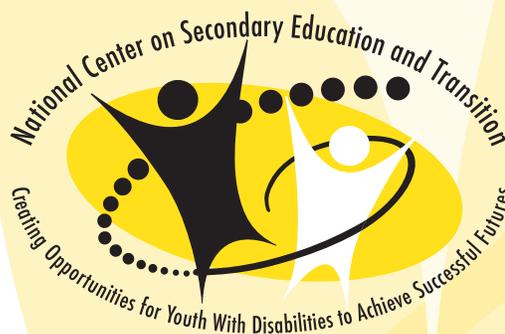


ESSENTIAL TOOLS

*Improving Secondary Education and
Transition for Youth With Disabilities*

Cultural and
Linguistic Diversity:
Implications for
Transition Personnel



The College of Education
& Human Development

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA



U.S. Office of Special
Education Programs

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Transition for Youth With Disabilities*

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Linguistic Diversity:
Implications for
Transition Personnel

October 2005

*Prepared by:
David Leake
Rhonda Black*

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For further information about NCSET, please contact:

David R. Johnson, Ph.D., Director
Institute on Community Integration (UCEDD)
University of Minnesota
102 Pattee Hall, 150 Pillsbury Drive SE
Minneapolis, MN 55455
t. 612.624.6300
f. 612.624.8279

NCSET was established *to create opportunities for youth with disabilities to achieve successful futures.* Headquartered at the Institute on Community Integration, University of Minnesota, NCSET provides technical assistance and disseminates information focused on four major areas of national significance for youth with disabilities and their families:

- Providing students with disabilities with improved access to and success in the secondary education curriculum.
- Ensuring that students achieve positive postschool results in accessing postsecondary education, meaningful employment, independent living, and participation in all aspects of community life.
- Supporting student and family participation in educational and postschool decision-making and planning.
- Improving collaboration and system linkages at all levels through the development of broad-based partnerships and networks at the national, state, and local levels.

National Center on Secondary Education and Transition

Institute on Community Integration (UCEDD)
University of Minnesota
6 Pattee Hall, 150 Pillsbury Drive SE
Minneapolis, MN 55455
t. 612.624.2097
f. 612.624.9344
e. ncset@umn.edu
w. www.ncset.org

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PART I — Essential Tool Overview

Introduction

Youth with disabilities are likely to face greater challenges than their peers without disabilities as they transition from high school to independent living, postsecondary education, or employment. These challenges are often even greater for youth with disabilities of culturally and linguistically diverse heritage. The phrase *culturally and linguistically diverse* (CLD) primarily refers to people of color who are not Caucasian or White, but it can also include people who are Caucasian or White yet are outside the mainstream of American culture. In this *Essential Tool* the term *American mainstream* refers to the majority of people in the United States who identify with Caucasian/White American cultural traditions and values and speak English as their first language. Caucasians who might be outside the American mainstream include immigrants from Europe who have limited English proficiency or people who live in impoverished communities.

Many Americans of Caucasian/White and CLD heritage share similar lifestyles and enjoy a relatively high standard of living. However, there are good reasons for making a distinction between these cultures. One is that CLD groups have historically been marginalized, discriminated against, or excluded from political and economic power. Although much progress has been made, numerous studies indicate that CLD groups score lower on socioeconomic measures than White Americans. This is also true for CLD youth with disabilities, who generally have less successful transition outcomes than their White peers, according to the National Longitudinal Transition Study of Special Education Students, a major research project funded by the U.S. Department of Education. Conducted from 1985 through 1990, the study followed more than 8,000 youth with disabilities across the country as they transitioned from high school.¹ The study indicated that CLD youth with disabilities achieved significantly poorer outcomes after high school compared to White youth with disabilities, including lower employment rates, lower average wages, and lower rates of continuing their educations (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996). The study authors concluded “that minority status may present further obstacles to successful transitions beyond those that youth experience because of disability alone” (p. 410).

This *Essential Tool* summarizes current research about transition issues and CLD youth with disabilities. It also offers information on how transition personnel can effectively support these youth by building on their strengths and enhancing natural supports available within their families and communities. This tool offers several guiding principles. One is *cultural competence*, which means that services and supports are provided in ways that are appropriate and sensitive to the cultural nuances and expectations of youth and their families.

However, transition personnel should not assume that a youth’s membership in a particular ethnic or racial group indicates particular values, goals, or preferences. The great range of diversity within ethnic and racial groups is evidence that stereotypes are almost certainly inaccurate for individuals of any age. Cultural competence therefore requires adherence to another guiding principle—*individualization*. From the perspective of this *Essential Tool*, cultural competence is not something that transition personnel can acquire and then apply to all youth and families. Rather, it must be redeveloped individually with each youth and family.

In order to understand and work effectively within the cultural environment of an individual youth, transition personnel must find out basic information about that person and his or her family as well as their heritage and culture. What are their hopes, dreams, strengths, and challenges? What is the youth’s place within the family and community? With basic knowledge about the youth’s ethnic/racial group and cultural background, transition personnel are better able to recognize cultural themes and ask relevant questions in a culturally sensitive manner.

It is important to establish good working relationships when making contact with family members. It is also important to recognize that families from ethnic/racial groups might be uncomfortable working with personnel

¹ This research is currently being repeated using a similar study design from 2000 through 2005. A description of the National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 and free reports of the results as they become available may be found at <http://www.nts2.org>. Most of these reports include sections describing the results according to ethnic/racial categories.

from schools and other agencies. Again, cultural competence is essential to create a team atmosphere in which CLD family members can feel comfortable and be effective members.

