

HOW STUDENTS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY RECEIVE COMMUNITY
RECREATION PARTICIPATION SKILLS DURING TRANSITION PLANNING: A
STUDY ON TEACHER PERCEPTIONS

by

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I. INTRODUCTION

Like most people, individuals with disabilities aspire to experience a purposeful social life (Porter, 2016). However, it is important to acknowledge that individuals with disabilities deserve to live purposeful, fulfilling lives (Upshaw, 2013). Existing research has emphasized the importance of recreation, characterizing it as an approach to improved quality of life (QOL), yet there is a lack of research regarding recreation as a related service and the impact it has on recreation participation after high school (Badia et al., 2012). Academic scholars believe that the QOL for individuals with disabilities is dependent upon the level of training and support they receive prior to their exiting public school, in addition to the connection regarding appropriate community resources upon graduation (Upshaw, 2013). In effort to prepare students with IDD for post-school success, effective transition planning is needed (Francis et al., 2018). Current literature indicates a lack in research regarding best-practices for transition planning. Therefore, the purpose of this thesis will be to investigate teacher perceptions on how students with IDD acquire community recreation participation skills during transition planning.

Recreation therapy (RT) is a profession grounded on various models that provide purpose and meaning for our services. In particular, one of the founding and oldest model used in RT is the Leisure Ability Model (Gunn & Peterson, 1978). The primary goal of the Leisure Ability Model is improved independence and satisfying leisure functioning. Further, the Leisure Ability Model is grounded on three fundamental outcomes: functional interventions, leisure education, and recreation participation. A key component of this model is leisure education. Through leisure education, recreation therapists focus on developing attitudes, knowledge, and skills needed to participate in recreation of

choice. According to Carter and Van Andel (2011), leisure education positively affects overall QOL, health, and well-being. Previous research suggests that when implemented as an educational program, RT fosters optimal recreation support toward the health and educational development of students with disabilities within the school system (Green et al., 2018).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this proposed study is to investigate teacher perceptions on how students with IDD acquire community recreation participation skills in transition planning. More specifically, this study will explore teacher perceptions on: (1) What skills are needed for successful community recreation participation, (2) How community recreation participation skills are taught, (3) How students receive and acquire community recreation participation skills, (4) What measures are used to determine how a student has successfully acquired community recreation participation skills. The focus will be on special education teachers who currently teach special education in a Michigan public high school. By exploring the perceptions of teachers who have experience with transition planning, it will be possible to obtain several perspectives that further our understanding of, and possibly clarify gaps in transition planning.

Definition of Terms

Due to the broad use of terminology in this literature review, a review of terminology is provided below to ensure a common understanding.

Special Education: Special education is specifically designed instruction, often offered at no cost, to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability. This includes specialized instruction conducted in a classroom, in the home, in hospitals, in institutions, or in other

settings, and includes instruction in physical education (Individuals with Disabilities Act of 2004, 2011).

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA): A law that makes available a free appropriate public education to eligible children with disabilities throughout the nation and ensures special education and related services to those children (IDEA, 2004).

Individualized Education Program (IEP): Once an individual is eligible for special education and related services, school districts are obligated to develop an IEP. An IEP is a written statement of the program for a child with a disability that is developed, reviewed, and revised in a team-meeting format. The IEP specifies the individual educational needs of the child and what specific special education and related services are necessary to meet those needs (IDEA, 2004).

Intellectual Developmental Disorder (IDD): A below-average cognitive ability with three characteristics: intelligent quotient (or I.Q.) is between 70-75 or below, significant limitations in adaptive behaviors (the ability to adapt and carry on everyday life activities such as self-care, socializing, communicating, etc.), and the onset of the disability occurs before age 18 (APA, 2013).

Related Services: In general the term related services means transportation, and such developmental, corrective, and other supportive services (including speech-language pathology and audiology services, interpreting services, psychological services, physical and occupational therapy, recreation, including therapeutic recreation, social work services, school nurse services designed to enable a student with a disability to receive a free appropriate public education as described in the individualized education program of the child, counseling services, including rehabilitation counseling, orientation and

mobility services, and medical services, except that such medical services shall be for diagnostic and evaluation purposes only) as may be required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education, and includes the early identification and assessment of disabling conditions in children (IDEA, 2004).

Transition Services: A coordinated set of activities for a student with a disability that- (a) is designed to be within a results-oriented process, which is focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the child with a disability to facilitate the student's movement from school to post-school activities, including post-secondary education, vocational education, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation; (b) is based on the individual child's needs, taking into account the student's strengths, preferences, and interests; and (c) includes instruction, related services, community experiences, the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives, and, when appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation (IDEA, 2004).

Recreation Therapy (RT): Treatment services designed to restore, remediate and rehabilitate a person's level of functioning and independence in life activities, to promote health and wellness as well as reduce or eliminate the activity limitations and restrictions to participation in life situations caused by an illness or disabling condition (ATRA, 2019).

Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist (CTRS): Is a certified recreational therapist who has demonstrated professional competence by acquiring a specific body of knowledge and successfully passing the National Council for Therapeutic Recreation

Certification exam. The CTRS employs a scope of practice that is based upon theoretical constructs and applied methodology known as the assessment, planning, implementation, evaluation, and documentation (APIED) process. In practice, a CTRS applies this critical set of competencies and skill toward the total person and the life factors that are associated with a specific disability or illness (NCTRC, 2014).

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review will discuss research regarding RT, transition planning, and related services.

Intellectual Developmental Disorder

Intellectual developmental disorder (IDD) is the most common type of developmental disability with approximately 6.5 million in the United States living with this disability (APA, 2013). Many possible causes exist for IDD, which include: brain injury or infection, poor nutrition or health care, abnormalities of chromosomes and genes, premature births, drug use during pregnancy or child abuse (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, 2004). Furthermore, IDEA (2004) stated that IDD manifests during the developmental period, resulting in significantly sub-average intellectual functioning co-occurring with deficits in adaptive behavior that unfavorably affects an individual's scholastic ability. Such deficits often result in difficulties to meet standards of personal independence and social responsibilities. Such as communication, social participation, academic or occupational function and person dependence in the home or community (IDEA, 2004). The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Health Disorders 5th Edition recognizes four levels IDD, with ranges of mild, moderate, severe, and profound (APA, 2013).

