

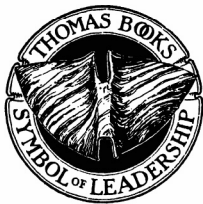
**CASE STUDIES IN TRANSITION
AND EMPLOYMENT FOR STUDENTS
AND ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES**

**CASE STUDIES IN TRANSITION
AND EMPLOYMENT FOR
STUDENTS AND ADULTS WITH
DISABILITIES**

By

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To Michal Post and Joyce Montgomery. Two people who not only understand the importance of transition and employment but also have made it successfully happen for many people and in addition have taught many others on how to make it happen. I greatly appreciate being their colleague and am appreciative of their toleration of my eccentricities and sense of humor.

PREFACE

This book is intended to give support providers the understanding, knowledge, and skills for providing transition and employment services in schools, employment, community, and residential settings and thereby improve the quality of life for the individuals that they support. The rubber meets the road, not only in how to support an individual with a disability, but also in how to implement instructional strategies, services, and systems change so that positive quality of life outcomes occur.

This book responds to a critical need for highly qualified personnel who will become exemplary professionals in transition and employment settings because of their advanced knowledge, skills, and experiences in working with students and adults with varying disabilities. An advantage of this book is that universities, school districts, and organizations preparing support providers can easily use it in courses or trainings that address transition and employment services as the case studies comprehensively cover methodology and issues that represent best practices and evidence-based methods in these areas. Those who are already support providers will find the case studies to be practical and helpful for increasing their skills in applied settings. I see three main groups who would primarily be interested in this book:

1. College instructors teaching courses in Transition and Employment, Rehabilitation, Career Counseling, Applied Behavior Analysis, School Psychology, Special Education, or related areas. College instructors are likely to choose our book based upon:
 - a. The consistent format throughout the book.
 - b. The “practicality” and “readability” of the book for students in college.
 - c. The comprehensive analysis and coverage of developing supports and services for individuals with disabilities.
 - d. The direct applicability of the case studies to applied settings.
 - e. The ability to use the case studies as assignments and/or exams.
2. Individuals working in the disability field.
3. Individuals studying to work in the disability field.

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**CASE STUDIES IN TRANSITION
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OVERVIEW OF TRANSITION AND EMPLOYMENT FOR STUDENTS AND ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES

The most important outcome of education is that students have a good quality of life and are productive members of society. Employment is the critical component for a successful quality of life for people with disabilities. Good jobs and/or careers that offer meaningful work, good pay and benefits, and social inclusion provide the key for successful outcomes. Unfortunately, these outcomes have been difficult to achieve and too many students with disabilities end up as adults who are unemployed, have a poor quality of life, and are not contributing members of society. Too many adults with disabilities are either unemployed or underemployed with low wages and no benefits. Thus, the years of education have often been wasted.

A successful transition to adult life (when the student leaves the K-12 school system) is probably the most important component of a student's education and is the ultimate test of whether or not their education has been successful. Quality-of-life outcomes have generally been poor for individuals with disabilities, in part because of poor services in the transition from school to adult life.

With a job that has good wages and good benefits, people with disabilities can avoid the poverty and dependency in which the vast majority of people with disabilities live. Along with economic independence also comes political participation which is how people with disabilities will ultimately influence and control the service delivery system (Johnson, 2003; Longmore, 1995). To paraphrase Helen Keller, "People with disabilities not only need to be given lives, they need to be given lives worth living."

Transition Planning

When students receiving special education services turn 16, they are required to have an Individual Transition Plan (ITP) which may be part of their Individual Education Program (IEP) or a separate document. The ITP is intended to set goals for the transition process (“Gordon will job shadow at four job sites during the school year and interview the supervisor at two of the sites regarding skills needed for three different jobs at that job site”).

It is important to give students work experience in school before the age of 16. Once a student is 16 then they may start having work experience in real jobs in the community. It is helpful for the student to have different jobs for increasing amounts of time as student gets older. They may start with job shadowing and job tryout experiences in a variety of jobs. All of these experiences provide students with information about types of job and careers that are of most interest to them (do I want to work inside or outdoors, jobs with a lot of social interactions or few interactions, do I want a job where I move around a lot or not, etc.). This information may be difficult to obtain through simulated activities or classroom instruction about different jobs.