Another guiding principle is *natural supports*. In contrast to formal supports provided by paid personnel, natural supports are provided by community members in the course of daily life. Natural supports may be provided by relatives, peers, community volunteers, clubs, religious organizations, etc. Natural supports are important because they promote the inclusion of youth with disabilities in the community, potentially remain in place after professionals leave the scene, and are often more easily acceptable to youth and families than formal supports provided by agency personnel.

This *Essential Tool* also highlights the guiding principle of *building on strengths* in order to address challenges. This principle is an antidote to focusing on a person's deficits. Focusing on deficits is likely to be less effective than a strengths-based approach and may also result in unintended consequences of reducing confidence and motivation. A major problem with focusing on "fixing" a person's deficits is that what could be lacking in the broader environment may be ignored. Building on strengths means identifying and nurturing interests, skills, and personal relationships that help youth with disabilities achieve their transition goals.

Key Questions

The following key questions can be asked: What cultural and other strengths might CLD youth with disabilities and their families have that can enhance transition? What are common obstacles to successful transitions for CLD youth with disabilities? How can transition personnel use this knowledge to more effectively support CLD youth with disabilities to achieve their desired outcomes after high school?

Intended Audience

This *Essential Tool* is designed to help answer the key questions for teachers, counselors, transition specialists, and other personnel involved in transition planning and services for CLD youth with disabilities. This topic is important because demographic trends project that the number of CLD students in the United States will increase from about one-third of total students currently to about one-half by 2040 (Archer, 2000).

How This Essential Tool Is Organized

This *Essential Tool* consists of parts described below that focus on cultural and other issues that may influence the transition process for CLD youth with disabilities. Each part also has individual "tools" that offer practical support and guidance for transition personnel. The tools either condense important information in a concise format or provide guidance for conducting key transition activities. These tools can be photocopied and distributed as needed.

PART II: CLD Youth with Disabilities in Transition

This part includes an overview of the primary ethnic/racial groups in the United States with a focus on information related to disability and education. It also summarizes challenges that tend to be particularly significant for CLD youth with disabilities and briefly describes how transition personnel can help address these challenges.

PART III: A Continuum of "Individualistic" and "Collectivistic" Values

This part explores the contrasts between "individualistic" values that tend to be held within the American mainstream and the "collectivistic" values that tend to be more common among CLD groups. An explanation follows of how the transition process and goals of youth with disabilities and their families may be shaped by their cultural values and how values may influence the concept of "self-determination."

PART IV: The Culturally Sensitive Individualization of Services and Supports

This part explores the concept of cultural competence and how transition personnel can individualize services and supports through the use of proven strategies such as cultural reciprocity, person-centered planning, and resource mapping.

Resources Available on the Internet

At the end of the *Essential Tool*, additional resources are described that provide more extensive information on relevant topics and are available on the Internet.

Ensuring Practices Presented Are Evidence-Based

The information summarized in this *Essential Tool* was gathered through a range of professional activities over the past 15 years, including preparing and teaching courses for pre-service and in-service professionals in special education and counseling/rehabilitation, conducting research in the areas of transition and diversity, and the authors' attendance of conferences on special education, transition, diversity, and related topics. Also an extensive search of the published literature and the Internet sought resources on disabilities, cultural and linguistic diversity, and transition, which are the three key topics addressed by this *Essential Tool*. The results are summarized in a forthcoming article (Leake et al., in press) and are also available at a Web site (<http://www.cld.hawaii.edu>) in the form of an annotated bibliography of more than 400 references and links to more than 200 relevant Web sites. In writing this *Essential Tool*, the authors carefully focused on research- and evidence-based practices.

PART II — CLD Youth with Disabilities in Transition

Introduction

Defining and labeling ethnic/racial groups is often a controversial topic. Members of a group may reject the definitions and labels by outsiders and may also disagree among themselves about what they should be called. This *Essential Tool* uses U.S. Census Bureau ethnic/racial categories, because socioeconomic data collected by the federal government is almost always reported according to these categories. The categories are White (non-Hispanic), Hispanic, Black (non-Hispanic), Asian/Pacific Islander, and American Indian/Alaskan Native (the categories are listed in descending order of population size).

Of course, within each racial/ethnic category there are numerous distinct subgroups, each with a unique historical and cultural background. There are nearly 300 American Indian tribal groups; the Hispanic category includes people of different racial backgrounds (including Black and White) from regions spanning thousands of miles; and the Asian/Pacific Islander category combines persons with roots in the highly diverse regions of South Asia, Southeast Asia, East Asia, and the Pacific Islands. As might be expected, one problem with ethnic/racial categories is that they can obscure important differences among subgroups. For example, on a variety of socioeconomic measures (e.g., education, income, health, etc.), Asians as a group tend to score above the U.S. national average while Pacific Islanders tend to score below the average. However, these differences become hidden when the two groups are combined in the reporting of data, and their strengths and needs can become obscured.

In addition to the great diversity among subgroups within the U.S. Census Bureau's ethnic/racial categories, there are many variables among individuals within subgroups on a wide range of attributes, such as degree of identification with their traditional culture versus American mainstream culture and their facility with standard English—an estimated 18% of the U.S. population speak a language other than English at home (U.S. Census Bureau, 2003a). These considerations strongly support the idea that individualization is an essential ingredient for cultural competence. At the same time, however, the process of individualizing services and supports will be enhanced when transition personnel are aware of and understand the broader cultural context in which individual youth and their families live.