For individuals with IDD, social inclusion is identified as a foundation to QOL (Merrells et al., 2018). However, existing literature provides evidence that individuals with IDD are at high-risk for social isolation and lack of relationships (Simplican et al, 2015). Shattuck and colleagues (2011) found that participants experienced very limited social activities with peers in the community, reporting 64% of participants were never

invited to activities. Similarly, Buttner & Tierney (2005) investigated the importance of socialization, emphasizing that having a strong social support network can increase overall health and well-being. The results from their study indicated that amongst students with disabilities, the majority of their relationships and social interactions were with people who were paid to be in their lives for support. In the same way, Nota et al. (2007) found that students with IDD had trouble fostering social bonds with peers, resulting in less social support compared with students without disabilities, and that social abilities significantly influenced learning and coping with day-to-day life. According to APA (2013), individuals with IDD may have a deficit in interpersonal skills, social responsibility, self-esteem, social problem solving, and capabilities to follow rules are suggested to be contributing factors in social barriers.

In terms of relationships amongst individuals with IDD, typical patterns include having relationships with people in only three categories: paid staff, other people with disabilities they live with or work with, and, occasionally their family (Hapke, 2015). Students with disabilities are more likely to experience peer rejection, and less likely to rely on peers for social support (Bellanca, & Pote, 2013; Jones, 2004). Similarly, poor social abilities are associated with difficulty maintaining and establishing communication with others (Gilmore & Cuskelly, 2014; Murray & Greenberg, 2006). Social isolation has been recognized as a common reality amongst persons with IDD and often contributes to increased loneliness (Gilmore & Cuskelly, 2014). In effort to alleviate loneliness, four outcomes have been identified that should be implemented to promote socialization: improving social skills, enhancing social support, increasing opportunities for social interaction and addressing maladaptive social cognition (Masi et al., 2010).

Individualized Education Program

Intellectual developmental disorder is one of the thirteen disability categories identified in the IDEA as being eligible for special education services (IDEA, 2004). Once an individual is eligible for special education and related services, school districts are required to develop an IEP. An IEP is defined as a written statement of the program for a child with a disability that is developed, reviewed, and revised in a team-meeting format. The IEP identifies the individual educational needs of the student and what specific special education and related services are necessary to meet those needs (IDEA, 2004).

Previous studies regarding the IEPs of children with disabilities have noted that IEP goals were primarily planned to address deficits in language, literacy and social-emotional development (Kwon et al. 2011). In addition, students' IEP goals were aligned with specific professional human service areas, e.g., physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech/language pathology, or ophthalmology. Giangreco et al. (1998) investigated how effective IEP documents were in addressing communication needs and in providing appropriate interventions for students with multiple disabilities. Their findings suggest that, more often than not, IEP goals and objectives were vague, broad, inconsistent, and ineffective in attending to children's educational needs. The IEP must include appropriate measurable postsecondary goals based upon age-appropriate transition assessments, related training, education, employment, and, where appropriate, independent living skills, and the transition services needed to assist the student in reaching these goals (Upshaw, 2013). Block and colleagues (2013) indicated that special

education teachers are not familiar with, or do not have the training to teach recreation programs, and special education teachers would not feel comfortable teaching their students skills necessary to engage in community-based recreation.

Transition Planning

Transition services are defined as: “A coordinated set of activities for a student with a disability that is designed 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 training, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing adult education and adult services, independent living, or community participation” (IDEA, 2004). As a related service, transition has progressed from being a subsidiary feature of an IEP to a vital component of a special education program. Over time, the focus of transition in special education has changed from disability deficit, to an approach that considers individual student choices, in addition to post-secondary needs (Upshaw, 2013).

Currently, students are eligible to receive special education services until they reach age 21. After a student reaches age 21, funding for services provided by the school come to an end (Gauthier-Boudreault et al., 2017). Previous research has indicated that the transition period into adulthood is a crucial time for individuals with IDD (Gauthier-Boudreault et al., 2017). In effort to prepare students with IDD for post-school success, effective transition planning is needed (Francis et al., 2018). However, successful post-school outcomes are often flawed due to inadequate transition plans and lack of services (Francis et al., 2018). Due to consistency in poorly constructed transition plans, the

transition period often leads to adverse consequences that negatively affect a student's ability to integrate into the community and engage in social activities (Gauthier-Boudreault, Couture & Gallagher, 2017; Francis et al., , 2018. Similarly, Shogren & Plotner (2012) indicated that transition planning has frequently been labeled as inadequate. More specifically, it was suggested that several schools fail to meet compliance with transition laws that are federally mandated by IDEA in the areas of: (1) service coordination and interagency collaboration, (3) student and family involvement, (2) basing goals on student's preferences and interests, and (4) linking transition goals to academic experiences. Current literature indicates a need to explore the gaps in transition planning as there is a lack in research regarding best-practices for transition planning.

Recreation Therapy

Recreation therapy is recognized by IDEA as a reliable provider of transition services, however, there is a lack in utilization of these services in the school system (Porter, 2016; Allsop et al., 2013). According to the NCTRC, only 1.8% of CTRS' are practicing within school systems (NCTRC, 20014). In effort to understand the under-utilization of RT in schools, Hawkins et al. (2012) reviewed a large body of research and found there to be lack of awareness of RT as a related service, poor support of recreation and leisure services, low advocacy for inclusion of RT and challenges with RT as a related service becoming approved by the public-school system. A primary focus of RT in the school system is to assist students receiving special education services in learning how to appropriately use their leisure time productively and foster an improved QOL (Heyene & Anderson, 2011).

Buttimer and Tierney (2005) investigated leisure and recreation participation among students with IDD. In this study, recreation and leisure participation were measured in relation to: choice (who chooses the activity), socialization (the amount of social interaction with others during the activity), enjoyment (level of enjoyment) and assistance (level of help required to carry out the activity). Using the TRAIL Leisure Assessment Battery (TLAB), individual constraints and barriers to leisure and recreation participation were identified. Moreover, the results indicated not having a friend, not feeling welcome and not knowing how to carry out a leisure activity were recognized as top barriers to participating in leisure (Buttimer & Tierney, 2005). Taken together, these findings suggest there is a need for further support among students with IDD in effort to develop and enhance the social and practical skills vital for effective use of leisure and recreation time (Buttimer & Tierney, 2005).

