together	Each group together presents their creation of what, as members of the Special Education Department, they experience, value and dream of for themselves and for their students.	Space for presentations	1:00 (50")
Debrief	To hear from one another and appreciate/redesign our possibilities	Answering the following prompts about the Design presentations: What stood out for you? What did you learn? How would you refine your own possibility		1:50 (10")

		statement?		
Deliver System Change	To ensure systems in our department, our school and for our students that maximize our best experiences, support and enhance our values, and make our wishes come true.	Answer the following prompts and speak to the entire group about them: *Requests*: What do you need/would ask for from the Special Education Department at District E in order to inspire the best in student achievement? *Offers:* What can you offer/contribute to the Special Education Department at District E to inspire the best in student achievement? *Commitments:* What can your promise to do for the District E Special Education Department to inspire the best in student achievement?	Newsprint, Markers for Visioning Note cards	2:00 (30")
Evaluation	To deconstruct the Appreciative Inquiry process and translate its potential to other venues.	In original groups, answer the following question individually. Decide on five ideas as a group. Put these answers on cards and apply them to the sticky wall. What five ideas would you take away from today's process to improve outcomes for CSE meetings? Categorize the results.	Scripted Questions Cards Sticky wall	2:30 (30")

Appendix E

AI-IEP Protocol

Questions for discussion at IEP meetings:

During IEP meetings:

First, Success

1) To the student:
Tell us about some of your successes this year. (If appropriate, add: What have you done well and what has worked well for you? What's been happening to make you successful?)

2) To the parent:
What successes have you seen your child enjoy this year? (If appropriate add: tell us about what's been happening to help make your child successful?)

3) To the teachers and specialists:
What successes have you seen for (this student)? (If appropriate, add: tell us about what's been happening to help make him/her successful?)

4) To the group:
What suggestions or changes can you think of to make (this student's) program work even better?

Second, Goals

5) To the student:
What do you think you'd most love to do when you grow up? (or What is your goal in life [or after school]?)
And
What do you think you'll need to do to get to do what you love most (or to get to your goal)?
And
What have you done so far to get to do what you love most (to move toward that goal)?

6) To the group:
What kinds of support and help can you provide to make this student's program work toward the goals he/she's set for him/herself?

Appendix F

AI-IEP Protocol Fidelity Rubric

First, Success		
		To the student:
Y	N	Tell us about some of your successes this year. (If appropriate, add: What have you done well and what has worked well for you? What's been happening to make you successful?)
		To the parent:
Y	N	What successes have you seen your child enjoy this year? (If appropriate add: tell us about what's been happening to help make your child successful?)
		To the teachers and specialists:
Y		What successes have you seen for (this student)? (If appropriate, add: tell us about what's been happening to help make him/her successful?)
		To the group:
Y	N	What suggestions or changes can you think of to make (this student's) program work even better?
Second, Goals		
		To the student:
Y	N	What do you think you'd most love to do when you grow up? (or What is your goal in life [or after school]?)
		And
Y	N	What do you think you'll need to do to get to do what you love most (or to get to your goal)?
		And
Y	N	What have you done so far to get to do what you love most (to move toward that goal)?
		To the group:
Y	N	What kinds of support and help can you provide to make this student's program work toward the goals he/she's set for him/herself?

Appendix G
IEP Meeting Interaction Measure

Meeting Code: _____

Key: + = Positive Remark / - = Negative Remark / T= Student, M= Parent, C=Administrator, S=Special Educator, G=General Educator, P=School Psychologist, R=Related Service Provider, A= Parent Advocate*, D= Guidance, E=BOCES, 1:1=Teaching Assistant, W=Social Worker, AP = Private Advocate, MT = Family Care Provider, OT = Occupational Therapist, PT = Physical Therapist/ I = Info / O = Opinion / B = Observation/F = Transition/SA=Self-Advocacy

1				2			3			4			5			6			7			8	
Role	+ -		SA	Role	+ -		SA	Role	+ -		SA	Role	+ -		SA	Role	+ -		SA	Role	+ -		SA	Role	+ -
	I	O	B		I	O	B		I	O	B		I	O	B		I	O	B		I	O	B		I O B
			F				F				F				F				F				F		

9				10			11			12			13			14			15			16	
Role	+ -		SA	Role	+ -		SA	Role	+ -		SA	Role	+ -		SA	Role	+ -		SA	Role	+ -		SA	Role	+ -
	I	O	B		I	O	B		I	O	B		I	O	B		I	O	B		I	O	B		I O B
			F				F				F				F				F				F		

17				18			19			20			21			22			23			24	
Role	+ -		SA	Role	+ -		SA	Role	+ -		SA	Role	+ -		SA	Role	+ -		SA	Role	+ -		SA	Role	+ -
	I	O	B		I	O	B		I	O	B		I	O	B		I	O	B		I	O	B		I O B
			F				F				F				F				F				F		

25				26			27			28			29			30			31			32	
Role	+ -		SA	Role	+ -		SA	Role	+ -		SA	Role	+ -		SA	Role	+ -		SA	Role	+ -		SA	Role	+ -
	I	O	B		I	O	B		I	O	B		I	O	B		I	O	B		I	O	B		I O B
			F				F				F				F				F				F		

33				34			35			36			37			38			39			40	
Role	+ -		SA	Role	+ -		SA	Role	+ -		SA	Role	+ -		SA	Role	+ -		SA	Role	+ -		SA	Role	+ -
	I	O	B		I	O	B		I	O	B		I	O	B		I	O	B		I	O	B		I O B
			F				F				F				F				F				F		

41				42			43			44			45			46			47			48	
Role	+ -		SA	Role	+ -		SA	Role	+ -		SA	Role	+ -		SA	Role	+ -		SA	Role	+ -		SA	Role	+ -
	I	O	B		I	O	B		I	O	B		I	O	B		I	O	B		I	O	B		I O B
			F				F				F				F				F				F		

49				50			51			52			53			54			55			56	
Role	+ -		SA	Role	+ -		SA	Role	+ -		SA	Role	+ -		SA	Role	+ -		SA	Role	+ -		SA	Role	+ -
	I	O	B		I	O	B		I	O	B		I	O	B		I	O	B		I	O	B		I O B
			F				F				F				F				F				F		

57				58			59			60			61			62			63			64	
Role	+ -		SA	Role	+ -		SA	Role	+ -		SA	Role	+ -		SA	Role	+ -		SA	Role	+ -		SA	Role	+ -

	I O B	F		I O B	F		I O B	F		I O B	F		I O B	F		I O B	F		I O B	F		I O B
65			66			67			68			69			70			71			72		
Role	+ -	SA	Role	+ -	SA	Role	+ -	SA	Role	+ -	SA	Role	+ -	SA	Role	+ -	SA	Role	+ -	SA	Role	+ -
	I O B	F		I O B	F		I O B	F		I O B	F		I O B	F		I O B	F		I O B	F		I O B

Appendix H

Key to IEP Meeting Interaction Measure.

Meeting Code = Meeting Date/Disability (if known)/Gender (if recorded)

*Role = T = Student
M = Parent
A = Parent Advocate
C = Administrative Representative
S = Special Educator
G = General Educator
P = School Psychologist
D = Guidance Counselor
R = Related Service Provider
PT= Physical Therapist
OT= Occupational Therapist
E = BOCES Teacher
MT = Family Advocate
AP = Private Advocate
1:1= Teaching Assistant
W = Social Worker

+ = Positive Remark: one that encourages the meeting participants, is focused on student progress, or has the best interest of the student or the meeting participants at heart.

- = Negative remark: one that stifles or derails discussion at the meeting, casts the student in a bad light or focuses on failure, or is generally disparaging, angry, undiplomatic, or hostile

SA = Self-Advocacy: if the student speaks up for him or herself or if someone prompts the student to speak up for him or her self.

I = Information: if the remark provides some fact or observation to the meeting or some objective , having to do with the student's progress, his/her meeting the goals of the IEP, grades, behavior, transition plan, etc.

O = Opinion: if the remark is based on here say, preference, attitude, or is a reflection of the personality of the speaker, or something that can't or isn't objectively corroborated.

B = Observation: a remark about the student based on seeing or hearing actual performance/behavior.

F = Transition = any remark having to do with the student's goals, aspirations, preferences for work, employment, or post-secondary plans.

? = Question asked = any time during the meeting when a question is asked for the purpose of clarification, information, IEP documentation, etc.

Appendix I

Educator Consent Letter – School District P
Observations of IEP Meeting

February 5, 2007

Dear Educator,

My name is Peter Kozik and I am a doctoral student from the School of Education at Syracuse University. I am writing to invite you to allow me observe your IEP meetings. Involvement in the study is voluntary, so you may choose to participate or not. Please feel free to ask questions about the study if you have any. I will be happy to explain anything in greater detail if you wish.

I am interested in observing the ways in which people participate in IEP meetings. A series of questions will be included during the meeting focused positive student outcomes. Therefore, I ask your permission to observe the IEP meetings on _____at _____. I hope to use the insights gained through this observation to help students, their families, and educators create IEP meetings that empower participants even more.

Please know that your signing this consent form means that you consent to my observing these IEP meetings.

All information in this study will be kept confidential which means that no mention will be made of any child by name anywhere in the study or in my dissertation. Also, a pseudonym will be used for your school district, your town, and for your county in any research findings that are published.

The benefit of this research is that you will be helping teachers and faculty who prepare teachers understand how to make IEP meetings more effective and how to help students become better at self-advocacy and self determination. The information should help us work with school districts and with Committees on Special Education to encourage students to gain voice and purpose and to include all participants in the process.

The risks to you of participating in this study are:

- ✓ Student self-consciousness about being subjects in the study.
- ✓ Awkwardness at IEP meetings on the part of participants with a visitor present.

Finally, I am aware of my responsibility as an observer of these IEP meetings to uphold you and the participants' right to due process and therefore will serve as a witness if asked.

Any risks will be made less by our agreeing to respect one another and by your student not having to answer questions about which he or she feels uncomfortable. If, at any time, you no longer wish to continue with allowing me to observe, you have the right to withdraw without penalty and request that I leave the meeting.

If you have any questions about this research study, you may contact Dr. Dennis Gilbride at (315) 443-5264.

You may also contact the Syracuse University Institutional Review Board at (315) 443-3013. Thank you.

All of my questions have been answered and I wish to participate in this research study and allow the observation of the IEP meetings in which I play a role.

_____	_____	_____
Signature of Educator	Printed Name of the Educator	Date

_____

Peter L. Kozik, Investigator (315) 443-1461

Appendix J

Parent Consent Letter – School District P
Observation of Child's IEP Meeting, Access to Transition Plan

February 5, 2007

Dear Parent or Guardian,

My name is Peter Kozik and I am a doctoral student from the School of Education at Syracuse University. I am writing to invite you to allow me observe your student's IEP meeting and read your student's transition plans. Involvement in the study is voluntary, so you may choose to allow your student to participate or not. Please feel free to ask questions about the study if you have any. I will be happy to explain anything in greater detail if you wish.

I am interested in observing the ways in which people participate in IEP meetings. A series of questions will be included during the meeting focused positive student outcomes. I hope to use the insights gained through this observation to help students, their families, and educators create IEP meetings that empower participants even more.

Therefore, I need you to consider consenting to two parts of this study:

1) Consent to letting an observer sit in on your child's IEP meeting on _____at _____;
2) Consent to letting me review your child's transition plan in his/her IEP.

Please know that your signing this consent form means that you consent to <u>both</u> my observing your student's IEP meeting and my reading your child's transition plan.

All information in this study will be kept confidential which means that no mention will be made of any child by name anywhere in the study or in my dissertation. Also, a pseudonym will be used for your school district, your town, and for your county in any research findings that are published.

The benefit of this research is that you will be helping teachers and faculty who prepare teachers understand how to make IEP meetings more effective and how to help students become better at self-advocacy and self determination. The information should help us work with school districts and with Committees on Special Education to encourage students to gain voice and purpose and to include all participants in the process.

The risks to you of participating in this study are:

- ✓ Student self-consciousness about being subjects in the study.
- ✓ Awkwardness at IEP meetings on the part of participants with visitors present.