This part of the *Essential Tool* provides a broad statistical comparison of primary ethnic/racial groups, followed by descriptions of challenges that tend to be more serious for CLD youth. These challenges tend to be most significant for youth and families living in conditions of poverty and marginalization, whether they are of White or CLD heritage (Greene & Nefsky, 1999). CLD populations, however, tend to have much higher rates of poverty.

Statistical Comparisons of Ethnic/Racial Groups

Table 1 (see next page) provides a statistical snapshot of U.S. ethnic/racial groups on a variety of population, disability, and education indicators. Two differences stand out between Whites and the CLD groups as a whole. One is that all of the CLD groups have median ages much lower than Whites. This means that larger percentages of CLD group members are of school age. In addition, projections of the U.S. population for 2020 and 2050 indicate that CLD groups are growing at a faster rate than Whites. These population trends have considerable significance for educators as the proportion of CLD students grows in classrooms across the country. As schools serve a growing number of CLD students, they will need to enhance their cultural competence in order to support positive outcomes for all their students.

Table 1. Comparisons by Race/Ethnicity on Selected Indicators

Proportion of Total U.S. Population Indicators <i>(Columns total approx. 100% across rows)</i>	White	Hispanic	Black	Asian/ Pacific I.	Am. Indian/ Nat. Alaskan
% of U.S. population, 2000 ¹	69.1%	12.5%	12.1%	3.6%	0.7%
% of U.S. population, projected for 2020 ²	63.8%	17.0%	12.8%	5.7%	0.8%
% of U.S. population, projected for 2050 ²	52.8%	24.3%	13.2%	8.9%	0.8%
% of students from 6-21 years old in special education, 2000-01 ³	62.9%	17.5%	14.8%	3.8%	1.0%
% of all postsecondary students, 2000 ⁴	67.8%	9.5%	11.3%	6.4%	1.0%
% of 4-year college students, 2000 ⁴	71.1%	6.9%	10.6%	6.3%	0.9%
% of 2-year college students, 2000 ⁴	64.0%	14.2%	12.4%	6.8%	1.3%
% of full-time postsecondary faculty, 1997 ⁵	86.3%	2.7%	5.0%	5.7%	0.4%
% of full-time postsecondary administrators, 1997 ⁵	85.9%	2.8%	8.9%	1.9%	0.5%
Within-Group Proportion Indicators <i>(Columns independent of each other)</i>	White	Hispanic	Black	Asian/ Pacific I.	Am. Indian/ Nat. Alaskan
Median age in years, 2000 ¹	37.7	25.8	30.2	32.5	28.0
% below poverty level, 2001 ⁴	9.9%	21.4%	22.7%	10.2%	24.5%
% of students from 5-15 years old who have disability, 2000 ⁶	5.6%	5.4%	7.0%	3.0%	7.7%
% of persons from 16-64 years old who have a disability, 2000 ⁶	16.8%	24.0%	26.4%	17.0%	27.0%
% of students 6 to 21 years old in special education, 2000-01 ³	8.0%	6.8%	10.9%	4.0%	11.0%
% of college students reporting disability, 1995-96 ⁷	6.2%	4.1%	3.4%	1.9%	13.4%
% obtaining high school diploma, 1999-2000 ³	62.5%	51.8%	39.7%	56.3%	48.2%
% dropping out of high school, 1999-2000 ³	26.5%	33.1%	37.0%	19.3%	44.0%
% of persons 18-24 years old (prime college age), 2000 ¹	8.9%	13.4%	11.0%	11.2%	11.6%
% of high school completers ages 18-24 enrolled in college, 2001 ⁸	64.2%	51.7%	54.6%	n/a	n/a
% graduating from 4-year college within 6 years, 1998 ⁵	59%	48%	37%	66%	37%

Note. In comparing numbers, it should be remembered that different sources may use different definitions of ethnic/racial categories and different methods of determining membership in categories.

¹ U.S. Census Bureau (2001b).

² U.S. Census Bureau (2000).

³ U.S. Department of Education (2002).

⁴ Wirt et al. (2003).

⁵ Harvey (2001).

⁶ U.S. Census Bureau (2003b).

⁷ Horn and Berktold (1999).

⁸ Snyder and Hoffman (2003).

The second major difference between White and CLD groups is that CLD groups (with the exception of Asians/Pacific Islanders) have much higher rates of poverty than Whites. According to the 2000 census, about 9.9% of Whites and 10.2% of Asians/Pacific Islanders live below the poverty level, compared to 21.4% of Hispanics, 22.7% of Blacks, and 24.5% of American Indians/Alaskan Natives (Wirt et al., 2003). Poverty has a negative impact on a host of factors relevant to academic achievement (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002). Poverty also is associated with higher disability rates across all age groups due to such factors as limited availability or accessibility of health insurance and medical care, including prenatal care, greater exposure to environmental toxins, and higher likelihood of employment in physically dangerous jobs (Fujiara & Yamaki, 1999; Smart & Smart, 1997).

The poverty rate for students with disabilities has been estimated as 28% compared to 8% for those without disabilities (U.S. Census Bureau, 2001a). The National Academy of Sciences conducted a comprehensive analysis of the literature on special and gifted education placements (Donovan & Cross, 2002). The authors concluded that overrepresentation of some CLD groups in certain special education categories, and underrepresentation in gifted education programs, is primarily related to higher poverty rates. At the postsecondary level (college, community or technical college, or trade school), it appears that many barriers to education success for CLD persons with disabilities also are related more to the effects of poverty than to cultural or linguistic factors. For example, one study found lack of money to be the greatest “contextual barrier” faced by CLD families seeking access to postsecondary education for their children (Geenen, Powers, Vasquez, & Bersani, 2003). Another example of a poverty-related barrier is that residents of high poverty neighborhoods are the least likely to have computers and Internet access at home (Wilhelm, Carmen, & Reynolds, 2002).