In another study, researcher Diodati (2017) investigated the implementation of recreation as a related service within a public-school setting, and perspectives on the impact of recreation on leisure participation and QOL among students with disabilities. In this study, a purposive sampling strategy was used to collect data from the IEP team member and the student involved with recreation as a related service. By including diverse perspectives and research sites, the researcher was able to include multiple sources of information, increasing the reliability of the findings. In order to guarantee credibility, the researcher facilitated member checks, certifying that the chosen participants had an opportunity to validate the reliability of the information provided during interviews. This study included multiple data collection methods, allowing the researcher to triangulate the data, which was employed to increase the credibility of the

study. Results from the study indicated that 80% of IEP member participants believed that recreation as a related service positively influenced the social inclusion among students with disabilities, 60% of the IEP members thought recreation as a related service has an important a role in developing both school and community accommodations to ensure accessibility for students to participate in leisure and recreation, 60% of IEP members stated RT plays an integral role in assisting students with developing awareness of local resources and positive attitudes toward leisure and recreation, 60% of IEP members felt that RT influenced students' interpersonal relations, lastly, results indicated that 86.7% of IEP member participants believed recreation as a related service is very or extremely helpful toward removing barriers for participation in leisure and recreation activities. Considering the above findings, utilizing recreation as a related service can have positive impacts on recreation participation among students with disabilities.

IDEA recognizes four key features of recreation as a related service: assessment of leisure function, recreation therapy services, recreation programs in schools and community agencies, and leisure education (National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities, 2010; IDEA, 2004). A CTRS is trained to restore, remediate and rehabilitate a person's level of functioning and independence in life activities, to promote health and wellness as well as reduce or eliminate the activity limitations and restrictions to participation in life situations (ATRA, 2019). With this, a CTRS has the ability to implement community-based experiences comprised of experiences outside of the school building that foster the transition into adult life; promoting skills in shopping, using public transportation and accessing local and community resources (Porter, 2016). Unfortunately, students go without the opportunity to practice accessing community-

based resources before transitioning out of school (Curtis et al., 2008). Participation in community-integration activities creates a boundless continuum of functional learning opportunities, which are highly desired outcomes for individuals with IDD (Porter, 2016)

Coupled with community integration, a recreation therapist can deliver and emphasize advanced social skills (Porter, 2016). Shultz et al. (2017) examined the impact of RT programming on social interaction behaviors of students with disabilities, and found that RT programming can increase social interaction behaviors amongst students with disabilities. Likewise, prior studies indicated that educators have recognized recreational activities as being a key aspect the lives of students with disabilities (Heyne & Anderson, 2011). However, limited numbers of students receive RT in school, thus, social needs continue to go unmet.

Summary

Considering the literature reviewed, incorporating recreation services in transition planning can be an influential and effective tool for individuals with IDD. Further, a consistent finding in the literature suggests utilizing RT services in school can lead to many benefits such as: improved communication, social interaction, friendship skills, appropriate social behavior through modeling from peers, independence, increased participation in the community, and strengthened feelings of belonging and acceptance in school and community settings (Heyne & Anderson, 2011). Recreation therapists are often the ones to create a strong linkage between home, school and community. Given the above-mentioned findings, a need to promote understanding on the contribution of RT as a related service is evident. With evidence-based planning and teamwork, recreation

therapists have the credibility to implement programs that foster skills needed to pursue meaningful recreation participation that will follow them post-high school.

III. METHODS

Introduction

Previous research has indicated that the transition period into adulthood is a crucial time for individuals with IDD (Gauthier-Boudreault et al., 2017). In effort to prepare students with IDD for post-school, effective transition planning is needed (Francis et al., 2018). However, successful post-school outcomes are often flawed due to inadequate transition plans and lack of services (Francis et al., 2018). Due to consistency in poorly constructed transition plans, the transition period often leads to adverse consequences that negatively affect a student's ability to integrate into the community and engage in social activities (Gauthier-Boudreault et al., 2017; Francis et al., 2018). Current literature indicates a need to explore the gaps in transition planning, especially related to RT as a provider, as there is a lack in research regarding best-practices for transition planning.

Statement of the Problem

Research suggests that the underutilization of RT services can be directly associated with a lack of awareness regarding recreation as a related service among other related service personnel, teachers, administrators, and parents (Hawkins et al., 2012). Recreation therapists are often the ones to create a strong linkage between home, school and community. A CTRS has the ability to implement community-based experiences comprised of experiences outside of the school building that foster the transition into adult life; promoting skills in shopping, using public transportation and accessing local and community resources (Porter, 2016). Unfortunately, many students go without the opportunity to practice accessing community-based resources before transitioning out of

school (Curtis et al., 2008). Participation in community-integration activities create a boundless continuum of functional learning opportunities, which is a highly desired outcome for individuals with IDD (Porter, 2016). Coupled with community integration, a recreation therapist can deliver and emphasize advanced social skills (Porter, 2016).

Research Question

This study addresses the following question:

- What perceptions do teachers have regarding how students with IDD acquire community recreation participation skills during transition planning?

Research Design

A qualitative approach was used for this study. Utilizing a qualitative method allowed the researcher to better understand and learn the true meaning a participant holds regarding the problem or issue (Creswell, 2018). The phenomenological approach is a commonly used method in qualitative research. For this study, the phenomenological approach was used to examine perceptions of interviewed participants. The qualitative research methods used for this study are further explained below.

Data Collection Procedure

Creswell (2018) characterized the researcher as the key instrument, and that qualitative researchers collect data themselves through examining documents, observing behavior, and interviewing participants. In addition, it is recognized that qualitative researchers can develop their own instruments, thus, for the purpose of this study, a thirteen-question semi-structured interview was developed based on the purpose and intent of the study (Creswell, 2018). Semi-structured interviews were selected to produce in-depth data necessary for qualitative analysis (Patten, 2018). In addition, semi-

structured interviews encourage participants to respond freely and openly as questions are open-ended and conversation-like. Probing questions were used when deemed necessary, allowing participants to expand on, or clarify a response (Creswell, 2018).

This study was conducted in January and February of 2020. All interviews were semi-structured and audio-recorded. Each interview was conducted over the phone, ranging from 15 to 30 minutes. Demographic questions collected included: Name, date, time of interview, gender, district, size of school, years teaching, experience with transition planning, population served and a verbal confirmation. Telephone interviews were selected for this study, as this made it possible for teachers with busy schedules to participate in the study. Recruitment and interviews of participants were completed when data saturation occurred, and the information provided from the interviewees became redundant (Creswell, 2018).