Finally, I am aware of my responsibility as an observer of your student's IEP meeting to uphold you and your student's right to due process and therefore will serve as a witness if asked.

Any risks will be made less by our agreeing to respect one another and by your child not having to answer questions about which he or she feels uncomfortable. If, at any time, you no

longer wish your son or daughter to continue, you have the right to withdraw without penalty and request that I leave the meeting.

If you have any questions about this research study, you may contact Dr. Dennis Gilbride at (315) 443-5264.

You may also contact the Syracuse University Institutional Review Board at (315) 443-3013. Thank you.

All of my questions have been answered and I wish my child to participate in this research study.

_____	_____	_____
Signature of Parent	Printed Name of Participant	Date

_____
Peter L. Kozik, Investigator (315) 443-1461

Appendix K

Student Consent Letter – School District P
Observation of Child's IEP Meeting, Access to Transition Plan

February 5, 2007

Dear Student,

My name is Peter Kozik and I am a doctoral student from the School of Education at Syracuse University. I am writing to invite you to allow me observe your IEP meeting and to read your IEP transition plan. Involvement in the study is voluntary, so you may choose to participate or not. Please feel free to ask questions about the study if you have any. I will be happy to explain anything in greater detail if you wish.

I am interested in observing the ways in which people participate in IEP meetings. A series of questions will be included during the meeting focused positive student outcomes. I hope to use the insights gained through this observation to help students, their families, and educators create IEP meetings that empower participants even more.

Therefore, I need you to consider consenting to two parts of this study:

3) Consent to letting an observer sit in on your IEP meeting on _____at _____;
4) Consent to letting me review your transition plan in your IEP.

Please know that your signing this consent form means that you consent to both my observing your IEP meeting and reviewing your transition plan.

All information in this study will be kept confidential which means that no mention will be made of any child by name anywhere in the study or in my dissertation. Also, a pseudonym will be used for your school district, your town, and for your county in any research findings that are published.

The benefit of this research is that you will be helping teachers and faculty who prepare teachers understand how to make IEP meetings more effective and how to help students become better at self-advocacy and self determination. The information should help us work with school districts and with Committees on Special Education to encourage students to gain voice and purpose and to include all participants in the process.

The risks to you of participating in this study are:

- ✓ Student self-consciousness about being subjects in the study.
- ✓ Awkwardness at IEP meetings on the part of participants with visitors present.

Finally, I am aware of my responsibility as an observer of your IEP meeting to uphold your right to due process and therefore will serve as a witness if asked.

.

Any risks will be made less by our agreeing to respect one another and by your child not having to answer questions about which he or she feels uncomfortable. If, at any time, you no longer wish to continue, you have the right to withdraw without penalty and request that I leave the meeting.

If you have any questions about this research study, you may contact Dr. Dennis Gilbride at (315) 443-5264.

You may also contact the Syracuse University Institutional Review Board at (315) 443-3013. Thank you.

All of my questions have been answered and I wish to participate in this research study, and I allow an observer at my IEP meeting.

_____	_____	_____
Signature of Student	Printed Name of Student	Date

_____

Peter L. Kozik, Investigator (315) 443-1461

Appendix L

TRANSITION PLAN REVIEW PROTOCOL Subject ID Number _____

1: What is the projected status of diploma type:

- ❑ standard
- ❑ modified/certificate of accomplishment
- ❑ not indicated

2: Reflective of IDEA's Definitions:

Reflective of IDEA's Definition	Goal(s) listed?	Tied to post-school outcome?	Evidence of student's desires?	Number of action steps:	Implementation	Utility
Post-secondary education Tally:	0 1 2 3	N Y	N Y		0 1 2 3	0 1 2 3
Vocational education Tally:	0 1 2 3	N Y	N Y		0 1 2 3	0 1 2 3
Integrated employment Tally:	0 1 2 3	N Y	N Y		0 1 2 3	0 1 2 3
Independent living-other Tally:	0 1 2 3	N Y	N Y		0 1 2 3	0 1 2 3

Reflective of IDEA's Definition	Goal(s) listed?	Tied to post-school outcome?	Evidence of student's desires?	Number of action steps:	Implementation	Utility
Community Participation: Tally:	0 1 2 3	N Y	N Y		0 1 2 3	0 1 2 3

Best Practices

3.0: Is there any indication that the student has participated in person centered planning or career planning?

- ❑ *No*
- ❑ Yes

3.1: Is there any evidence that the student has received coaching/instruction around self-determination or advocacy?

- ❑ No
- ❑ Yes

3.2: Does transition plan mention student's employment goals/career aspirations?

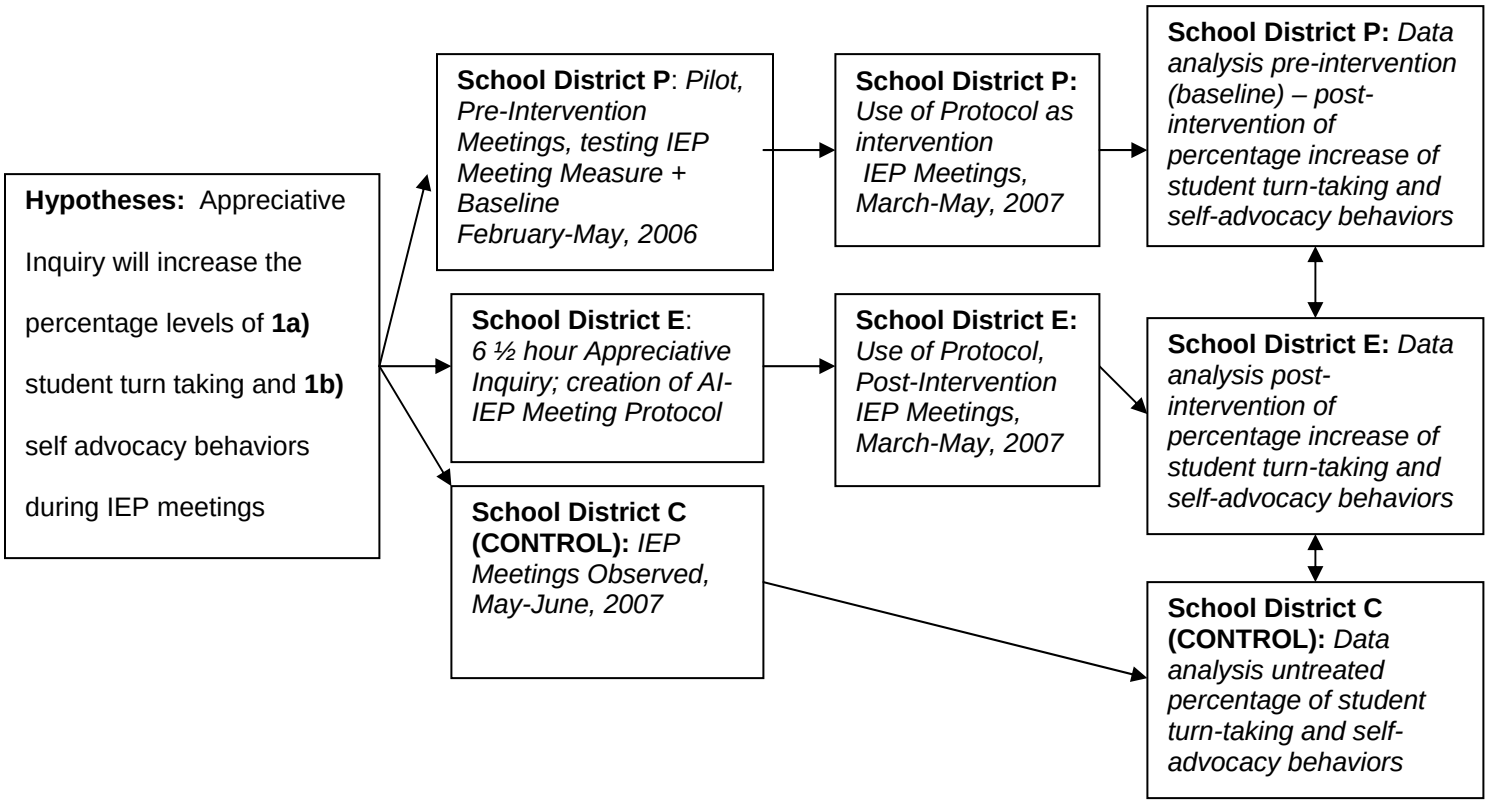
- ❑ No
- ❑ Yes

3.3: Does the TP make reference to, incorporate or accommodate student's cultural values or beliefs?

- ❑ No
- ❑ Yes

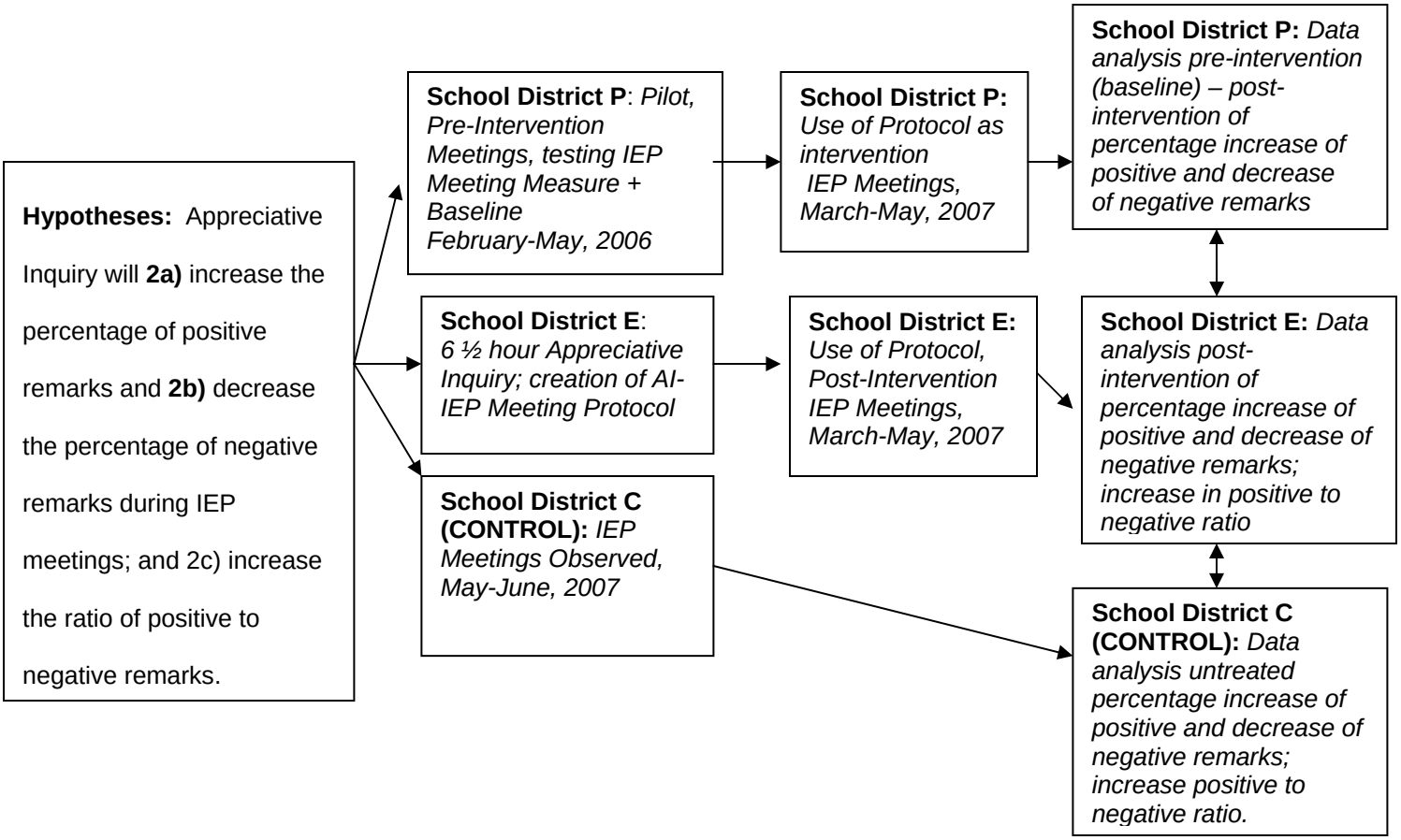
Appendix M

Figure 1. Experimental design for hypotheses 1a and 1b – increasing percentage levels of student turn-taking and self-advocacy during IEP meetings.