While in school, students must learn functional skills that relate to the Criterion of Ultimate Functioning (Brown, Nietupski, & Hamre-Nietupski, 1976). The criterion of ultimate functioning refers to referencing skills that the student will need as an adult. For example, these skills could include interviewing skills, dressing appropriately, speaking appropriately, punctuality, quantity and/or quality of work, and travel skills.

When students are learning employment skills the emphasis should be on learning existing local jobs rather than isolated work skills. For example, learning to put a can of food on a shelf in a classroom would be an isolated skill while learning to be a stocker in a grocery store would be learning a real job. By learning a job rather than a task, the student will be more likely to be successful in finding a job as employers are looking for someone who is competent in doing a job rather than a task.

Students with disabilities usually exit the K-12 school system at age 18 (when graduating from high school). Some students, with more severe disabilities, may continue to receive services from the school system while they are 18–22 years old. These services are often pro-

vided in off-campus transition programs where students receive instruction in employment, community, and residential skills.

IDEA requires that students have a transition component to their IEP at age sixteen and also mandates that all special education students who leave secondary education through graduation or exceeding state age eligibility be provided with a Summary of Performance (SOP) to use as they pursue their transition goals (Test & Grossi, 2011). The SOP is to be developed in lieu of an exit IEP, and is designed to provide useful information to agencies and schools to which the exiting student might go next. This has important implications as school districts collaborate with adult service agencies in providing “point of transition” services (Certo et al., 2003). The SOP requires that the local education agency provide the student with a summary of the student’s academic achievement and functional performance, which shall include recommendations on how to assist the student in meeting the student’s postsecondary goals. Point of transition services forms a partnership between the school district and adult service agencies during a student’s last year in public school to develop a direct-hire position with a variety of support services for work and community participation (Luecking & Certo, 2005).

Legal and Legislative Acts Regarding Transition, Employment, and Adult Life for People with Disabilities

When students are in the K-12 system, they receive services primarily under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. As adults, individual rights and services are often covered under legislation which is specific to individuals with disabilities. Service providers need to have at least a basic understanding of these acts so that they can assist individuals in receiving appropriate services. Key acts in his area are:

1. The Americans with Disabilities Act (prohibits discrimination based upon disability).
2. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation act of 1973 (people with disabilities cannot be denied benefits or discriminated against by any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance).
3. Social Security Disability Insurance for Adult Disabled Children (basic economic support).
4. Medicare (national insurance program for elderly people and people with disabilities).

5. Medicaid (payment for health-care services).
6. Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (training and placement of people with disabilities in employment)
7. Intermediate Care Facilities for Persons with Developmental Disabilities (home and community-based services for people with developmental disabilities).
8. The Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (provides work investment activities for increasing employment, retention, and earning of individuals).
9. Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999 (to help people who are receiving disability benefits from Social Security “find good jobs, good careers, and better self-supporting futures”).

Employment Issues

If, and where, people with disabilities should work has been an issue that people with disabilities and their families, school systems, adult service systems, and governments have struggled with (Kiernan, Hoff, Freeze, & Mank, 2011; Wehman, 1998, 2006). Questions concerning whether or not people with disabilities are even capable of working, whether they need to get “ready” to work (a focus on “pre-vocational” skills), whether they should work in sheltered or integrated environments, and the type of supports that are appropriate for workers with disabilities have confronted the field for many decades and still have not been resolved clearly from a policy standpoint (Leahy, Chan, Lui, Rosenthal, Tansey, Wehman, Kundu, Dutta, Anderson, Del Valle, Sherman, & Menz, 2014; Mank, 1994; Nord, Luecking, Mank, Kiernan, Wray, 2013; Wehman, 2011; Wehman & Kregel, 1995).

Terms such as supported employment, competitive employment, and integrated employment have been used to describe situations where the individual with a disability is working in a real job in the community, for real pay, is performing meaningful work, is socially integrated with others, and receives appropriate supports to be successful. Sheltered settings (also known as Transitional Workshops, Adult Day Programs, Work Activity Centers) describes a situation in which the individual with a disability is in a center with other people with disabilities, is often receiving below minimum wage, and often spend much time doing non-work tasks such as puzzles or are involved