In qualitative research, it is recommended to conduct a pilot study in order to develop appropriate and relevant questions prior to the actual study (Creswell, 2018). Pilot testing is a significant step in research; pilot testing provides an initial assessment of each item, and improves the questions, format, and instructions (Creswell, 2018). For this study, internal consistency was assessed through the pilot test by asking the selected special education teacher to complete the interview questions. Based on the findings from the literature review, thirteen semi-structured interview questions were created that focus on how students with IDD receive community recreation participation skills during transition planning. Each question was reviewed by a CTRS with experience regarding RT in schools and piloted with an experienced special education teacher to clarify wording and resolve any issues.

Data Analysis Procedure

According to Patten (2018, p. 165), “examining perceptions is known as a phenomenological approach to acquiring knowledge about the world.” Creswell (2018, p. 35) distinguishes the phenomenological approach as a way to understand the experiences of several individuals who have all experienced the same phenomenon. For the purpose of this study, a phenomenological approach was used to analyze data. According to Creswell, this approach usually involves conducting interviews; hence, selecting the phenomenological approach best aligned with this research. Using a phenomenological approach allowed the researcher to focus on a single concept, bring personal values into the research and accumulate participant meanings (Creswell, 2018, p. 39).

All interviews were audio-recorded using the Mac Book Air computer application Quick Time Player. Using Quick Time Player allowed for an efficient way to create a file for each audio-recorded interview. After each interview was successfully recorded, each audio file was entered into NVivo, a Qualitative Data Analysis (QDA) computer software program to be transcribed. Each interview was transcribed, and read thoroughly in order to gain a clear understanding of participant experience (Creswell, 2018).

Coding was completed by following the five steps to data analysis suggested by Creswell (2018). The five steps include: organize and prepare data for analysis, read or look at all the data, begin coding all of the data, generate a description and themes, and lastly, discuss the description and themes. First, each interview was transcribed, and thorough notes regarding frequently used words were taken. In the second step, all of the data were carefully read over, allowing the researcher to comprehend the core meaning of the data; more specifically, what are the participants saying? Next, the researcher

organized data into clusters, and identified common words or phrases. In step four, the researcher used the coding process to generate a detailed description of major themes emerged for data analysis. As suggested by Creswell (2018), each transcript was printed out with large margins to allow adequate space to bracket and cluster codes. Coding was also used to identify small numbers of sub-themes that represent the main idea. Creswell (2018) suggests generating five to seven themes per research study. Next, themes were closely analyzed and formed into a general description. For the purpose of this study, the general description was the phenomenology. Lastly, an in-depth description of the themes was written in order to convey the findings of the data analysis. It should be recognized that throughout the coding process, the researcher frequently referred back to the research questions, ensuring the purpose of the study was addressed.

As similarities were identified in the coding process, four themes emerged: (1) community participation skills are not focused on recreation, (2) skills necessary for successful community participation post-school, (3) perceived strengths and weaknesses of current transition plans, and (4) perceived benefits of recreational therapy in transition planning regarding student community recreation participation skill acquisition. Orange was used to identify any sentences or phrases regarding community participation skills, yellow was used to identify sentences or phrases in relation to skills necessary for successful community participation, blue was used to identify key phrases regarding teacher experience and perceptions of strengths and weaknesses of current transition plans, and lastly, pink was used to identify statements regarding perceived benefits of RT in transition planning. Given the purpose of this research, to investigate teachers'

perceptions on how students with IDD acquire community recreation participation skills during transition planning, the four above-mentioned codes are fitting and relevant.

There were several sub-themes that emerged during coding process. Sub-themes for community participation skills are not focused on recreation include: employment, grocery shopping, using money, transportation. Sub-themes for skills necessary for successful community participation post-school include: social skills, safety skills, independence and initiative, awareness-knowing what is in the community and public transportation. The sub-themes identified for perceived strengths and weaknesses in current transition planning include: inadequately trained staff, lack in trained staff, funding, community-based instruction, speech pathologist, occupational therapist, ESTR, lack in time, recreational therapy (lack in awareness) and recreation. Lastly, sub-themes identified for perceived benefits of RT in transition planning regarding student community recreation participation skill acquisition include: recreation participation/ involvement, purposeful/ meaningful life.

Population and Sample

Snowball sampling was used for the recruitment of participants for this study. Snow-ball sampling is a nonprobability method of sampling that is commonly used in qualitative research (Creswell, 2018). The snowball sampling method is recognized as a process to identify participants through connecting networks, as it relies on recommendations in order to find participants with sought-after skills applicable to the study (Patten, 2018). For this study, one well-qualified special education teacher was asked to recommend other special education teachers with knowledge and experience required for this study. In addition to sharing my contact information, the special

education teacher who participated in the pilot study then provided names and contact information of prospective participants. For this study, a snowball sampling method was ideal due to the size, and unknown locations of recommended participants.

An e-mail was sent to the prospective participants, asking them whether they would be interested in participating in a study regarding their perception on how students with IDD receive community recreation participation skills during transition planning. After receiving a response via e-mail from the prospective participant, a follow up e-mail was sent to determine a convenient date and time for a telephone interview. Demographic questions were asked first, followed by the thirteen-core questions.

Ethical Considerations

Approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) was determined prior to the study in November of 2019. For this study, participant confidentiality was respected, therefore, a verbal consent was required before the interview began. In addition, participants were informed of the research purpose, anticipated outcomes and procedure. Participants were also informed on their right to withdrawal from the interview at any time.

Strategies for Validating Findings

To reduce personal bias, member checks were utilized during and after interviews to strengthen the credibility, validity, and transferability of the study results (Creswell, 2018). After an interview was transcribed, an email was sent to each participant, asking them to review statements for accuracy and respond within one-week. If participants did not respond within one week, it was assumed the statements transcribed were accurate.

Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to outline the research method used in order to answer the research question. A discussion of the procedure, participants, data collection, and data analysis summarized the details of how the study was conducted and who participated in the study. A phenomenological approach was used to investigate teacher perceptions on how community recreation participation skills are acquired during transition planning. All participants of the study contributed to this approach by sharing their experiences, and perspectives on current related services and transition plans. The goal of Chapter IV is to provide the study results and illustrate that the methodology described in Chapter III was followed.

IV. FINDINGS

Introduction

This study focused on investigating teacher perceptions on how students with IDD acquire community recreation participation skills during transition planning. A lack in prior research and literature regarding this phenomenon piqued this researchers interest for investigating how teachers perceive current related services and transition plans. Investigating how students receive community recreation participation skills during transition planning revealed perceived lacks in and strengths of current transition plans, how students are receiving community recreation participation skills and a perceived need for recreational therapists as a related service. A qualitative framework was employed to design the study. A phenomenological approach was used to guide data collection and analysis. For the semi-structured interviews, the research question served as a guiding factor of the study's design: What perceptions do teachers have regarding how students with IDD acquire community recreation participation skills during transition planning?