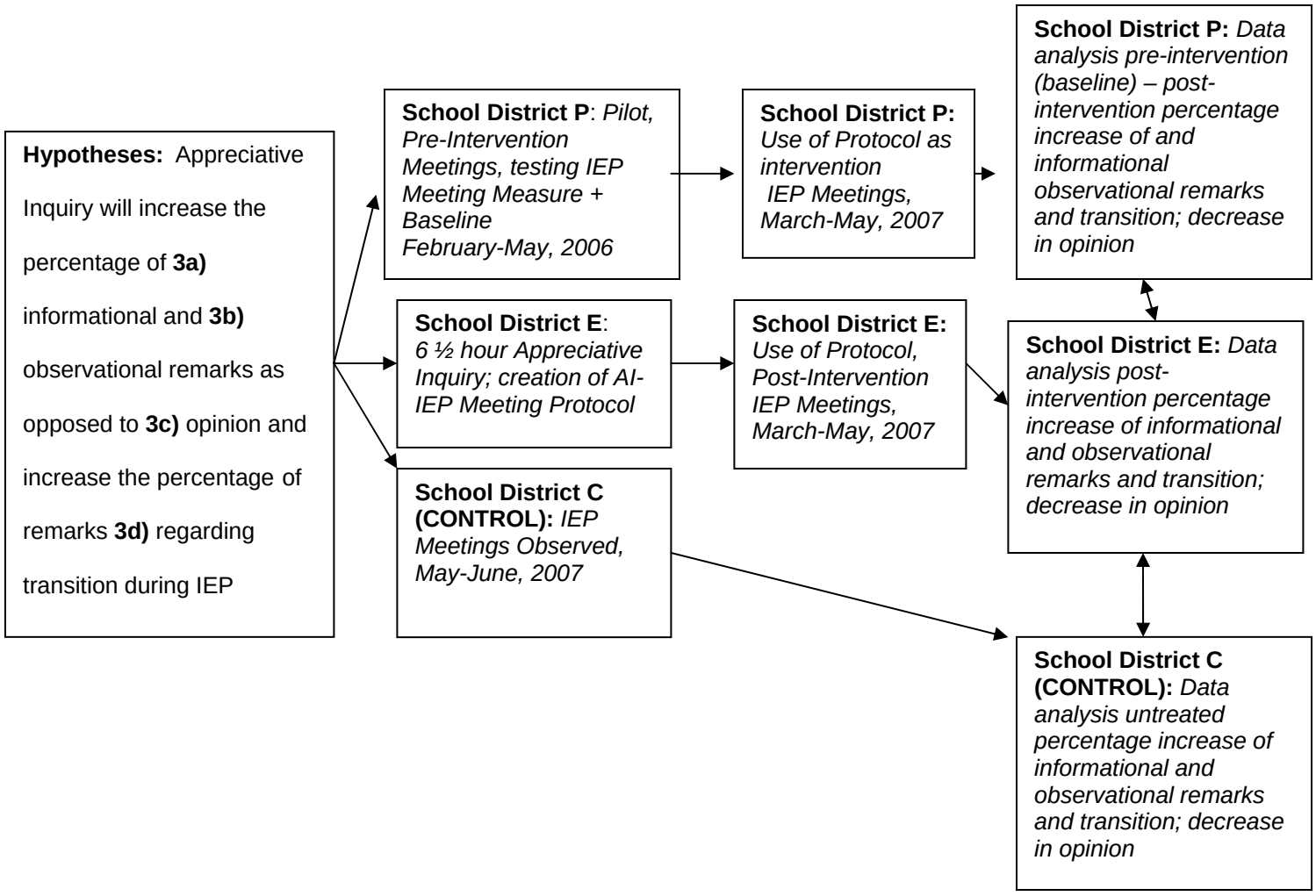
Appendix N

Figure 2. Experimental design for hypotheses 2a and 2b -- increasing percentage of positive and decreasing percentage of negative remarks during IEP meetings.



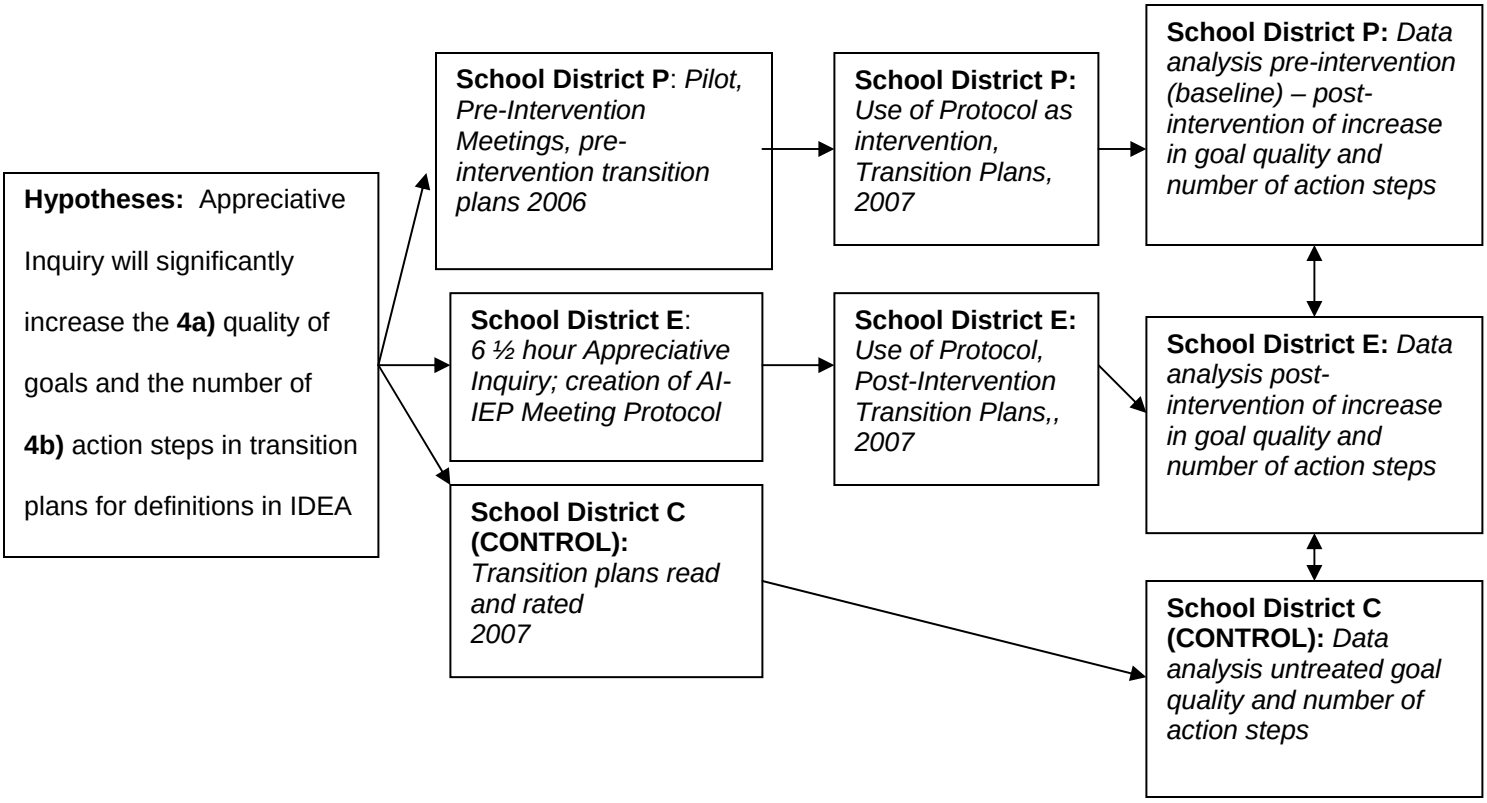
Appendix O

Figure 3. Experimental design for hypotheses 3a, 3b, 3c, 3d -- increasing the percentage of informational and observational remarks and transition remarks as opposed to opinion remarks during IEP meetings.



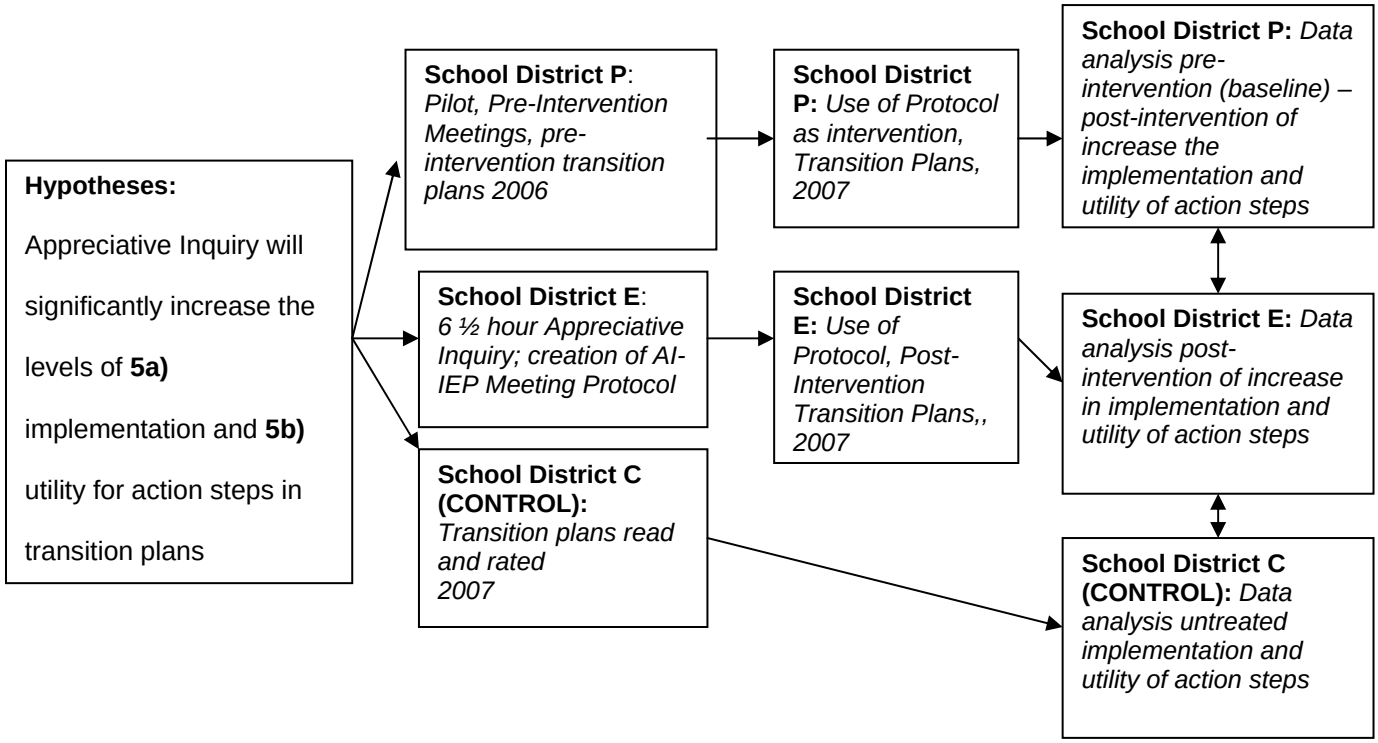
Appendix P

Figure 4. Experimental design for hypotheses 4a and 4b -- increasing the quality of transition plan goals and the number of action steps in transition plans.