Barriers to postsecondary education faced by many CLD youth with disabilities may limit their transition options. Their relatively low rates of attending postsecondary education programs are reflected in Table 2, which shows that the proportion of college students reporting a disability is considerably lower for each of the CLD groups (with the exception of American Indians/Alaskan Natives) compared to Whites. In addition, compared to their White counterparts, CLD college students with disabilities are more likely to abandon their studies or to take longer to complete a postsecondary program (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996).

Table 2. Percentage of 1995-96 Undergraduates Who Reported a Disability, by Race/Ethnicity*

Race-Ethnicity	% Reporting Disability	Disability Type					
		Visual	Hearing	Speech	Orthopedic	Learning	Other
White, non-Hispanic	6.2%	15.8%	17.1%	1.8%	22.6%	31.3%	20.6%
Hispanic	4.1%	19.1%	17.5%	16.3%	17.3%	23.7%	14.6%
Black, non-Hispanic	3.4%	11.7%	11.3%	1.7%	31.3%	18.0%	34.2%
Asian/Pacific Islander	1.9%	--**	--	--	--	--	--
American Indian/Native Alaskan	13.4%	--	--	--	--	--	--
All students	5.5%	16.3%	16.3%	3.0%	22.9%	29.2%	21.2%

*Percentages for “disability type” do not add up to 100% because some students reported multiple disabilities.

**(--) Sample size too small for a reliable estimate.

Adapted from Horn and Berkotold (1999), Table 2, p. 8.

Strengths to Build On for Transition Success

There has been a paradigm shift in a range of social service fields, including special education, regarding the idea of building on strengths rather than focusing on deficits (Dunst, Trivette, & Deal, 1994; Osher, 1996). The core assumptions underlying strengths-based approaches include:

- All youth have strengths;
- The motivation of youth may be enhanced when others point out their strengths; and
- Failure of a youth to acquire a skill does not mean a deficit but instead indicates that opportunities and appropriate instruction to obtain the skill have not been provided (Epstein & Sharma, 1998).

Positive behavioral supports are an example of a strengths-based approach for people with severe disorders whose behavior limits their successful functioning in integrated settings. This approach works best when functional assessment is used to identify and address factors surrounding the individual that contribute to the behavior problem. These factors could be how the education or service system works, how the classroom or other setting is organized, or a lack of specific skills on the part of service personnel. In addition, the individual’s strengths (e.g.,

special abilities, hobbies, preferences, personal relationships, etc.) are identified and used as the basis for promoting desired behaviors and replacing negative ones (Warger, 1999). Positive behavior supports have been found to produce better outcomes than trying to reduce negative behaviors by using aversive techniques such as seclusion and restraint (National Task Force on Behavior Management, 2001).

What strengths do CLD youth with disabilities commonly have that can be used to support transition success? One strength that tends to be prominent across all ethnic/racial groups is family affiliation. When the family is working well, its members support and look out for each other, and together they build up and share the benefits of what is called “social capital” (Harper, 2001). Social capital refers to aspects of the social environment that people can use to improve or sustain how they are doing in important life domains, such as health, education, employment, housing, and transportation. Social capital consists of such things as formal and informal social networks, group membership, trust, reciprocity, and civic engagement. Most of the social capital available to youth is usually what has been developed by their families by establishing relationships with various individuals, other families, and organizations in their community. The greater the level of social capital, the greater the capacity of youth and families to receive and share information, advice, financial support, emotional support, etc. Research indicates that people with higher levels of social capital are more likely to be “housed, healthy, hired, and happy” (Woolcock, 2001, p. 12).

Challenges Commonly Faced by CLD Youth with Disabilities in Transition

The remainder of this part of the *Essential Tool* describes a number of challenges that tend to be especially difficult for youth with disabilities who also come from CLD backgrounds. Transition personnel should be aware of these challenges so they are better able to recognize and address them. Some of the most common and significant challenges are briefly described below, along with suggestions for addressing them. These challenges are typically most significant for youth from low-income backgrounds of all ethnicities. In addressing these challenges, transition personnel are actually helping to increase the social capital of youth and their families and communities. The specific challenges described relate to social inclusion, self-determination, self-advocacy, academic achievement, high school completion, English proficiency, technology access, and financing postsecondary education. Table 3 provides a summary of the challenges. Additional resources available on the Internet are described at the end of the *Essential Tool*.

Social Inclusion

What many students like best about high school is being with their friends and having an active social life. Students who are able to develop and maintain strong social networks in high school are likely to do so after high school as well, and thereby gain natural supports for achieving desired transition outcomes (Halpern, 1994; Sitlington, Clark, & Kolstoe, 2000). However, as most school personnel are well aware, many students with disabilities have trouble making and keeping friends, due to such factors as lacking social skills or being ignored by nondisabled peers (Forness & Kavale, 1996; Vaughn, Elbaum, & Schumm, 1996).