The study included one-on-one, semi-structured interviews with eight special education teachers who met the criteria for this study. In responding to the questions, participants described their perceived strengths and weaknesses in current transition planning, and how community recreation participation skills are taught, measured and acquired. Participants also voiced their thoughts on whether they thought a recreation therapist would be beneficial to their students. The interview protocol allowed for rich, in-depth depiction of the participants' perceptions (Patten, 2018).

Description of the Sample

There were seven female participants and one male. Teaching experience varied, as three participants had fewer than five years of experience, and the other five participants had five to ten years of experience. All participants were certified special education teachers working in public schools across Michigan. Each participant reported teaching transition-aged students ranging from 15 to 26 years old. Five participants reported teaching mild cognitive impairment, two participants reported teaching moderate cognitive impairment and one participant reported teaching students with mild (moderate/severe) cognitive impairment. The size of each school varied from small to large; small meaning under 850 students and the largest having over 1,800 students. Data was collected from a total of six different public schools. The table below shows a description of the sample population.

Participants	Sex	Years Teaching/ Transition Planning	Population	Size of School
T1	F	10	MICI	<850
T2	F	6	MOCI	>1800
T3	F	1.5	MOCI	>1800
T4	F	3	MICI	>1800
T5	F	5	MICI	<850
T6	F	8	MICI	<850
T7	M	2	SCI	<850
T8	F	7	MICI	>1800

< = Less than 850 Students
 < = Greater than 1800 Students
 MOCI = Moderate Cognitive Impairment
 SCI = Severe Cognitive Impairment
 MICI = Mild Cognitive Impairment

The quality of each interview was contingent on the participants' ability to understand the questions and provide clear, in-depth information. The quality of each

interview was also contingent on the researcher's ability to read the questions in a clear way, and provide applicable probing questions. Answers varied, as some participants provided more in-depth answers and shared personal examples to depict their experiences. In contrast, some participants had difficulty describing examples of their experiences and perceptions, which resulted in short-answer responses to the interview questions.

Research Methodology Applied to the Data Analysis

This study collected data through open-ended, semi-structured interviews with participants selected through snowball sampling. The questionnaire was composed of 13 open-ended questions. The purpose of the questionnaire was for participants to express their perceptions on: (1) What skills are needed for successful community recreation participation, (2) How community recreation participation skills are taught, (3) How students receive and acquire community recreation participation skills, and (4) What measures are used to determine how a student has successfully acquired community recreation participation skills. The data were analyzed through descriptive coding [See Appendix A].

Results

Each theme will be reviewed individually in this section and will be identified and followed by a detailed description of the data. Further, quotes derived from participants during interviews will be used as primary supports to the findings.

Community Participation Skills Are Not Focused on Recreation

Findings revealed that there are various ways in which teachers measure transition-based skill acquisition. The interviews revealed that two out of the eight

participants employ “self-evaluation”, and six participants reported using the Enderle-Severson Transition Rating Scale-J (ESTR-J). During the interview, T7 was asked to explain what the ESTR-J is; she stated, “The ESTR-J is a tool used to assess student performance levels in five transition areas, and those five-transition areas are: Recreation and Leisure, Employment, Community Participation, Home Living and Postsecondary Education.” Further, it is important to note that five out of the six participants who use the ESTR-J stated the recreation and leisure category is often the area lacking focus and priority. Participants agreed that there is a heavier emphasis on employment and home living. During an interview, T2 shared,

“A lot of times, we are more focused on employment and home living. So, in my class, my students work on skills like washing clothes, sweeping, washing dishes and other various skills like recycling. We also focus on the next phase. So, for my students with mild cognitive impairment, we will do lesson plans that focus on employment post school. I always ask, “What do you want to do?” For example, I had a student who wanted to work in a daycare... so I had her make a list of skills needed for the job, how she was going to get to and from work, and things like that.”

Similarly, T7 shared, “I primarily focus on employment and skills needed to live independently. To me, those are the skills that worry me the most...I just want my students to have a sense of purpose in life once they leave my class, so to me, if my students can gain skills that make them employable that’s what is incredibly important to me”. Likewise, T5 noted,

“The ESTR-J is really a really phenomenal tool when it comes to assessing transition skills; however, I will say areas like community participation or leisure will often receive less focus as opposed to like, home living. I think that is just a result of time, staff and funding. I would absolutely love to take my students into the community all the time, or take them to places like the Y to engage in leisure, but I either do not have enough para-pros or a way to get my kids there because then that requires a bus. So, a lot of the times, we will just discuss in class “Okay, so how would we use the bus, what steps are needed to take the bus?” ... or “Okay, how would we ask a peer to go to the movies?”

In contrast, T6 voiced her opinion regarding current transition assessments. She stated, “I swear I am going to make a new assessment someday. I just don’t think all that is listed on them right now is realistic.” When probed to explain further, she stated,

“Like, for example, my students that have more moderate to severe cognitive impairment, postsecondary education is not as realistic as recreation and leisure. Those students are more likely to go to a movie, or even engage in recreation with a direct care worker or family member than go to college or trade school... so why should I still be assessing postsecondary education?”

Skills Necessary for Successful Community Participation Post-School

The essence of this theme demonstrates what teachers think to be significant in regard to community recreation participation. Participants suggested that community recreation participation can be challenging for their students, and is best developed from community-based programs. Corresponding with one another, participants deemed community recreation participation as skills necessary to successfully engage and

navigate the community. When comparing transcriptions, all eight participants voiced concerns about their students' ability to independently navigate and engage in the community post-school. Further, participants frequently expressed the need for their students to acquire and attain initiative, social, safety skills, independence and initiative skills, the likelihood of their students engaging in full community recreation participation post-school is limited. More specifically, during an interview, T2 stated:

“...Community participation is just like a part of everyday life...and it can just be super challenging for people with intellectual developmental disabilities...so that's why it's so important that we go out and do it. It can be the most basic skills, or more in-depth skills. I just want my students to grow and gain independence in the community...because the ultimate goal in the classroom is to help students prepare for after high school and how to be independent.”