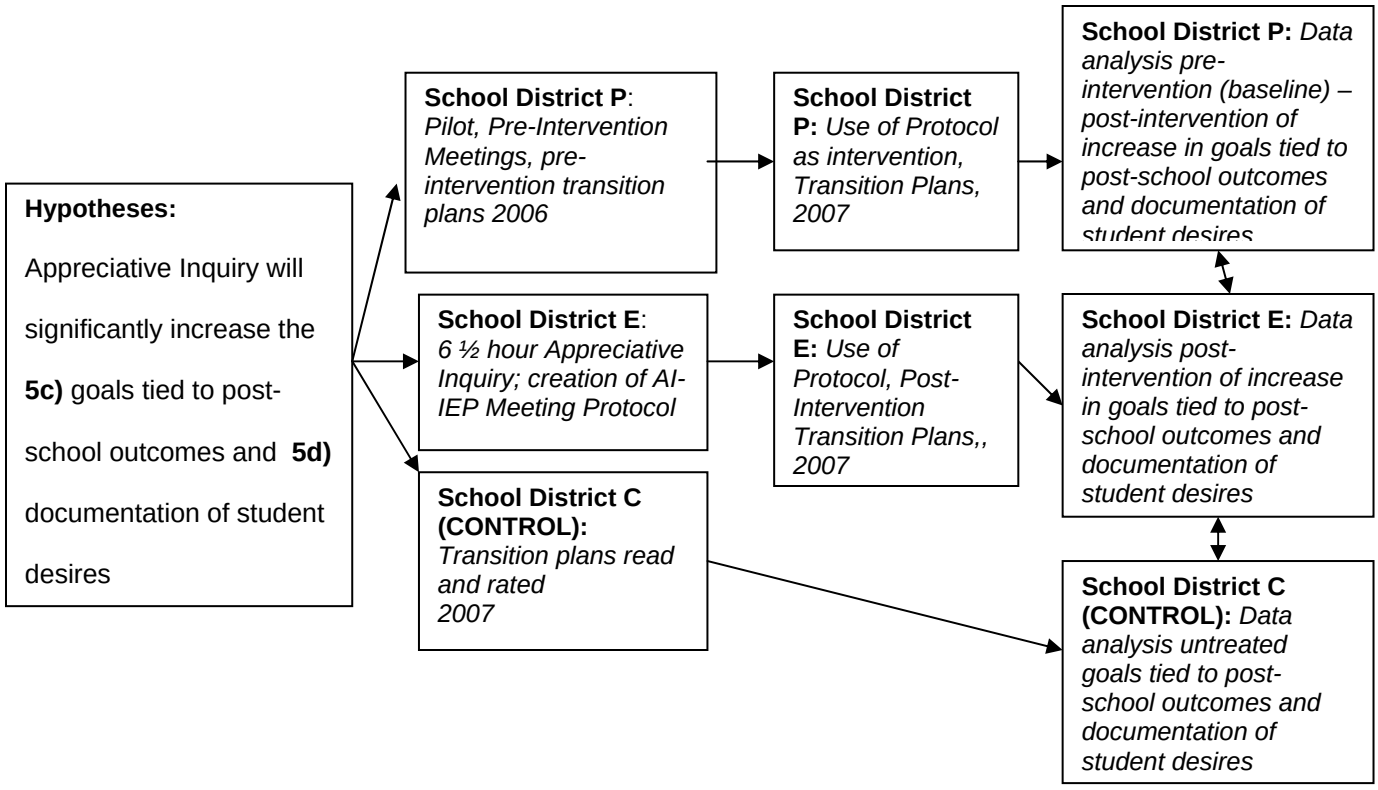
Appendix Q

Figure 5. Experimental design for hypotheses 5a and 5b -- increasing the implementation and utility of action steps in transition plans.



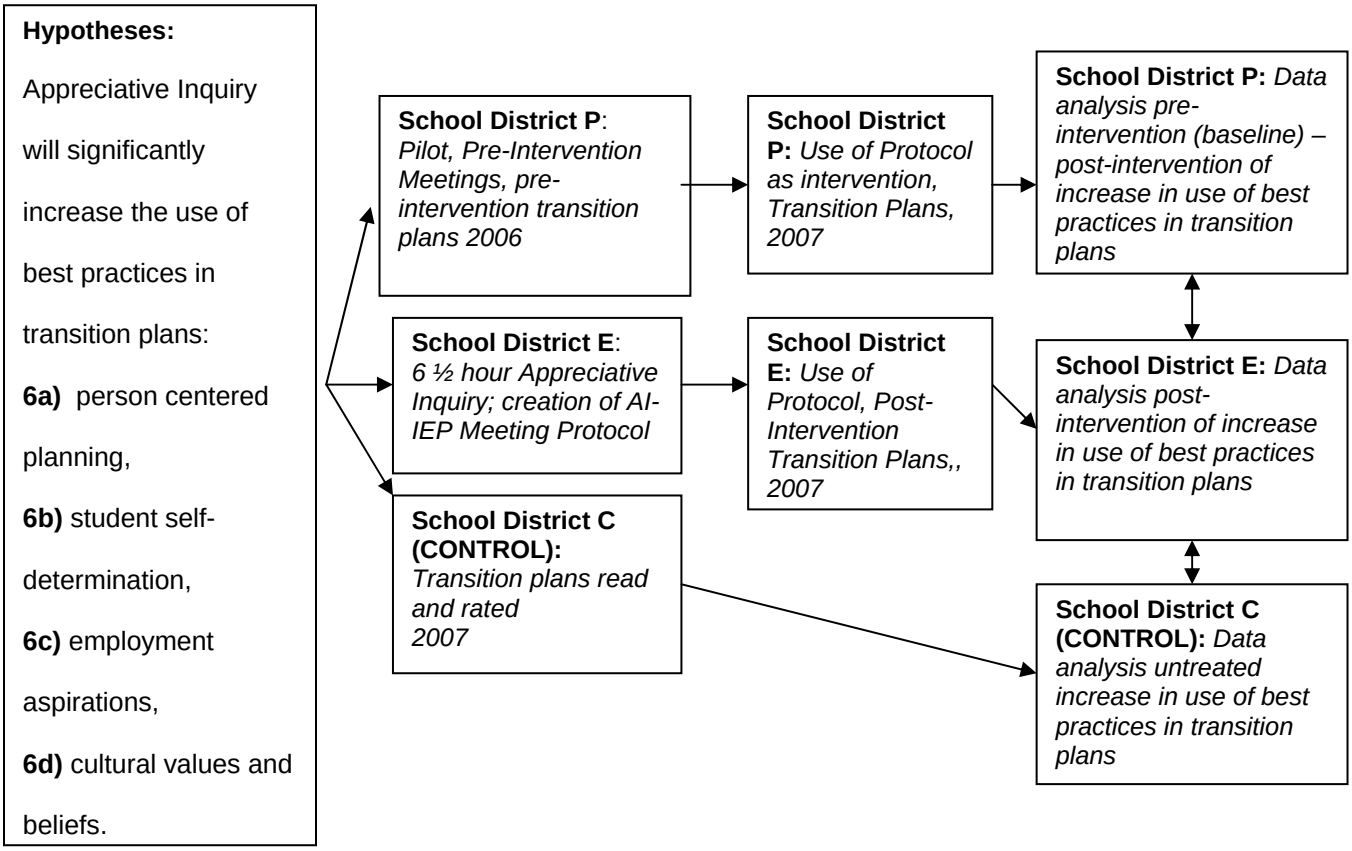
Appendix R

Figure 6. Experimental design for hypotheses 5c and 5d -- increasing the goals tied to post-school outcomes and the documentation of student desires.



Appendix S

Figure 7. Experimental design for hypotheses 6a, 6b, 6c, 6d -- increasing the use of best practices in transition plans: person centered planning, coaching for self determination, employment aspirations, and cultural values .



Appendix T

Data results of IEP meeting interactions from school district P (2007).

No.	Code	Total	Role	% Role	+	-	% Pos	% Neg	SA	% Adv.	I	% Info.	O	% Op.	B	% Ob	F	% Trans.	?	% Inq.
1	32804FLD7	162	C74	46	29	4	18	4	0	0	95	59	53	33	14	9	0	0	15	9
25%			S36																	
			G11																	
			R25																	
			M4																	
			D7																	
			P5																	
			TX																	
2	32803FLD6	123	P2	1	33	23	0	0	0	0	60	43	47	33	16	11	0	0	8	6
			C42	30																
			S41	30																
			G37	26																
25%			M6	4																
			TX	X																
3	32802MDD6	223	C120	54	25	20	11	9	0	0	114	51	60	27	14	6	7	3	21	9
			G28	13																
			D6	3																
			OT25	11																
25%			S31	14																
			M13	6																

			T0	0																
No.	Code	Total	Role	% Role	+	-	% Pos	% Neg	SA	% Adv.	I	% Info	O	% Op.	B	% Ob	F	% Trans.	?	% Inq.
4	32801M7	113	C64	57	19	2	17	2	9	100	59	52	36	32	11	10	7	6	31	27
			T9	8																
			D5	4																
			G5	4																
25%			S30	27																
			M0	0																
5	32807LD8F	113	C51	45	10	1	9	.08	0	0	66	58	25	22	22	19	0	0	16	14
			G4	4																
			D43	38																
			S14	12																
25%			P1	.08																
			TX	X																
			MX	X																
No.	Code	Total	Role	% Role	+	-	% Pos	% Neg	SA	% Adv.	I	% Info	O	% Op.	B	% Ob	F	% Trans.	?	% Inq.

6 25%	32806OHIM13	178	C69	39	9	13	5	7	7	77	98	55	62	35	18	10	12	7	19	11
			G24	13																
			D3	2																
			S33	18																
			T9	9																
			R29	16																
			M7	4																
			P4	2																
7 25%	M1032308LD	238	C47	20	27	11	11	5	6	66	161	68	62	26	15	6	7	3	9	4
			G31	13																
			M47	20																
			T9	4																
			P64	29																
			D16	7																
			S26	11																
No.	Code	Total	Role	% Role	+	-	% Pos	% Neg	SA	% Adv	I	% Info	O	% Op.	B	% Ob.	F	% Trans.	?	% Inq.
8 25%	325M12LD	74	C32	43	11	2	15	3	2	50	38	51	12	16	24	32	2	3	9	12
			S16	22																
			M14	19																
			D6	8																
			G3	4																
			T3	4																

9	160423FMD	155	C29	19	26	13	17	8	1	100	72	46	57	37	26	17	12	8	16	10
			M55	35																
			S42	27																
			G22	14																
25%			D6	4																
			T1	.06																
10	042311M	70	S18	26	6	9	1	1	9	47	50	71	9	13	9	13	3	4	3	4
			C26	37																
			G4	6																
			T19	27																
25%			D3	4																
			MX																	
No.	Code	Total	Role	% Role	+	-	% Pos	% Neg	SA	% Adv	I	% Info	O	% Op.	B	% Ob.	F	% Trans.	?	% Inq.
11	42707F12DD	98	C28	29	8	0	8	0	27	68	32	33	39	40	27	28	6	6	3	3
			S29	30																
			T40	41																
			P1	1																
25%			MX																	

12	4270707M	213	C46	22	23	4	11	2	3	60	28	13	93	44	92	43	9	4	12	6
			S122	57																
			M11	5																
			D5	2																
25%			T5	2																
			P24	11																
13	42304MLD16	85	C31	36	6	5	7	6	8	40	23	27	34	40	28	33	7	8	6	7
			T20	24																
			S30	35																
			D4	5																
25%			MX	X																
No.	Code	Total	Role	% Role	+	-	% Pos	% Neg	SA	% Adv.	I	% Info	O	% Op.	B	% Ob.	F	% Trans.	?	% Inq.
14	4270705OHIM9	176	C41	23	7	3	4	2	7	100	96	55	67	38	13	7	3	2	10	6
			S41	23																
			M36	20																
25%			P50	28																
			T7	4																