Students with disabilities who also come from CLD backgrounds may be at even greater risk of social isolation due to the “double whammy” of membership in two minority groups (Hollins, Downer, Farquarson, Oyepeju, & Kopper, 2002). Some CLD youth may face discrimination because they behave in ways that are natural and accepted in their home and community, but that are not considered acceptable at school (Cartledge & Loe, 2001). A related factor is that CLD youth, as well as White youth from low-income families, may also lack exposure to and experience in “mainstream” social situations, and therefore lack knowledge and confidence in such situations (Middleton, 1999). This challenge may be even greater for those who lack command of standard English, because they grew up speaking another language, or nonstandard English, at home (Salend & Salinas, 2003). In addition, some CLD youth develop an “oppositional” social identity and alienation from the American mainstream culture as the result of past experiences of discrimination (Ogbu, 1990) and tend to interact only with peers within their own CLD group, thus limiting their social network options (Clark, 1991).

Social isolation may have a negative effect on school engagement and academic performance and may also lead those who feel isolated to form “deviant” peer groups that encourage members to engage in oppositional, de-

linquent, and/or risky behaviors (Dodge et al., 2003). As a result, youth are more likely to drop out or be expelled, and therefore lose opportunities to gain the attitudes, skills, and knowledge needed for successful transition from high school (Walker, Colvin, & Ramsey, 1995).

Implications for Transition Personnel Regarding Social Inclusion

Many high school students with disabilities have solid social skills and active social lives. However, if youth with disabilities feel socially isolated in high school, then they are likely to also have difficulties establishing supportive social networks after high school, and therefore less likely to achieve positive outcomes in college, at work, or in the community (Halpern, 1994; Sitlington, Clark, & Kolstoe, 2000). In taking an individualized approach, transition personnel need to work with each youth and his or her family to understand the basic reasons for social isolation and to identify strengths and resources that can help achieve greater social inclusion (Black & Ornellas, 2001). Unfortunately, this is often a difficult problem for which there are no easy solutions.

Teaching social skills to youth is often recommended. A number of prepackaged programs are available, offering features such as role-playing activities or videotapes that model skills. However, when the results of a large number of studies on the effectiveness of social skills programs are combined and analyzed (an approach called meta-analysis), these programs seem to lead to small gains, if any, in social skills (Gresham, Sugai, & Horner, 2001; Quinn, Kavale, Mathur, Rutherford, & Forness, 1999). One possible reason for the lack of positive outcomes is that the specific skill deficits and learning strengths of students may not have been well matched to program content. In other words, the more that social skills training is individualized, the more likely it is to be effective. With regard to CLD youth, lack of cultural competence in instruction is another possible reason for ineffectiveness of social skills programs. Cartledge (1996) provides a good overview of how to enhance cultural competence in social skills instruction such as through a cooperative (group) learning approach, because it more closely matches how learning tends to occur in CLD communities.

One way to achieve individualization and provide intensive support is to use a paraprofessional (such as an educational aide or a skills trainer) to work one-on-one with the youth on specific skills and in real situations as often as possible. This can include paraprofessionals with similar cultural backgrounds to the students, who can provide special help in bridging two cultures. However, this option is expensive and likely to be available only for a limited number of youth with more severe disabilities (Mueller & Murphy, 2001). The use of mentors can be a cost-effective alternative approach that also supports individualization (Rhodes, Grossman, & Resch, 2000). Mentors may be peers, adult volunteers, or school staff. They are not likely to be specially trained in the area of social skills. Rather, they can support youth to gain social skills by establishing a relationship of mutual trust and respect, so that youth naturally want to imitate the attitudes and skills modeled by their mentors. In fact, mentors have great potential to support youth in addressing all the challenges discussed in the next sections (Stader & Gagnepain, 2000).

In addition to supporting youth to gain social and other skills, both paraprofessionals and mentors may play important friendship roles with youth who have disabilities and a limited social network. For some youth who are socially isolated, it may be very helpful to create a "circle of support" consisting of key persons in their lives, including peers, relatives, and personnel who provide services (Cotton et al., 1992). The circle of support approach is used primarily for youth with more significant disabilities, often with a focus on addressing emotional or behavioral challenges, such as depression and low self-esteem, that may both contribute to and are caused by social isolation (Rainforth, York, & Macdonald, 1997). Although a circle of support may initially be somewhat artificial as a social network, it may well develop into an authentic one as members get to know each other and collaboratively support a young person whom they all care about. Circles of support can be especially appropriate for CLD youth with disabilities, since natural supports and professional expertise on relevant cultural issues, and linguistic challenges can be identified and included. Ideally, circles of support or teams are established during high school and continue after a youth exits high school, helping to ensure a smooth transition (Gartin, Rumrill, & Serebreni, 1996).

In addition to the individual and small group strategies described previously, school-wide strategies have also been developed to promote social inclusion. This is accomplished by establishing a climate of acceptance and respect for diversity, ideally beginning in elementary school when students are less likely to have already developed discrimi-

natory attitudes (Keith & Fink, 2004). School-wide positive behavioral support (PBS) programs (also called effective behavioral support [EBS] programs) focus on defining acceptable behaviors and creating a school and classroom climate that promotes those behaviors. PBS/EBS programs were originally developed to replace aversive techniques for controlling severe behaviors of people with disabilities or mental illness. This is an approach that produces better outcomes than relying mainly on discipline (e.g., detentions, suspensions, expulsions, etc.) for unacceptable behaviors (Lewis & Sugai, 1999). These programs typically emphasize mutual respect and acceptance of diversity through a team approach involving school staff at all levels (Todd, Horner, Sugai, & Sprague, 1999). In addition to school-wide use, the approach can be used effectively by school personnel in single classrooms (Lewis & Sugai, 1999).