Similarly, T3 illustrated important factors necessary for community participation, stating:

“...A matter of learning how to safely navigate the community, whether it's crossing a street, knowing how to use different things within the community... also just having the communication skills, knowing what to say to people in the community.... basically, a lot of initiative skills and being independent. Most of those skills are second nature to some of us, but a lot of our students with disabilities just need some more practice with navigating the community.”

T8 brought up an interesting point by stating,

“One of the major things I have noticed since becoming a special education teacher is the lack in ability for our friends with ID to simply identify a recreational activity. It is so challenging for them to sit down, and come up with

even one activity they like. That is one of the biggest concerns I have... truthfully, my students do not know the meaning of leisure...they think sitting at home in front of a television is the only option. We need to focus on this, and spend time on addressing and teaching our friends what all is out there...Special Olympics, YMCA, clubs, you know even youth groups...anything! Everyone involved in the IEP needs to spend time with students so they can identify, you know at least one activity they like to do.”

Safety skills were also commonly identified by the participants. Examples of safety skills included learning how to cross the street, understanding crosswalk signals and how to safely navigate public transportation. Each participant stressed how critical it is to work on safety skills; however, some participants mentioned that this skill can sometimes be difficult to focus on due to a wide range of needs.

Perceived Strengths and Weaknesses of Current Transition Plans

These two themes closely correlate with one another as they recognize and indicate how teachers perceive current related services. When asked if there are any gaps in their school’s transition plan, T2 stated, “I would say the focus on teaching safety skills is lacking”. When probed to elaborate, she explained,

“...Each member of our student’s IEP has their own specialty...you know the speech pathologist focuses on communication and the OT works on things like fine motor skills... but I feel like we don’t have someone who specializes in community-based skills like safety. I feel if we had someone on our team that their specialty was community-based instruction, I think that would have more

impact on our student's safety skill acquisition. I think we need someone to focus one-on-one or in a small group on safety skills.”

Participants agreed that a key element of transition programming was transportation and accessibility. Participants advocated for the need to focus on transportation during transition planning; however, these needs often go unmet. Participants explained that funding and lack of school support are key contributors to lack in opportunities for students to learn and practice using public transportation. When expressing concerns about funding, T1 shared,

“...I think if we had someone devoted in that area, there would obviously be much more opportunity and more exposure to the community and learning how to access it...and it would be more purposeful. But again, I think it comes down to funding and if you know Michigan school districts, they are cutting funds left and right which results in program and resource cuts for our students preparing to exit school that need it the most.”

All eight participants spoke frequently on social skills acquisition, identifying social skills as an important factor in community recreation participation. Participants discussed various strengths and weaknesses regarding how social skills are currently taught during transition planning. Seven out of the eight participants viewed the school speech pathologist as the most important factor in social skills acquisition. When asked what works well with their current transition plans, the first response for the seven participants was regarding the speech pathologist. However, it should be noted that when addressing social skill acquisition, T5 stated,

“I definitely think that if I also had a recreational therapist working with my students, I would see more improvements. When thinking of social skills, we immediately think speech-pathologist...but before I got my teacher certification, I was working at Hope Network, and we would bring individuals into the community and work on social cues...like how to order at McDonalds, or Culvers. We would also work on social cues at places like the grocery store, and encountering strangers. So, I think that if my school had both speech-path and a rec therapist, student social skills would flourish.”

When addressing how transition skills are currently taught, participants voiced a need for increased training. Five out of the eight participants shared that it is the para-professionals who typically take students into the community. Teacher 8 stated,

“Our para-professionals are awesome, they are a staple to the classroom...but I feel that we need someone whose area of expertise is within community-based education...you know, I think a lot of times the para-professionals are working with students on behavior in the community, making sure they are behaving well, so I think that is where skills go unmet...but if we had more trained staff to go on community outings, I feel we would see a difference in skill acquisition. But unfortunately, you know...that all goes back to the funding issue.”

Perceived Benefits of Recreation Therapy in Transition Planning Regarding

Student Community Recreation Participation Skill Acquisition:

Each participant expressed their beliefs on RT and how they believe a recreation therapist would benefit their students during transition planning. When asked, “If there was a therapist that solely focused on measurable gains in recreation skills, do you think

that would have an impact on community recreation participation?” six participants said “absolutely” and two participants said “of course”.

T1 expressed,

“...Again, I think it would be nothing but positive. I think if we had a therapist devoted to only recreation and leisure skills, I have no doubt that our young adults would have more exposure because that position would be purposeful. It would be more structured and invested into programming for those community-based opportunities”.

T3 stated,

“...Yes, so for my students that aren't able to identify hobbies, sports or basic leisure, there's really nothing for them to look forward to... so to have a rec therapist that would target these areas of concern would only be beneficial. A rec therapist would help create more of a meaningful, fulfilling life for them...like actually teach them the skills needed to purposefully engage in recreation, because again, most of what my students engage in is passive.”

T5 shared,

“...I definitely think a recreational therapist would have a positive impact on my students...they would be able to help generalize the skills of each student... and I don't know, I think that is not my expertise. You know, I went to school to learn how to teach this population, but recreation programming is not my specialty. I think having a recreational therapist to work on functional skills such as accessing the community and identifying interests and how to access those, that's their

expertise and they went to school for that. So, I just think their specialty or expertise to the rec and leisure aspect of transition planning would be awesome.”

Although each participant agreed that having a recreational therapist work with their students would be beneficial, it should be noted that the participants have not seen a recreational therapist work in the public-school system. Teacher 8 shared, “...I think we definitely need a rec therapist working in schools... I don't see why we're not doing that now.”

Another interesting statement made by T6 was, “I have never thought about a recreational therapist as being a part of student IEP’s... like, if we go swimming, the OT comes with us...but yeah...actually, I feel like a recreational therapist would be great for that”. Later in the interview, T6 also shared,

“You know, I will be very honest, it is so difficult for my students to independently choose a leisure activity... most of the time, it is very passive... like watching tv. If I could solely work on one thing the entire school year, it would be that by the time they exit school, they can name 3, 4, 5, or even 6 leisure interests or activities. Earlier you asked about if I ever run into my students outside of school...I do, but it is so far and few in between...but even then, they are with parents and their parents speak for them. Going off of that, even if they enjoy going to the store and that is leisure for them, we need to be working on their skills to independently go, independently talk to people, independently pay. So, to indirectly answer your question, I think we, as in the whole IEP team and students need a rec therapist that can solely focus on skills of that nature.”