			A1	.05																
15	4270708F10MD	229	C95	41	14	2	6	.08	0	0	132	58	54	24	43	19	0	0	16	7
			S65	28																
			M30	13																
			OT16	7																
25%			R22	10																
			P1	.04																
			TX																	
16	4270703MLD10	65	C22	34	4	0	6	0	3	38	36	55	16	25	5	8	2	3	6	9
			S23	35																
			D11	17																
			T8	12																
25%			R1	2																
			MX	X																
No.	Code	Total	Role	% Role	+	-	% Pos	% Neg	SA	% Adv	I	% Info	O	% Op.	B	% Ob.	F	% Trans	?	% Inq.
17	427070612FDD	73	C22	30	6	1	8	1	15	100	27	37	31	42	15	21	7	10	3	4
			S27	37																
			T15	21																
			G3	4																
25%			P4	5																

			MX	X																
18	40407LDM1016	143	C59	41	10	6	7	4	10	66	49	34	83	58	11	8	3	2	21	15
			S24	17																
			M20	14																
			G15	10																
25%			T15	10																
			A8	6																
			P2	1																
19	40407OHIM12	176	C38	22	27	4	15	2	16	59	77	44	86	49	13	7	3	2	16	9
			T27	15																
			S50	28																
			G29	16																
25%			R19	11																
			M12	7																
			D1	.05																
No.	Code	Total	Role	% Role	+	-	% Pos	% Neg	SA	% Adv	I	% Info	O	% Op.	B	% Ob	F	% Trans.	?	% Inq
20	404079LDM10	159	C78	49	9	2	6	1	11	7	108	68	39	25	12	8	7	4	11	7
			D6	4																
			T15	9																
			G21	13																
25%			S18	11																

			1:121	13																
			M0	0																
21	4040710LDF	77	C32	42	12	4	16	5	9	12	39	51	32	42	6	8	3	4	13	15
			D16	21																
			S18	23																
			T11	14																
25%			MX	X																
22	40407DD11M	216	C97	45	27	8	13	4	0	0	84	39	108	50	24	11	0	0	34	16
			G17	8																
			S9	4																
			1:121	10																
25%			M10	5																
			P45	21																
			R7	3																
			D10	5																
			TX	X																
No.	Code	Total	Role	% Role	+	-	% Pos	% Neg	SA	% Adv	I	% Info	O	% Op.	B	% Obs.	F	% Trans	?	% Inq.
23	42307MDM13	112	C25	22	7	0	6	0	0	0	21	19	37	33	54	48	2	2	7	6
			G13	12																
			S39	35																
			M7	6																
25%			R17	15																

			P12	11																
			TX	X																
24 25%	4230701M14	240	C50	21	20	0	8	0	0	0	78	33	84	35	78	33	5	2	20	8
			S66	28																
			G47	20																
			P30	13																
			M40	17																
			D4	2																
			R3	1																
			TX	X																
25 25%	4230702LDM	241	C76	32	17	4	7	2	8	66	71	29	116	48	54	22	13	5	23	10
			T12	5																
			G72	30																
			M35	15																
			P34	14																
			D8	3																
			R4	2																

No.	Code	Total	Role	% Role	+	-	% Pos	% Neg	SA	% Adv	I	% Info	O	% Op.	B	% Obs.	F	% Trans	?	% Inq
25	**Totals:**	3752	C1294	34	392	141	10	4	151	67	1714	46	1342	36	632	17	120	3	348	9
			S848	24																
			P243	10																
			G386	14																
			D160	6																
			A9	.2																
		1116	E0	0																
		1138	R123	11																
			W0	0																
		375	1:142	11																
		452	OT41	9																
		103	PT0	0																
		140	AP8	6																
	Student Totals	2334	T225	10																
	Parent Totals	3171	M(F)347	11																
	% Meetings Student Abs.			28																

	% Meetings Student Silent			4																
	% Meetings Parent Abs.			28																
	% Meetings Parent Silent			8																

Key: + = Positive Remark / - = Negative Remark / T= Student, M= Parent, C=Administrator, S=Special Educator, G=General Educator, P=School Psychologist, R=Related Service Provider, A= Parent Advocate*, D= Guidance, E=BOCES, 1:1=Teaching Assistant, W=Social Worker, AP = Private Advocate, MT = Family Care Provider, OT = Occupational Therapist, PT = Physical Therapist/ I = Info / O = Opinion / B = Observation/F = Transition/SA=Self-Advocacy

Appendix U

Data results of IEP meeting interactions from school district E (2007).

No.	Code	Total	Role	% Role	+	-	% Pos	% Neg	SA	% Adv.	I	% Info.	O	% Op.	B	% Obs.	F	% Trans.	?	% Inq.
1	950107LD15	227	C43	19	82	11	36	5	34	92	31	14	179	79	17	7	18	8	12	5
			M58	26																
			T37	16																
			G25	11																
			D7	3																
			S37	16																
			P20	9																
2	50107LD16	172	C44	26	48	5	28	3	19	17	32	19	122	71	18	10	6	3	15	9
			M25	15																
			T25	15																
			S39	23																
			G35	20																
			D4	2																
3	51807F181	152	C45	30	45	4	30	3	16	57	54	36	75	49	23	15	9	6	16	11
			M7	5																
			P1	.07																
			G2	1																
			T28	18																
			S38	25																

			OT7	5																
			PT12	8																
			RS12	8																
No.	Code	Total	Role	% Role	+	-	% Pos	% Neg	SA	% Adv.	I	% Info	O	% Op.	B	% Obs.	F	% Trans.	?	% Inq.
4	50307AUM1104	214	C25	12	17	0	8	0	18	100	76	36	82	38	56	26	5	2	7	3
			M49	23																
			T18	8																
			S104	49																
			P15	7																
			D3	1																
5	5030711403F	135	C43	32	9	0	7	0	8	100	89	66	26	19	20	15	4	3	10	7
			G5	4																
			S46	34																
			E31	23																
			T8	6																
			D2	1																
No.	Code	Total	Role	% Role	+	-	% Pos	% Neg	SA	% Adv.	I	% Info	O	% Op.	B	% Obs.	F	% Trans.	?	% Inq.

6	50307M10LD05	225	C77	34	28	1	12	.04	21	95	126	56	60	23	39	14	4	2	6	3
			T22	10																
			M19	8																
			S91	40																
			G16	7																
7	5030712MLD06	97	C13	13	6	2	6	2	0	0	59	61	28	29	11	10	0	0	3	3
			M15	15																
			S31	32																
			E38	39																
			TX																	
No.	Code	Total	Role	% Role	+	-	% Pos	% Neg	SA	% Adv	I	% Info	O	% Op.	B	% Obs.	F	% Trans.	?	% Inq.
8	50407LDF01	166	C71	43	24	0	14	0	7	100	102	61	40	24	24	14	5	3	5	3
			P33	20																
			S25	15																
			M6	4																
			G17	10																
			T7	4																

			E7	4																
9	O5040702LD17	143	MX		13	0	9	0	8	89	106	74	27	19	10	7	2	1	3	2
			C59	41																
			P33	23																
			S10	7																
			D15	10																
			E7	5																
			T9	6																
			G10	7																
			A1	.06																
10	050407LD3F10	68	MX		11	0	16	0	3	75	41	60	22	32	5	7	1	1	2	3
			C35	51																
			T4	6																
			G13	19																
			S5	7																
			P11	16																
No.	Code	Total	Role	% Role	+	-	% Pos	% Neg	SA	% Adv	I	% Info	O	% Op.	B	% Obs	F	% Trans.	?	% Inq.
11	51807DDF92	174	C38	22	51	3	51	2	17	47	32	18	123	71	19	11	21	12	4	2
			T36	21																
			M32	18																
			OT22	13																
			S39	22																

			P6	3																
			D1	.05																
12	4507MLD8	156	C33	21	57	4	37	3	16	100	44	28	82	53	30	19	17	11	11	7
			P33	21																
			S41	26																
			D10	6																
			G11	7																
			T16	10																
			M12	7																
13	4507F86LD	259	C71	27	56	6	22	2	0	0	88	34	119	46	52	20	24	9	12	5
			M53	20																
			S56	22																
			G27	10																
			P43	17																
			D9	3																
			TX																	
No.	Code	Total	Role	% Role	+	-	% Pos	% Neg	SA	% Adv.	I	% Info	O	% Op.	B	% Obs.	F	% Trans.	?	% Inq.
14	4507M4LD68	307	C63	21	82	17	27	6	57	75	66	21	193	63	48	16	38	12	14	5
			P37	12																
			S49	16																
			M41	13																
			T76	25																

			G11	4																
			R21	7																
			D7	2																
			A2	.06																
15	4507LDF3	234	C70	30	64	13	27	6	0	0	37	16	134	57	63	27	17	7	19	8
			G19	8																
			S79	34																
			R36	15																
			D26	11																
			P4	1																
			MX																	
			TX																	
16	4507LD8M	216	TX		49	9	23	4	0	0	70	32	116	54	30	14	40	19	23	11
			C84	39																
			M36	17																
			S61	28																
			G26	12																
			D8	6																
No.	Code	Total	Role	% Role	+	-	% Pos	% Neg	SA	% Adv	I	% Info	O	% Op.	B	% Obs	F	% Trans	?	% Inq.
17	450718FLD	138	C46	33	33	6	24	4	53	38	70	51	15	11	11	100	30	22	17	12
			M5	4																
			T11	8																
			S56	41																
			G12	9																

			D8	6																
18	5640704F10	96	C62	65	3	2	3	2	3	42	60	63	16	17	[20]	21	3	3	11	11
			G9	9																
			S13	14																
			D5	5																
			T7	7																
			MX																	
19	405070510M	137	C36	26	11	2	8	1	0	0	58	42	61	45	[18]	13	0	0	5	4
			M71	52																
			S24	18																
			G6	4																
			TX																	
No.	Code	Total	Role	% Role	+	-	% Pos	% Neg	SA	% Adv	I	% Info	O	% Op.	B	% Obs.	F	% Trans.	?	% Inq
20	4100710LD7	205	C83	40	30	9	15	4	0	0	[113]	55	[57]	28	[35]	17	4	2	11	5
			S90	44																
			D14	7																
			G18	9																
			TX																	

			MX																	
21	4100702FLD	162	C65	40	21	1	13	.06	9	90	75	46	54	33	3 3	20	3	2	16	10
			S52	32																
			T10	6																
			D5	3																
			G13	8																
			M17	10																
22	50107LDM915	127	S45	35	26	6	20	5	11	61	31	24	81	64	[15]	19	6	5	14	11
			D5	4																
			G16	13																
			C43	34																
			T18	14																
			MX																	
No.	Code	Total	Role	% Role	+	-	% Pos	% Neg	SA	% Adv	I	% Info	O	% Op.	B	% Obs.	F	% Trans	?	% Inq.
23	50107LDF916	146	C42	35	32	12	22	8	0	0	42	29	86	59	[18]	12	3	2	9	6
			S75	4																
			D15	11																
			G14	14																
			MX																	
			TX																	

	Totals:	3956 2531 3375 3111 541 393 326 152	C1193 S901 P231 G305 D144 A3 E83 R69 W0 1:10 OT29 PT12	30 23 9 9 5 .007 15 18 0 0 9 8	798	113	20	3	300	90	1502	38	1793	45	615	16	216	5	245	6
		0	AP0	0																	
	Student Totals	2662	T332	12																	
	Parent Totals	2802	M(F)446	16																	
	% Meetings Student Abs.			30																	
	% Meetings Student Silent			0																	
	% Meetings Parent Abs.			30																	
	% Meetings Parent Silent			0																	

Appendix V

Data results of IEP meeting interactions from school district C (2007).