Self-Determination

The field of special education has increasingly focused on self-determination over the past decade or so. Self-determination has been defined as “that condition in which personal behavior emanates from a person’s own wishes, choices, and decisions” (Freedberg, 1989, p. 33). According to Wehman (1996), the practice of self-determination is a critical difference between people without disabilities, who generally have self-determination skills and opportunities, and people with disabilities, who often lack them.

Research indicates that youth with disabilities who have good self-determination skills achieve better post-school outcomes than those who lack such skills (Wehmeyer, Agran, & Hughes, 1998). One important reason for promoting self-determination is that youth who actively participate in setting their own goals and planning their own services are likely to be more motivated to strive for those goals and be more engaged in those services (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Two things are needed for self-determination. The individual has to have the *capacity* (in the form of appropriate attitudes, skills, and knowledge) to behave in a self-determined manner, and the social environment has to provide the *opportunity* to make real choices without interference from others (Mithaug, 1996). Opportunity is a property of the social environment, and without it people with disabilities are unlikely to develop the capacity (Moloney, Whitney-Thomas, & Dreilinger, 2000). Some CLD youth with disabilities may grow up with few opportunities for self-determination, especially if they are from low-income backgrounds that limit available choices, or if individual choice and self-expression are not culturally valued in their families or communities.

Skills needed for self-determination include evaluating one’s own abilities and limitations, setting goals, identifying options, accepting responsibility, communicating preferences and needs, and monitoring and evaluating progress (Field, Martin, Miller, Ward, & Wehmeyer, 1998). Numerous programs and curricula have been developed to provide youth with disabilities with these and related skills, and some have been shown by research to be effective in enhancing self-determination (Karvonen, Test, Wood, Browder, & Algozzine, 2004; Kohler, 1998). One recommended practice is to have students with disabilities actively participate in developing their own IEPs/ITPs, preferably running the planning meetings (Bremer, Kachgal, & Schoeller, 2003).

However, virtually all available self-determination programs and curricula are based on American mainstream values that may be at odds with the values of CLD cultures. Self-determination programs and curricula may therefore have to be adapted if they are to be relevant and effective for many CLD youth. This issue will be discussed further in Part III, where the concept of self-determination is used to illustrate some of the key differences often found between “individualistic” American mainstream culture and CLD cultures that are “collectivistic” in orientation.

An example of this contrast is provided by the American mainstream value of independent living, which holds that people should become self-sufficient and establish their own households when they reach adulthood. Based on this perspective, transition personnel might well believe that the best course for a young adult with developmental disabilities is to move from the family home to supported living and, eventually, independent living. In many CLD cultures, however, independent living is not seen as a milestone of adulthood, and young adults may be expected to continue living at home and contributing to the well-being of the extended family. If that is the case, then independent living may not be an appropriate transition goal.

Implications for Transition Personnel Regarding Self-Determination

The importance of self-determination to transition success means that transition personnel should make sure that needs in this area are identified and addressed for each and every youth on an individualized basis that takes into account the cultural values of the youth and family. However, personnel should be aware that efforts to promote American-style self-determination may “incite controversy among families from cultures that hold opposing beliefs and values for their offspring” (Sands & Wehmeyer, 1996, p. 337). In addition, personnel may find there is ongoing conflict within some CLD families as youth adopt American mainstream values while their elders focus on maintaining cultural traditions. Personnel who come across situations of family conflict may face delicate decisions about whether to push for self-determination and related values or to honor family desires that may limit personal choice and self-determination. Some recommended approaches for dealing with such issues will be presented in Part IV.

On the other hand, transition personnel should certainly not stop promoting self-determination because of worries about such outcomes. Only a small proportion of families are likely to react negatively. Rather, personnel serving CLD youth should strive to use culturally sensitive ways to impart attitudes, skills and knowledge that support self-determination. As will be discussed in Part III, it is possible to expand the concept of self-determination beyond the usual focus on the individual to address how the youth can also meet obligations to the family and community.

Unfortunately there are very few self-determination curricula designed to be culturally sensitive. One option is to adapt existing curricula. An excellent resource in this regard is provided by the Self-Determination Synthesis Project, which has collected information on numerous self-determination programs and curricula available in the United States. The Project identified about 50 interventions shown by data-based research to be effective in imparting specific self-determination skills. For each intervention the project staff then developed a “starter lesson plan” of several pages describing lesson objectives, setting and materials, lesson content, teaching procedures, and evaluation methods. These lesson plans can be downloaded free on the Internet at http://www.uncc.edu/sdsp/sd_lesson_plans.asp, where the specific skills taught by each lesson plan are also listed.

Self-Advocacy

Self-advocacy is the ability to recognize and express one’s strengths and needs and to seek out and obtain services and supports needed to achieve one’s goals (Battle, Dickens-Wright, & Murphy, 1998). Self-advocacy is often considered to be a self-determination skill, but is worth considering as a valid topic because of the shift in responsibility that occurs when youth with disabilities exit the public school system (Stodden & Dowrick, 2001). Students with disabilities served under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 automatically have their needs assessed, and services and supports are planned and provided for them. However, when people with disabilities graduate from high school with a regular diploma or age out, IDEA no longer applies, and they must take the initiative themselves in order to benefit from the rights and protections of Section 504 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. If adults with disabilities need accommodations or supports at work or in college, then they must inform the appropriate officials of their disabilities, provide documentation, and propose reasonable options for accommodations (Cullen, Shaw, & McGuire, 1996).