Summary

The results section of this chapter intertwines both the experiences and perceptions of eight special education teachers. The transcribed interviews highlight commonalities and differences in their perceptions and experiences with the implementation of transition planning and current related services. The analysis of the participants' individual experiences led to the identification of four prominent themes. The four themes both prevalent and critical to understanding how students with IDD receive community recreation participation skills during transition planning. The goal of Chapter V is to provide a detailed discussion of the results, and illustrate implications for practice and future research.

V. CONCLUSION, DISCUSSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Introduction

The objective of this study attempted to understand the perceptions of teachers who have experience with transition planning. This chapter includes a discussion of the major findings in this study, as related to current literature. Furthermore, this study was designed to increase the understanding of, and possibly clarify gaps in transition planning and gain insight on how special education teachers perceive RT to be beneficial in association to community participation skills. The qualitative methodology used in this study offers a detailed investigation of the perceptions and experiences of eight special education teachers. The findings of this study offer a foundation to build on for future research to continue exploring this topic. The conclusions of the research findings are provided below.

Discussion of the Research Findings

This research sought to explore the perceptions of special education teachers regarding how students with IDD acquire community recreation participation skills during transition planning. The most prominent themes of the study are:

- Community participation skills are not focused on recreation.
- Skills necessary for successful community participation post-school
- Perceived strengths and weaknesses of current transition plans
- Perceived benefits of recreational therapy in transition planning regarding student community recreation participation skill acquisition

The participants in this study believed that a vital component of student success post-school is acquiring “a lot of initiative skills and being independent”. In addition, T7 also emphasized how such skills are second nature to us, but for individuals with disabilities,

it is challenging, thus the need for more instruction and practice during transition planning. Similarly, participants identified safety skills as a necessary component to community recreation participation. For example, teachers perceived learning how to cross the street, understanding crosswalk signals and how to safely navigate public transportation as critical skills to teach during transition planning. However, participants discussed that there is a lack in time, funding or staff to adequately work on these skills. With this, it should be noted that these skills are within the scope of RT. Likewise, King et al., (2012) stated, “recreational therapists are ideally suited to teach life skills because they specialize in group dynamics, have experience delivering services in natural environments and are trained to work in and with the community.”

Participants spoke often on the importance of community-based instruction for transition-aged special education students. Participants agreed that community-based instruction supports necessary skills for post-school success such as safety, accessibility and appropriate social skills. Participants also placed heavy emphasis on skills such as identifying resources and utilizing public transportation, recognizing them as critical components to post-school success and community engagement. The emphasis on identifying resources and utilizing public transportation are consistent with previous research. Similarly, Buttimer & Tierney (2005) found that not being able to independently travel or use transportation was a major barrier to individuals with IDD.

Findings of this study reveal that teachers perceive a need for RT during transition planning for students with IDD. However, the interviews indicated that teachers were not aware that RT can be utilized in student IEP. During the interviews, it was interesting to hear both recreation and leisure, and community participation are currently being

assessed- but not by a recreation therapist. Further, the interviews revealed that teachers view only the occupational therapist (OT) and speech-pathologist as related service. Previous research similarly found a lack of awareness of RT as a related service, poor support of recreation and leisure services, low advocacy for inclusion of RT and challenges with RT as a related service becoming approved by the public-school system (Hawkins et al., 2012). These findings insinuate a need for further advocacy by recreation therapists; it should be reiterated that RT has been listed as a related service since 1997 (P.L.94-142).

Findings also suggest that although the participants do not think there are any gaps in transition planning, underlying gaps became evident when addressing how teachers are assessing transition areas. Interviews revealed that areas such as community participation and recreation and leisure sometimes do not receive the level of focus needed. Participants identified lack in staff, resources and funding to be a limiting factor in the implementation of community-based programs. Participants voiced a need for increased training, revealing that in addition to the teacher, it is often the para-professionals who take students into the community. Likewise, participants expressed a need for more trained staff. Findings also revealed that teachers think they are not sufficiently trained to focus on functional recreation skills, emphasizing that recreation is not their area of expertise.

Interviews suggested that transition areas such as employment and home living are placed as high priority. For example, one participant stated “we actually don't really have anything that does that. We teach community involvement in our classroom, but our district doesn't really offer resources to do much with community involvement. There's

no like organized activities really, so I feel like that is a reason why it often gets second priority.” Similarly, another participant stated, “you know, I can only do so much from the classroom, so for me, I really focus on skills like washing clothes or dishes.” The literature reviewed is consistent with this finding as Block and colleagues (2013) indicated that special education teachers are not familiar with, or do not have the training to teach recreation programs, and special education teachers would not feel comfortable teaching their students with disabilities the skills necessary to engage in community-based recreation activities. Block and Colleagues (2013) suggested this may be due to lack in awareness on how to appropriately adapt to, or modify the environment; for example, using adaptive equipment. Block and Colleagues recognize a need to address current programming, proposing that inclusion programs implemented by a trained professional in the school and community setting would be one way to decrease community-based recreation barriers. This finding is consistent with the current study, as the participants voiced their perceived need for trained experts in recreation and leisure to implement community-based programs to students in transition planning.

This study provided evidence that the teachers in this study perceived a need for RT in transition planning, and a need to focus more on skills necessary to navigate the community such as using transportation, money management, accessing and understanding how to utilize community recreation facilities/ parks, safety skills and appropriate communication. These skills are parallel to those identified by ATRA. Further, it is recognized by ATRA (2017) that within the least restrictive environment for transitioning students with disabilities, a recreation therapist can deliver social skill

training, education on the use of local transportation, identification of environmental and social barriers, money management, self-management skills, and awareness of leisure.

Further, this study provided evidence that the lack in utilization of RT in transition planning could be a potential gap in transition planning. Participants in this study frequently voiced a perceived need for more trained staff; specifically trained to implement and focus on the recreation and leisure section in student transition plans. Similarly, literature reviewed suggests a need for more trained staff to focus on community-based instruction. If utilized as a related service, a recreation therapist could work on skills that currently lack focus such as recreation and leisure. Recreation therapists would have the ability to assess each student, and create individualized goals and objectives for each student (ATRA, 2017). Creating treatment plans based on individual needs would provide opportunity to focus and strengthen skills necessary for successful community engagement post-school. Participants in the study voiced concern that when there are community outings, individual needs are not being focused on, thus needs go unmet. Utilizing a recreation therapist would provide the opportunity for students to receive individualized, and focused support that foster community-based skills needed for purposeful post-school recreation participation.