No.	Code	Total	Role	% Role	+	-	% Pos	% Neg	SA	% Adv.	I	% Info.	O	% Op.	B	% Obs.	F	% Trans.	?	% Inq.
1	Z52507149OHI119	123	C52	42	3	18	2	15	0	0	14	11	105	85	4	3	6	5	9	7
			S33	27																
			M26	21																
			G9	7																
			D3	2																
			P0	0																
			TX	X																
2	Z52507MLD	28	C2	7	4	11	14	39	0	0	10	36	18	64	0	0	0	0	1	4
			S23	82																
			G3	11																
			P0	0																
			TX	X																
			MX	X																
3	525074MLD	41	C2	5	9	10	22	24	0	0	17	41	17	41	7	17	2	5	3	7
			G6	15																
			S28	68																
			D5	12																
			P0	0																
			TX	X																

			MX	X																
No.	Code	Total	Role	% Role	+	-	% Pos	% Neg	SA	% Adv.	I	% Info	O	% Op.	B	% Obs.	F	% Trans.	?	% Inq.
4	Z525073LDF	33	D6	18	6	1	18	3	0	0	10	30	20	61	3	9	7	21	3	9
			S18	55																
			C6	18																
			G3	9																
			P0	0																
			TX	X																
			MX	X																
5	Z525072	45	S31	69	3	11	7	24	0	0	17	38	26	58	2	4	1	2	9	20
			G8	18																
			C9	20																
			D7	15																
			P0	0																
			TX	X																
			MX	X																
No.	Code	Total	Role	% Role	+	-	% Pos	% Neg	SA	% Adv.	I	% Info	O	% Op.	B	% Obs.	F	% Trans.	?	% Inq.

6	Z52507104M	62	C10	16	12	16	19	26	0	0	11	18	50	81	1	2	0	0	1	2
			S20	32																
			M25	40																
			D1	2																
			G6	10																
			P0	0																
			TX	X																
7	Z5250713LD10	55	S33	60	6	24	11	44	0	0	9	16	46	84	0	0	2	4	1	2
			G17	31																
			D5	9																
			P0	0																
			TX	X																
			MX	X																
No.	Code	Total	Role	% Role	+	-	% Pos	% Neg	SA	% Adv	I	% Info	O	% Op.	B	% Obs.	F	% Trans.	?	% Inq.
8	Z5250710MLD	43	S21	49	8	8	17	17	0	0	19	44	24	56	0	0	4	9	3	7
			D10	23																
			G7	16																
			C5	12																
			P0	0																
			TX	X																

			MX	X																
9	Z5250712LDM	37	S23	62	5	5	14	14	1	3	7	19	28	76	2	5	3	8	1	3
			D7	19																
			G5	14																
			C2	5																
			P0	0																
			TX	X																
			MX	X																
10	Z52507FLD10	43	S24	56	13	4	30	9	0	0	19	44	22	51	2	5	3	7	1	2
			M9	21																
			G7	16																
			C2	5																
			D1	2																
			P0	0																
			TX	X																
No.	Code	Total	Role	% Role	+	-	% Pos	% Neg	SA	% Adv	I	% Info	O	% Op.	B	% Obs	F	% Trans.	?	% Inq.
11	Z52507MLD9	33	S21	64	5	10	15	30	0	0	16	48	13	39	4	12	1	3	1	33
			G9	27																
			C2	6																
			D1	3																
			P0	0																

			TX	X																
			MX	X																
12	Z525078LD9M	68	S40	59	16	16	24	24	0	0	19	28	46	68	3	4	0	0	1	1
			M12	18																
			D4	6																
			C6	9																
			G5	7																
			P1	1																
			TX	X																
13	Z525076MD10	52	C24	46	8	5	15	10	3	6	23	44	28	54	1	2	0	0	6	12
			M17	33																
			G1	2																
			T5	10																
			P1	2																
			D4	8																
No.	Code	Total	Role	% Role	+	-	% Pos	% Neg	SA	% Adv.	I	% Info	O	% Op.	B	% Obs.	F	% Trans.	?	% Inq.
14	Z525079LDF9	41	S30	73	12	7	29	17	0	0	14	34	26	63	1	2	1	2	1	2
			D5	12																
			C6	15																
			P0	0																
			TX	X																

			MX	X																
15	Z52507910FLD	36	S29	81	6	2	17	6	0	0	17	47	19	53	0	0	3	8	2	6
			C4	11																
			D3	8																
			P0	0																
			TX	X																
			MX	X																
16	Z530076LDM9	39	C10	26	11	12	28	31	0	0	14	36	23	59	2	5	0	0	3	8
			G9	23																
			S13	33																
			D7	18																
			P0	0																
			TX	X																
			MX	X																
No.	Code	Total	Role	% Role	+	-	% Pos	% Neg	SA	% Adv	I	% Info	O	% Op.	B	% Obs	F	% Trans	?	% Inq.
17	Z530078FLD9	33	C8	24	6	13	18	39	0	0	7	21	73	6	2	6	2	6	2	6
			S16	48																
			D3	9																
			M2	6																
			G4	12																

			P0	0																
			TX	X																
18	Z530077F	28	C6	21	9	6	32	21	0	0	4	14	23	82	1	4	0	0	3	11
			S15	54																
			D1	4																
			G6	21																
			P0	0																
			TX	X																
			MX	X																
19	Z53007LD11F	19	C9	47	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	11	17	89	0	0	0	0	1	5
			M8	42																
			S2	11																
			P0	0																
			TX	X																
No.	Code	Total	Role	% Role	+	-	% Pos	% Neg	SA	% Adv	I	% Info	O	% Op.	B	% Obs.	F	% Trans.	?	% Inq
20	Z53007109FLD	35	C8	23	5	10	14	29	0	0	7	20	24	69	5	14	0	0	0	0
			S20	57																
			G5	14																
			D2	6																
			TX	X																

			MX	X																
			P0	0																
21	Z530079LDF10	75	C10	13	12	6	16	8	5	7	10	13	65	87	0	0	5	7	3	4
			S21	28																
			D15	20																
			M23	31																
			T6	8																
			G4	5																
			P0	0																
22	Z5300711OHIM	19	S12	63	0	10	0	53	0	0	5	26	14	74	0	0	1	5	1	5
			C6	32																
			G1	5																
			TX	X																
			MX	X																
			P0	0																
No.	Code	Total	Role	% Role	+	-	% Pos	% Neg	SA	% Adv	I	% Info	O	% Op.	B	% Obs.	F	% Trans	?	% Inq.
23	Z5300712F9LD	64	C7	11	5	16	8	25	1	2	4	6	60	94	0	0	1	2	5	8
			S18	28																
			T4	6																
			D7	11																
			G4	6																
			M24	38																

			P0	0																
24	Z530073LD3	38	C3	8	7	14	18	37	0	0	11	29	27	71	0	0	1	3	0	0
			S19	50																
			P5	13																
			D2	5																
			G4	11																
			M5	13																
			TX	X																
			P0	0																
25	Z5300711LD	54	S20	37	9	9	17	17	0	0	20	37	31	57	3	6	0	0	1	2
			G16	30																
			D15	28																
			M2	4																
			C1	2																
			TX	X																
			P0	0																
No.	Code	Total	Role	% Role	+	-	% Pos	% Neg	SA	% Adv	I	% Info	O	% Op.	B	% Obs.	F	% Trans	?	% Inq.
26	Z530072OHI10	73	S59	81	8	25	11	34	0	0	16	22	52	71	5	7	0	0	3	4
			G6	8																
			D5	7																
			P1	1																
			C2	2																
			TX	X																

27	Z5300714F	82	C24	29	6	2	7	2	5	83	22	27	60	73	0	0	6	7	15	18
			S22	27																
			D14	17																
			T6	7																
			R9	11																
			W2	2																
			P1	1																
			M4	5																
28	Z530079LD10	80	P4	5	12	7	15	9	1	100	22	28	54	68	4	5	0	0	2	2
			M7	9																
			C25	31																
			G7	9																
			D5	6																
			S30	38																
			T1	1																

No.	Code	Total	Role	% Role	+	-	% Pos	% Neg	SA	% Adv	I	% Info	O	% Op.	B	% Obs.	F	% Trans	?	% Inq
29	Z530075LDF12	53	C9	17	9	15	17	28	0	0	17	32	32	60	4	8	6	11	1	2
			D5	9																
			S26	49																
			M4	8																
			G6	11																
			P3	6																

			TX	X																
30	Z5300713	20	C8	40	0	3	0	15	0	0	6	30	14	70	0	0	0	0	0	0
			P8	40																
			D4	20																
			TX	X																
			MX	X																
	Totals:	1452	C265	18	215	296	15	20	11	69	406	28	1991	68	55	4	55	4	83	6
			S667	46																
			P16	1																
		1432	G158	11																
		1452	D147	10																
			AX	X																
		1116	E163	15																
		82	R9	11																
		82	W2	2																
			APX	X																
	Student Totals	392	T16	4																
	Parent Totals	808	M(F)168	21																
	% Meetings Student Abs.			83																
	% Meetings			0																

	Student Silent																			
	% Meetings Parent Abs.			50																
	% Meetings Parent Silent			0																

Key: + = Positive Remark / - = Negative Remark / T= Student, M= Parent, C=Administrator, S=Special Educator, G=General Educator, P=School Psychologist, R=Related Service Provider, A= Parent Advocate*, D= Guidance, E=BOCES, 1:1=Teaching Assistant, W=Social Worker, AP = Private Advocate, MT = Family Care Provider, OT = Occupational Therapist, PT = Physical Therapist/ I = Info / O = Opinion / B = Observation/F = Transition/SA=Self-Advocacy

Appendix W

Data results of IEP meeting interactions from school district P (2006).

No.	Code	Total	Role	% Role	+	-	% Pos	% Neg	SA	% Adv.	I	% Info.	O	% Op.	B	% Obs.	F	% Trans.	?	% Inq.
1	1118M426LD	96	C56	56	16	5	17	5	4	100	24	25	72	75	0	0	2	2	6	6
			G6	6																
			D0	0																
			M10	10																
			S20	21																
			R0	0																
			A0	0																
			T4	4																
			P0	0																
2	10?M506LD	127	C51	40	3	13	2	10	0	0	39	31	86	68	0	0	7	6	10	8
			G5	4																
			D0	0																
			M19	15																
			S18	14																
			R15	12																
			A0	0																
			T0	0																
			P17	13																
3	1118M506LD	60	C22	37	2	2	3	3	5	38	23	38	35	58	0	0	3	5	7	12
			G18	30																
			D0	0																
			M0	0																

			S7	12																
			R0	0																
			A0	0																
			T13	22																
			P0	0																
No.	Code	Total	Role	% Role	+	-	% Pos	% Neg	SA	% Adv.	I	% Info	O	% Op.	B	% Obs.	F	% Trans.	?	% Inq.
4	1017F426LD	53	C13	25	4	20	8	38	0	0	21	40	31	58	0	0	4	8	6	11
			G13	25																
			D7	13																
			M0	0																
			S19	36																
			R0	0																
			A0	0																
			T0	0																
			P0	0																
5	813M505OHI	103	C25	24	9	10	9	10	3	100	23	22	79	77	0	0	1	1	5	5
			G0	0																
			D13	13																
			M6	6																
			S1	1																
			R0	0																
			A0	0																
			T3	3																
			P40	39																
			E0	0																
			PT5	5																
			OT6	6																
No.	Code	Total	Role	%	+	-	%	%	SA	%	I	%	O	%	B	%	F	%	?	%

				Role			Pos	Neg		Adv.		Info		Op.		Obs.		Trans.		Inq.
6	916F426DD	109	C22	20	10	23	9	21	0	0	31	28	78	76	0	0	11	10	9	8
			G30	28																
			D13	12																
			M4	4																
			S27	25																
			R0	0																
			A1	1																
			T0	0																
			P1	1																
			F0	0																
7	1118F506OHI	101	C32	32	12	6	12	6	0	0	32	32	68	68	0	0	20	20	10	10
			G3	3																
			D9	9																
			M9	9																
			S31	31																
			R5	5																
			A0	0																
			T2	2																
			P0	0																
			I0	0																
			1:18	8																
			OT1	1																
No.	Code	Total	Role	% Role	+	-	% Pos	% Neg	SA	% Adv	I	% Info	O	% Op.	B	% Obs.	F	% Trans.	?	% Inq.
8	1117F506LD	38	C16	42	0	2	0	5	0	0	15	39	21	55	0	0	0	0	4	11
			G5	13																
			D14	37																
			M0	0																
			S7	18																