Effective self-advocacy requires assertiveness and problem-solving skills. For youth with disabilities, additional knowledge and understanding is also required, including self-awareness of disability, self-acceptance of disability, and knowledge of rights and resources (Deschamps, 2001; Hicks-Coolick & Kurtz, 1997). A variety of programs and curricula have been developed specifically to foster self-advocacy skills (Roessler, Brown, & Rumrill, 1998). However, culturally related factors may increase the challenge of achieving effective “mainstream-style” self-advocacy for some CLD youth with disabilities. For example, being assertive is considered negative in many CLD cultures, especially if done by people who are young or low in the social hierarchy. Other common CLD values at odds with the ideal of self-advocacy include not disclosing personal challenges and not asking strangers for help—and when the decision to seek help is made, it is typically done by friends or relatives rather than on one’s own (Hampton, 2000).

Implications for Transition Personnel Regarding Self-Advocacy

Implications regarding self-advocacy are much the same as the implications presented above for self-determination. For example, a CLD youth may increase conflict within the family if he/she self-advocates in a way that is too confrontational according to traditional values. Self-advocacy training therefore needs to include a focus on how to interact appropriately in different settings. As for self-determination, there are few culturally sensitive curricula for teaching self-advocacy skills. The Self-Determination Synthesis Project is a good resource, since a number of the starter lesson plans at its Web site (referenced above) address self-advocacy skills. One of the listed interventions is unique because it was developed specifically for low-income CLD high school students (Balcazar, Fawcett, & Seekins, 1990; Taylor-Ritzler et al., 2001).

Academic Achievement and High School Completion

Making good academic progress and completing high school are important for transition success, because those outcomes open doors to employment and postsecondary education. However, students with disabilities drop out of high school at substantially higher rates than their peers without disabilities. Blacks, Hispanics, and American Indians/Alaskan Natives have the highest dropout rates among students with disabilities, with the highest rates being among those with limited English proficiency (Hauser, Simmons, & Pager, 2000). Unfortunately, schools often contribute to dropout through practices that make certain students feel unwelcome, especially those with emotional or behavioral challenges (Orfield, Losen, Wald, & Swanson, 2004). Being suspended or expelled is one of the top three school-related reasons for dropping out (DeRidder, 1991). Moreover, suspension is a moderate to strong predictor of dropping out—more than 30% of sophomores who drop out have been suspended (Skiba & Peterson, 1999). Although schools may thereby rid themselves of what are considered “problem” youth, the result is that these youth often end up failing to gain the attitudes and skills they need to be productive, contributing members of their communities and are more likely to engage in antisocial activities (Civil Rights Project, 2000).

In addition to the issue of completing high school, the issue of the quality of the education provided is also very important. For youth with disabilities who do complete high school, their chances for transition success are further strengthened if they have been included in general curriculum classes and if they have been supported to meet high academic standards (President’s Commission on Excellence in Special Education, 2002). IDEA stresses the need to substantially increase the participation and progress of students with disabilities within the general education curriculum, which in turn makes it more possible for them to qualify for a diploma rather than a certificate of completion. Having a diploma is necessary to qualify for a wide range of employment and postsecondary education opportunities.

Implications for Transition Personnel Regarding Academic Achievement

Transition personnel are probably keenly aware of the dropout problem for youth with disabilities. Perhaps they have been trying to address the individual challenges faced by each of their students who may be at risk of dropping out. While supporting individual students is important, progress in increasing graduation rates is likely to depend on broader efforts at the school and system levels.

Two areas of need are particularly relevant for CLD youth with disabilities. One area is that of expectations. Youth with disabilities are often not expected to do well academically or to gain the attitudes, skills, and knowledge needed to attend college or obtain quality employment (Thurlow, 2002). Expectations for CLD youth with disabilities are sometimes even lower, due to stereotypes about their CLD group (Bakken & Aloia, 1999; Cartledge, 2002). However, according to the IDEA, many years of research and experience have shown that outcomes for students with disabilities are enhanced by holding high expectations and supporting them to access the general education curriculum in the regular classroom. Ideally, youth with disabilities are exposed from an early age to a climate of high expectations that spans school, home, and community settings, with peers, school staff, parents, and community members all expressing expectations that all youth will master the general curriculum to the best of their abilities and complete high school. If such a climate does not yet exist, transition personnel can work with other school staff and family members to make sure high expectations are reflected in IEPs and ITPs and frequently conveyed to youth.

Another area critical to improving high school completion rates is the cultural competence of instructional and related-services personnel. Cultural competence has been defined as a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, in an agency, or among professionals and enable effective services and supports in cross-cultural situations (Cross, Bazron, Dennis, & Isaacs, 1989). Lack of cultural competence in instruction and related services is widely considered to be an important reason for the generally poorer overall academic and transition outcomes of CLD youth with disabilities (Nguyen, Coutinho, & Oswald, 2000). Many CLD youth drop out because they experience a mismatch between their culture and that of the school (Franklin & Soto, 2002). Instructional methods may not match their learning preferences, the curriculum may seem irrelevant to their lives, or their behavior may be misinterpreted (Banks, 1996; Ladson-Billings, 1995). Part IV will offer approaches and tools for enhancing cultural competence in the transition planning process.

In response to the growing diversity of America's population, cultural competence is being promoted in all service-providing fields (e.g., education, health, social services, sales, etc.). The following key points about cultural competence in health care are also very relevant for educational and transition services. Think of "education" or "transition" in place of "health" and "health care" in the following passage:

Although issues of "cultural competence" or "cultural and linguistic appropriateness" in health care often are framed as "minority" issues, they are, in fact, human issues affecting all people. Everyone has a culture and a cultural background that shapes one's views about health and illness. Similarly, everyone has a language and language needs. However, because some cultural and linguistic needs are met while others are not, the issue becomes yet another of disparity in addressing the health needs of certain groups—most often racial and ethnic minorities. This disparity directly affects the ability to access high-quality health services (COSMOS Corporation, 2003, pp. iii-iv).