Implications for Practice

Previous research and results of the current study identify misconceptions regarding RT profession. This is a key factor to the lack in utilization of RT in transition planning. For example, Hawkins et al. (2012) suggested that misconceptions begin with lack in awareness among teachers and parents regarding the CTRS credential, that RT is listed as a related service under IDEA, or not fully understanding the RT practice.

According to IDEA, a recreation therapist can work to improve physical functioning, cognitive functioning which can include problem solving and decision-making skills, behavioral functioning and provide instruction in recreation/ leisure education that foster opportunity for students to acquire skills necessary for independent recreational participation (IDEA, 2004).

Recreation therapists can advocate for the use of their practice by presenting research at professional conferences such as the ATRA. In addition, recreation therapists should advocate for their practice at public-school meetings and to parents of current clients. While advocating at public school meetings and to parents, it is important for recreation therapists emphasize that by law, RT is recognized and listed as a related service under IDEA. In addition, it is important to emphasize the scope of RT within IDEA; for example, the assessments in which recreational therapists use. More specifically, assessments such as the Community Integration Program (CIP), FOX, Leisure Diagnostic Battery (LDB), or the Bus Utilization Skills Assessment which are all geared toward improving skills necessary for accessing and navigating the community. Active and persistent efforts in advocating for RT in the school system is a simple, yet progressive step toward the utilization of RT in the school system. In addition, active outreach will further the knowledge of professionals and individuals who have great influence on what services are provided to students receiving special education.

Future Research

The findings highlighted several directions for future research. First, future research should be conducted that measures the level of community recreation participation post-school among students who have received RT during their transition

plan. It would be most insightful to measure years one through five post-school, and compare data to schools that do not offer RT in their transition program. Further, it would be critical to collect data from more than two schools, with the same control variables such as socioeconomic status. This study would require the researcher to develop an appropriate objective measuring tool that can be used to collect data while students are in transition planning and post-school. Data could reveal possible associations between level of engagement in the community among students who received RT. This would be a huge undertaking, but results would reveal quantifiable data that suggests RT should be in the school system. One of the challenges with this study would be the development of valid metrics to assess community recreation participation. The results of this qualitative study indicate that teachers perceive a value in adding RT into transition planning. However, the results indicate a need for quantifiable data that can be utilized in public outreach in education. For example, outreach to administration and policy makers that have heavy influence on inclusion and funding of RT services in the public-school system.

In addition, it would be interesting for future research to investigate how parents perceive the benefits of RT in regard to their child's transition plan. Semi-structured interviews could be conducted to investigate their perceptions on whether they notice increases in recreation, independent or social skill acquisition after receiving RT during transition planning. Parent(s) are an integral part of the IEP team; they contribute in creating measurable goals and make important decisions regarding how their child will be taught. Therefore, data collected from parent(s) could be used to further support the need for RT as a related service during transition planning.

Summary

This thesis has presented an examination of the perceptions of special education teachers who teach students with IDD that are in transition planning. The purpose of this chapter was to provide an overall summary of the data results introduced in Chapter IV, followed by a discussion of the results relative to each interview and the literature reviewed. In addition, the implications for practice, and recommendations for further research were discussed.

The emergent themes identified during this study suggest that the participants perceive RT to be beneficial during transition planning. The participants in this study highlighted gaps and needs within current transition plans such as lack in awareness regarding RT, implementing recreation and leisure based instruction and lack of trained staff and time. With this, it is important to recognize that each of the perceived gaps and needs are within the scope of RT.

APPENDIX SECTION

Appendix A: Informed Consent

This email message is an approved request for participation in research that has been approved by the Texas State Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Dear _____,

My name is Carissa Stratton. I am a graduate student at Texas State University. I am conducting a research study to investigate teacher perceptions on how students with IDD acquire community recreation participation skills in transition planning. More specifically, this study will explore teacher perceptions on: What skills are needed for successful community recreation participation, how community recreation participation skills are taught, how students receive and acquire community recreation participation skills and what measures are used to determine how a student has successfully acquired community recreation participation skills. You are being asked to participate in a semi-structured telephone interview because you have been referred by someone you know because you meet the criteria for this project. If you are interested in participating in this research, please contact me at cls359@txstae.edu to set up a convenient date and time for a telephone interview.

Participation is voluntary. The interview will be audio recorded and take approximately 30 minutes to complete.

This study involves no foreseeable serious risks. It is asked that you try to answer all questions; however, if there are any items that make you uncomfortable, or that you would prefer to skip, please let me know so we can skip to the next question. Your responses are confidential.

There will be no direct benefit to you from participating in this study. However, the information that you provide will offer various perspectives that further our understanding of, and possibly clarify gaps in transition planning.

Reasonable efforts will be made to keep the personal information in your research record private and confidential. Any identifiable information obtained in connection with this study will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. The members of the research team and the Texas State University Office of Research Compliance (ORC) may access the data. The ORC monitors research studies to protect the rights and welfare of research participants. Your name will not be used in any written reports or publications which result from this research. Data will be kept in a secure, locked location for three years (per federal regulations) after the study is completed and then destroyed.

This project [6873] was approved by the Texas State IRB on [11/20/2019]

Pertinent questions or concerns about the research, research participants' rights, and/or research-related injuries to participants should be directed to the IRB chair, Dr. Denise Gobert 512-716-2652 –dgobert@txstate.edu or to Monica Gonzales, IRB Regulatory Manager 512-245-2334- meg201@txstate.edu

Appendix B: Interview Questionnaire

1. How would you describe community participation skills to someone who is unfamiliar with this concept?
2. Based on your district offerings, do you feel there are any gaps in current related services that you wish were covered that target community participation skills?
3. In your experience, which related service(s) have the greatest impact on community participation skills among students with IDD?
4. How are community participation skills taught to students with IDD who are in transition planning?
5. What skills are needed to be successful in community recreation participation for students with IDD?
6. How are community participation skills identified on the transition plan?
7. Describe what measures are used to determine if a student has acquired these skills?
8. To what extent do you see students outside of the classroom that is not a school trip?
9. If you have ever run into a student in the community, how often is a student with peer(s) or family? Regardless of who they were with, to what degree do you feel that student was socializing outside of a specific task?
10. Based on your experience, please describe what works well with current transition plans?

11. What do you wish current related services would do that would have a better impact on your graduates regarding community participation?
12. If there was a therapist that solely focused on measurable gains in recreation skills, do you think that would have an impact on community participation?
13. Can you tell me what you think recreation therapy could do to improve community participation? What impact do you think a recreation therapist would have on your students?

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