			R0	0																
			A0	0																
			T0	0																
			P1	3																
			F0	0																
9	814M505LD	79	C41	52	6	0	8	0	0	0	37	47	42	53	0	0	0	0	2	3
			G0	0																
			S21`	27																
			F0	0																
			R0	0																
			P0	0																
			A0	0																
			M5	6																
			T2	3																
10	613M427MD	72	C24	33	12	13	17	18	1	100	20	27	52	72	0	0	10	14	10	14
			G1	1																
			D0	0																
			M10	14																
			S11	15																
			R0	0																
			T1	1																
			P19	26																
			F2	3																
No.	Code	Total	Role	% Role	+	-	% Pos	% Neg	SA	% Adv	I	% Info	O	% Op.	B	% Obs	F	% Trans.	?	% Inq.
11	915M506LD	113	C43	38	7	3	6	3	0	0	25	22	98	87	0	0	18	16	5	4
			G8	7																
			D0	0																
			M5	4																

			S33	29																
			R0	0																
			P11	10																
			A0	0																
			F6	5																
			T2	2																
12	1019M506LD	58	C24	41	3	3	5	5	0	0	18	31	36	62	0	0	2	3	8	14
			G10	17																
			D0	0																
			M0	0																
			S18	31																
			R0	0																
			P5	9																
			A0	0																
			TX	X																
13	1016M426MD	199	C77	39	32	8	16	4	3	12	48	24	[151]	76	0	0	34	17	6	3
			G4	2																
			D0	0																
			M40	20																
			R0	0																
			T25	13																
			P0	0																
			A0	0																
			S43	22																
No.	Code	Total	Role	% Role	+	-	% Pos	% Neg	SA	% Adv.	I	% Info	O	% Op.	B	% Obs.	F	% Trans.	?	% Inq.
14	714F427LD	155	C62	40	12	33	8	21	2	18	54	35	[101]	65	0	0	0	0	16	10
			G22	14																
			D2	1																
			M0	0																

			S21	14																
			R25	16																
			P7	5																
			T11	7																
			A0	0																
15	713M427MD	148	C50	34	8	29	5	20	3	100	63	43	85	57	0	0	3	2	11	7
			G22	15																
			D19	13																
			M14	9																
			S22	15																
			P0	0																
			R15	10																
			A2	1																
			T3	2																
16	613M508LD	217	C75	35	4	32	2	15	13	81	49	23	158	73	10	5	4	2	1	.04
			G4	2																
			D0	0																
			M49	23																
			S46	21																
			P25	12																
			A2	1																
			T16	7																
No.	Code	Total	Role	% Role	+	-	% Pos	% Neg	SA	% Adv	I	% Info	O	% Op.	B	% Obs	F	% Trans	?	% Inq.
17	814M427LD	66	C19	29	16	6	24	9	4	80	11	17	55	83	0	0	0	0	6	9
			G2	3																
			D6	9																
			M3	5																

			S5	8																
			P23	35																
			R0	0																
			A0	0																
			T5	8																
18	614M508MD	73	C12	16	4	33	5	45	0	0	11	15	42	58	[15]	21	1	1	6	8
			G3	4																
			D0	0																
			M0	0																
			S29	40																
			P24	33																
			R2	3																
			A0	0																
			TX	X																
19	613F508LD	112	C46	41	13	15	12	13	0	0	31	28	56	50	[15]	13	2	2	8	7
			G0	0																
			D0	0																
			M0	0																
			S26	23																
			P19	17																
			R21	19																
			A0	0																
			TX	X																
No.	Code	Total	Role	% Role	+	-	% Pos	% Neg	SA	% Adv	I	% Info	O	% Op.	B	% Obs.	F	% Trans.	?	% Inq
20	815M508OHI	318	C63	20	2	12	.6	4	0	0	60	19	[236]	74	8	3	1	.3	13	4
			G15	5																
			D35	11																
			M_{123}	39																

			S40	13																
			P10	3																
			R29	9																
			A0	0																
			TX	X																
21	613F508LD	102	C56	55	9	10	9	10	0	0	43	42	50	49	5	5	1	1	11	11
			G5	5																
			D0	0																
			M4	4																
			S25	25																
			P9	9																
			R0	0																
			A1	1																
			T0	0																
22	613F508OHI	86	C28	33	1	22	1	26	0	0	10	17	47	55	[19]	22	1	1	9	10
			G8	9																
			D0	0																
			M0	0																
			S36	42																
			P18	21																
			R1	1																
			T0	0																
			A0	0																
No.	Code	Total	Role	% Role	+	-	% Pos	% Neg	SA	% Adv	I	% Info	O	% Op.	B	% Obs.	F	% Trans	?	% Inq.
23	816M508AU	99	C43	43	2	7	2	7	0	0	20	20	74	74	5	5	0	0	17	17
			G4	4																
			D0	0																
			M0	0																
			S34	34																

			R0	0																
			A0	0																
			T0	0																
			P18	18																
24	813M508LD	42	C26	62	3	0	7	0	0	0	21	50	21	50	0	0	0	0	5	12
			G3	7																
			D0	0																
			M6	14																
			S4	10																
			R0	0																
			A0	0																
			T0	0																
			P3	7																
25	1117F426DD	79	C31	39	15	4	19	5	0	0	26	33	56	71	0	0	8	10	7	9
			G6	8																
			D4	5																
			M0	0																
			S25	32																
			R0	0																
			A0	0																
			TX	X																
			P0	0																
			W5	6																
No.	Code	Total	Role	% Role	+	-	% Pos	% Neg	SA	% Adv	I	% Info	O	% Op.	B	% Obs.	F	% Trans	?	% Inq.
26	612M427AU	287	C115	40	23	12	8	4	0	0	34	12	253	88	0	0	4	1	16	6
			S35	12																
			M47	16																
			G19	7																
			W16	6																

			A1	.3																
			D31	11																
			P18	6																
			F2	.6																
			TX	X																
27	1118F426LD	98	C29	29	7	3	7	3	6	29	31	31	67	67	0	0	15	15	2	2
			S25	25																
			T21	21																
			G5	5																
			P7	7																
			MX	X																
28	16MGEDLD	101	C44	44	4	11	4	11	2	20	33	33	69	69	0	0	24	24	6	6
			G5	5																
			D0	0																
			M0	0																
			S32	32																
			P11	11																
			A0	0																
			T10	10																

No.	Code	Total	Role	% Role	+	-	% Pos	% Neg	SA	% Adv	I	% Info	O	% Op.	B	% Obs.	F	% Trans	?	% Inq
29	52061LD	142	C62	44	7	0	5	0	2	100	66	46	60	42	3	2	0	0	6	4
			S36	25																
			G20	14																
			D13	9																
			T2	1																
			A0	0																
			MX	X																

30	522068MD	76	C42	55	0	1	0	1	0	0	30	39	38	50	1	1	0	0	0	0
			S13	17																
			P8	11																
			D6	8																
			TX	X																
			MX	X																
			A0	0																
31	52206LD9	108	C57	53	4	3	4	3	0	0	70	65	9	8	21	19	1	1	1	1
			S34	31																
			D7	6																
			G2	2																
			A0	0																
			TX	X																
			MX	X																
32	525062OHI	70	C41	59	0	0	0	0	0	0	14	20	31	44	2	3	0	0	5	7
			S23	33																
			D4	6																
			A2	3																
			TX	X																
			MX	X																
33	522061017	74	C36	49	6	8	0	0	5	500	35	47	33	45	4	5	4	5	7	9
			P17	23																
			S9	12																
			R2	3																
			M2	3																
			D3	4																
			G2	3																
			T1	1																
			A0	0																
No.	Code	Total	Role	%	+	-	%	%	SA	%	I	%	O	%	B	%	F	%	?	%

				Role			Pos	Neg		Adv		Info		Op.		Obs.		Trans		Inq
34	52506LD915	234	C95	41	16	10	7	4	20	77	82	35	125	53	0	0	5	2	11	5
			S47	20																
			T26	11																
			D7	3																
			G20	9																
			M17	7																
			P11	5																
			A0	0																
35	52206DD915	73	C37	51	29	0	40	0	3	100	38	52	27	37	3	4	0	0	0	0
			D17	23																
			S13	18																
			P3	4																
			T3	4																
			A2	3																
			G0	0																
			MX	X																
36	52606LD612	128	C34	26	2	31	1	24	3	50	33	26	94	73	0	0	9	7	11	9
			S29	23																
			G1	.07																
			D17	13																
			E20	16																
			P20	16																
			T6	4																
			M1	.07																
No.	Code	Total	Role	% Role	+	-	% Pos	% Neg	SA	% Adv	I	% Info	O	% Op.	B	% Obs.	F	% Trans	?	% Inq
37	52606814	119	C10	8	2	38	2	32	0	0	11	9	106	89	2	2	3	3	2	2
			G1	.08																

			S16	13															
			D33	28															
			E57	48															
			A1	.08															
			P1	.08															
			TX	X															
			MX	X															
38	5206LD816	112	C60	54	0	3	0	3	0	0	29	26	46	41	0	0	0	0	5	4
			G13	12															
			D0	0															
			S31	28															
			P8	7															
			A0	0															
			TX	X															
			MX	X															
39	52606613	110	C57	52	5	3	5	3	0	0	60	55	42	38	7	6	10	9	14	13
			E32	29															
			D9	8															
			P11	10															
			TX	X															
			M0	0															
40	52606714	245	C93	38	1	3	.04	1	3	\14	79	32	146	60	0	0	0	0	25	10
			S10	4															
			D14	6															
			G38	16															
			M27	11															
			T22	9															
			A5	2															
			P4	2															
			W3	1															

			R4	2																
			E1	.04																
No.	Code	Total	Role	% Role	+	-	% Pos	% Neg	SA	% Adv	I	% Info	O	% Op.	B	% Obs.	F	% Trans	?	% Inq
41	52606LD	235	C102	43	4	11	2	5	24	92	69	29	156	66	0	0	2	.08	8	3
			S33	14																
			G24	10																
			M17	7																
			T26	11																
			R8	3																
			P15	5																
42	52206LD1117	82	C29	35	8	1	10	1	0	0	15	18	66	80	1	1	10	12	4	5
			S13	16																
			E28	34																
			P1	1																
			G3	4																
			D7	9																
			TX	X																
			MX	X																
43	52206ED914	164	C37	23	6	72	4	44	2	17	43	26	100	61	15	9	18	11	7	4
			S41	25																
			G16	10																
			M47	29																
			T12	7																
			A1	.06																
			R1	.06																
			E1	.06																
			W1	.06																
			D1	.06																
			1:1 3	2																

No.	Code	Total	Role	% Role	+	-	% Pos	% Neg	SA	% Adv	I	% Info	O	% Op.	B	% Obs.	F	% Trans	?	% Inq
44	52506LD1015	140	C49	35	4	8	3	6	1	100	41	29	97	69	0	0	0	0	8	6
			S24	17																
			T1	.07																
			M14	10																
			D19	14																
			AP8	6																
			G6	4																
			E17	12																
45	52506OHI	128	C45	35	16	2	13	2	1	100	37	30	87	68	1	.07	0	0	0	0
			D2	1																
			M22	17																
			S33	26																
			G14	11																
			E7	5																
			T1	.07																
			P3	2																
			1:1 1	.07																
46	52506LD4	142	C32	23	5	3	4	2	4	80	59	42	59	42	7	5	0	0	14	10
			S10	7																
			P13	9																
			T5	4																
			A4	3																
			G15	11																
			M1	.07																
			D2	1																
	Totals:	5573	C1949	35	338	534	6	10	114	3	1647	30	3527	63	206	4	212	4	356	6
			S1076	19																
			P453	8																

			G401	7																
			D305	5																
			A22	.4																
		1116	E163	15																
		3206	R128	4																
		775	W25	3																
		393	1:112	3																
		204	OT7	3																
		103	PT5	5																
		140	AP8	6																
	Student Totals	3969	T233	6																
	Parent Totals	4693	M(F)512	11																
	% Meetings Student Abs.			28																
	% Meetings Student Silent			17																
	% Meetings Parent Abs.			20																
	% Meetings Parent Silent			24																

Key: + = Positive Remark / - = Negative Remark / T= Student, M= Parent, C=Administrator, S=Special Educator, G=General Educator, P=School Psychologist, R=Related Service Provider, A= Parent Advocate*, D= Guidance, E=BOCES, 1:1=Teaching Assistant, W=Social Worker, AP = Private Advocate, MT = Family Care Provider, OT = Occupational Therapist, PT = Physical Therapist/ I = Info / O = Opinion / B = Observation/F = Transition/SA=Self-Advocacy

Appendix X

Table 22

Percentage of IEP Meetings in School Districts P, E, and C with Students Present (2007 Data)

School district	Total no. of meetings	Total no. of meetings with students present	% Students present
P	25	18	72
E	23	16	70
C	30	5	17

The percentage of IEP meetings with students present in school district P and school district E in 2007 was greater by factors of 4.2 and 4.1 respectively over the school district C (control) results.

Appendix Y

Table 23

Percentage of IEP Meetings with Students Present in School District P before and after Intervention (2006 [Baseline], 2007 Data)

School district	Total no. of meetings	Total no. of meetings with students present	% Students present
P (2006)	46	33	72
P (2007)	25	18	72

In school district P in 2007 there was no change in the percentage of meetings attended by students over the baseline (2006) results

Appendix Z

Effect of Intervention on Transition Plan Quality for Definitions in IDEA 2004

Table 24

Hypothesis 4a. Comparison before and after Appreciative Inquiry of Quality of Goals Set in 5 Definition Areas of Transition Planning in School Districts P, E, and C.

Transition plan indicator	School district	M		SD		*t* (single-tailed)	Significance @ .05
		Pre	Post	Pre	Post		
Post-secondary education	P n = 21	.739.	.739	.619	.619	0	No
	E n = 23	1.478	2.086	.665	.731	1.474	No
	C n = 30	1.666	1.833	.479	.592	0.599	No
Vocational education	P n = 19	.842	.842	.501	.501	0	No
	E n = 22	.913	1.173	.417	.576	0.879	No
	C n = 29	1.034	1.172	.421	.468	0.589	No
Integrated employment	P n = 15	.666	.666	.488	.488	0	No
	E n = 14	.714	1.143	.726	.363	0.985	No
	C n = 14	.714	1.231	.469	.439	1.475	No
Independent living	P n = 18	.888	.888	.471	.471	0	No

	E n = 19	.894	1.263	.459	.562	1.107	No
	C n = 17	.941	.941	.243	.243	0	No
Community participation	P n = 18	1.166	1.166	.383	.383	0	No
	E n = 17	1.176	1.588	.636	.712	0.089	No
	C n = 23	.783	1.043	.671	.767	0.614	No

No differences of any significance were found in the quality of the goals for any of the definitions in IDEA 2004 in the transition plans in school districts P, E, and C.

Appendix AA

Table 25

Hypothesis 4b. Comparison before and after Appreciative Inquiry of the Number of Action Steps in 5 Definition Areas of Transition Planning in School Districts P, E, and C.

Transition plan indicator	School district	M		SD		*t* (single-tailed)	Significance @ .05
		Pre	Post	Pre	Post		
Post-secondary education	P n = 21	.4782	.4782	.994	.994	0	No
	E n = 23	3.695	3.826	1.164	1.527	0.139	No
	C n = 30	4.166	4.301	1.487	1.442	0.176	No
Vocational education	P n = 19	1.105	1.105	.567	.567	0	No
	E n = 22	1.727	2.132	1.120	.888	0.673	No
	C n = 29	2.103	3.207	.939	5.609	0.522	No
Integrated employment	P n = 15	1.066	1.066	.458	.458	0	No
	E n = 14	1.142	1.785	1.222	1.368	0.218	No
	C n = 14	1.502	1.786	1.344	1.050	0.313	No
Independent living	P n = 18	1.166	1.166	.707	.707	0	No

	E n = 19	1.737	2.263	1.046	1.522	0.621	No
	C n = 17	1.530	1.764	.624	1.480	0.320	No
Community participation	P n = 18	1.222	1.222	.808	.808	0	No
	E n = 17	1.942	2.351	1.638	1.497	0.382	No
	C n = 23	2.043	2.043	1.492	1.665	0	No

No differences of any significance were found in the number of action steps for any of the definitions in IDEA 2004 in transition plans in school districts P, E, C.

Appendix BB

Table 26

Hypothesis 5a. Comparison before and after Appreciative Inquiry of Levels of Implementation in Action Steps for 5 Definition Areas of Transition Planning in School Districts P, E, C.

Transition plan indicator	School district	M		SD		*t* (single-tailed)	Significance @ .05
		Pre	Post	Pre	Post		
Post-secondary education	P n = 21	.957	.957	.878	.878	0	No
	E n = 23	1.826	2.347	.777	.487	1.363	No
	C n = 30	1.903	1.903	.539	.539	0	No
Vocational education	P n = 19	.895	.895	.809	.809	0	No
	E n = 22	1.593	2.227	.796	.752	1.363	No
	C n = 29	2.103	2.172	.939	.889	0.144	No
Integrated employment	P n = 15	.866	.866	.516	.516	0	No
	E n = 14	1.142	1.785	.770	.699	1.155	No
	C n = 14	1.357	1.857	1.081	.536	0.775	No
Independent living	P n = 18	.833	.833	.786	.786	0	No

	E n = 19	1.578	1.736	.834	.806	1.086	No
	C n = 17	1.470	1.411	.874	.939	0.094	No
Community participation	P n = 18	1.222	1.222	.732	.732	0	No
	E n = 17	1.412	1.882	.507	.781	1.042	No
	C n = 23	2.087	2.260	1.041	.915	0.300	No

No differences of any significance were found for the levels of implementation for any of the definitions in IDEA 2004 in transition plans in school districts P, E, and C.

Appendix CC

Table 27

Hypothesis 5b. Comparison before and after Appreciative Inquiry on Levels of Utility in Action steps for 5 Definition Areas of Transition Planning in School Districts P. E, and C.

Transition plan indicator	School district	M		SD		*t* (single-tailed)	Significance @ .05
		Pre	Post	Pre	Post		
Post-secondary education	P n = 21	.957	.957	.878	.878	0	No
	E n = 23	1.826	2.217	.984	.951	0.685	No
	C n = 30	1.633	1.766	1.033	.971	0.258	No
Vocational education	P n = 19	.842	.842	.765	.765	0	No
	E n = 22	1.772	2.318	.8125	.7798	1.135	No
	C n = 29	1.900	1.931	.724	.704	0.0920	No
Integrated employment	P n = 15	1.133	1.133	.743	.743	0	No
	E n = 14	1.642	2.286	1.081	.726	0.921	No
	C n = 14	1.714	2.286	1.266	.611	0.760	No
Independent living	P n = 18	1.111	1.111	.676	.676	0	No

	E n = 19	1.421	2.157	1.070	.602	1.307	No
	C n = 17	1.705	1.470	.686	.800	0.460	No
Community participation	P n = 18	1.111	1.111	.676	.676	0	No
	E n = 17	1.941	2.118	1.345	1.633	0.020	No
	C n = 23	2.087	1.957	1.125	1.107	0.199	No

No differences of any significance were found in the levels of utility for any of the definitions in IDEA 2004 in transition plans in school districts P, E, and C.

Appendix DD

Table 28

Hypothesis 5c. Comparison of Chi-square Measure of Independence for Goals Tied to Post School Outcomes before and after Appreciative Inquiry in 5 Definition Areas of Transition Planning in School Districts P, E, and C.

Transition plan indicator	School district	Response count pre		post		X^2 df = 1	Significance @ .05
		No	Yes	No	Yes		
Post-secondary education	P	10	11	10	11	0	No
	E	5	17	1	22	3.287	No
	C	3	27	2	28	0.218	No
Vocational education	P	9	10	9	10	0	No
	E	2	19	1	21	0.0278	No
	C	1	27	1	28	0.0006	No
Integrated employment	P	14	1	14	1	0	No
	E	2	10	2	12	0.0278	No
	C	1	9	1	13	0.063	No
Independent living	P	11	7	11	7	0	No
	E	3	13	3	16	0.053	No
	C	2	15	1	15	0.303	No
Community participation	P	1	17	1	17	0	No

	E	8	7	6	11	1.054	No
	C	12	9	15	8	0.299	No

No significance was detected using chi-square for goals tied to post-school outcomes in post-secondary education, vocational training, integrated employment, and independent living when pre and post intervention results were compared in transition plans in school districts P, E, and C.

Appendix EE

Table 29

Hypothesis 5d. Comparison of Chi-square Measure of Independence for Student Desires Reflected in Goals before and after Appreciative Inquiry in 5 Definition Areas of Transition Planning in School Districts P. E, and C.

Transition plan indicator	School district	Response count pre		post		X^2 df = 1	Significance @ .05
		No	Yes	No	Yes		
Post-secondary education	P	4	17	4	17	0	No
	E	2	20	1	22	0.407	No
	C	2	28	2	28	0	No
Vocational education	P	7	12	7	12	0	No
	E	2	19	1	21	0.410	No
	C	1	27	2	27	0.384	No
Integrated employment	P	9	6	9	6	0	No
	E	2	10	2	12	0.028	No
	C	1	9	1	13	0.062	No
Independent living	P	10	8	10	8	0	No
	E	3	13	3	16	0.053	No
	C	1	16	1	15	0.002	No
Community participation	P	9	9	9	9	0	No
	E	1	14	2	15	0.243	No

	C	7	14	6	17	0.284	No

No significance was detected using chi-square for student desires reflected in IDEA definitions in vocational training, integrated employment, independent living, and community participation when pre and post intervention results were compared in transition plans in school districts P, E, and C.

Appendix FF

Table 30

Hypothesis 6a. Comparison of Chi-square Measure of Person-centered Planning Reflected in Goals and Action Steps before and after Appreciative Inquiry in Transition Planning in School Districts P, E, C.

Best practice indicator	School district	Response count pre		post		X^2 df = 1	Significance @ .05
		No	Yes	No	Yes		
Person-centered planning	P	25	0	25	0	0	No
	E	20	3	20	3	0	No
	C	27	3	27	3	0	No

No significance was detected using chi-square for the best practice of person-centered planning when pre and post intervention results were compared in transition plans in school districts P, E, and C.

Appendix GG

Table 31

Hypothesis 6b. Comparison of Chi-square Measure of Coaching Student Self-determination Reflected in Goals and Action Steps before and after Appreciative Inquiry in Transition Planning in School Districts P, E, and C.

Best practice indicator	School district	Response Count pre		post		X^2 df = 1	Significance @ .05
		No	Yes	No	Yes		
Self-determination	P	25	0	25	0	0	No
	E	20	3	20	3	0	No
	C	28	2	28	2	0	No

No significance was detected using chi-square for the best practice of coaching for self-determination when pre and post intervention results were compared in transition plans in school districts P, E, and C.

Appendix HH

Table 32

Hypothesis 6c. Comparison of Chi-square Measure of Student Employment Aspirations Reflected in Goals and Action Steps before and after Appreciative Inquiry in Transition Planning in School Districts P, E, and C.

Best practice indicator	School district	Response Count pre		post		X^2 df = 1	Significance @ .05
		No	Yes	No	Yes		
Employment aspirations	P	5	20	5	20	0	No
	E	6	17	3	20	1.244	No
	C	4	26	3	27	0.160	No

No significance was detected using chi-square for the best practice of including student employment aspirations when pre and post intervention results were compared in transition plans in school districts P, E, and C.

Appendix II

Table 33

Hypothesis 6d. Comparison of Chi-square Measure of Student Cultural Values and Beliefs Reflected in Goals and Action Steps before and after Appreciative Inquiry in Transition Planning in School Districts P, E, and C.

Best practice indicator	School district	Response count pre		post		X^2 df = 1	Significance @ .05
		No	Yes	No	Yes		
Cultural values and beliefs	P	25	0	25	0	0	No
	E	22	1	21	2	.356	No
	C	30	0	30	0	0	No

No significance was detected using chi-square for the best practice of acknowledging student cultural beliefs and values when pre and post intervention results were compared in transition plans in school districts P, E, and C.

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