English Proficiency

An important component of cultural competence is being able to effectively communicate with and support people with limited English proficiency. The proportion of the U.S. population speaking English as a second language is growing. According to census data, the number of 5- to 24-year-olds who speak a language other than English at home more than doubled between 1979 and 1999, from 8% to 17%, and the percentage reported to speak English with difficulty increased from 3% to 8%, primarily as the result of increasing immigration of Hispanic peoples (Wirt et al., 2003). Spanish is most frequently spoken by 5- to 24-year-olds who speak a language other than English at home (72%) and by those who speak English with difficulty (78%). It is notable in Table 2 that among Hispanic postsecondary students with disabilities, 16.3% report having a "speech impairment" compared to fewer than 2% for Whites or Blacks, which may be related to the high proportion of Hispanic students for whom English is a second language. There are also many CLD students who may have difficulty with standard English because they grew up speaking a nonstandard form of English, such as Ebonics in urban Black neighborhoods (Baugh, 2000) or Pidgin in Hawaii (Sato, 1985). The category of students with disabilities who tend to face the most difficult challenges in mastering English are students who are deaf or have hearing impairments. These challenges are likely to be even greater for such students whose family members have limited English proficiency (Schirmer, 1994; Kuder, 2003).

Implications for Transition Personnel Regarding English Proficiency

Supporting English proficiency is likely to be a priority for some youth because a good command of English is generally essential for transition success in the United States. Transition personnel should ensure that the English language needs of all students are addressed. This may be difficult in schools that lack services and supports in this area, but transition personnel may be able to address this issue within IEPs by justifying the use of outside resources, such as hiring a tutor. If improving spoken English skills is a priority, then natural supports (peer or adult volunteer tutors or mentors) may be an option, by involving youth in real-life or simulated situations where appropriate English can be modeled and practiced (Allen, DiBona, & Chavez-Reilly, 1998). This approach may be especially helpful for youth who lack the confidence or opportunities to practice standard English in real-life settings.

Technology Access

Access to assistive technology and information technology is often critical to the academic and transition success of youth with disabilities. Assistive technology (AT) refers to equipment or systems that increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of people with disabilities (Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and 1998, as amended). Examples include wheelchairs, telecommunications devices for the deaf (TDD), voice devices that “speak” when words are typed or keys touched, software and hardware that make computers accessible to people with sensory impairments, and accessible instructional software (on CDs or other media) (Hasselbring & Glaser, 2000). A variety of AT devices and systems help students with learning disabilities and other learning challenges access information and learning opportunities, such as spelling and grammar checkers, screen readers, writing organization software, and speech input. The Internet and other technologies can also be used to link youth with disabilities to mentors, role models, and peers with whom they would otherwise be unable to communicate, located in their own community, nationally, and even internationally (Burgstahler, 1997; Burgstahler & Cronheim, 2001).

Concerning information technology, the *digital divide* is an issue for many CLD students with disabilities. The digital divide refers to the great contrast between relatively high rates of computer ownership and use among higher income people compared to lower income people. Overall, computers and computer-based information and services are less available to people who are of CLD heritage, have disabilities, are of low socioeconomic status, or live in rural areas (Kaye, 2000; National Telecommunications and Information Administration, 1999). Youth with more than one of these characteristics are especially likely to need support to gain the high level of computer access required for success in today’s educational settings. It has been estimated that among people with disabilities, 38% of Asian/Pacific Islanders, 27% of Whites, 19% of Hispanics, and 11% of Blacks have computers in their homes (Kaye, 2000). In addition, many CLD youth with disabilities might attend poorly funded high schools that either do not provide extensive access to and training in the use of computers or do not have access to assistive technologies (Darling-Hammond, 2001).

The digital divide also extends to Internet access; only 25% of America’s poorest households are online, compared with 80% of households earning more than \$75,000 per year (Dickard, Honey, & Wilhelm, 2003). In our increasingly digital world, people without computer and Internet skills may be technologically illiterate (International ICT Literacy Panel, 2002). Without access to the Internet, CLD youth with disabilities may be isolated from potential social supports and economic opportunities (Wilhelm, Carmen, & Reynolds, 2002). Internet access is increasingly required to perform research for school assignments and participate in course activities online, and it also expands opportunities for social interaction and skills development through e-mail, online chat, and interactive games. Distance-learning courses delivered via the Internet also provide a viable option for youth whose disabilities make it difficult to travel to campus for classes (Burgstahler, 2003).

Implications for Transition Personnel Regarding Technology Access

During IEP development, the technology access issues of students with disabilities should be identified and addressed so they can progress academically and complete high school. However, AT and computer needs of youth with disabilities might change after they leave high school. Transition planning should therefore include in-depth examination of the technology-related needs that are likely to arise in different transition settings, whether at work, postsecondary education, or in community living. For example, a youth headed for college might need a motorized wheelchair in order to independently move around campus or a computer and appropriate software to be able to work efficiently in his or her dorm room. In this example, the transition team should explore options with the youth and family for obtaining items of substantial expense. For some youth this might include entering the vocational rehabilitation system or contacting organizations that support people with disabilities to access technology (see descriptions of additional Internet resources at the end of this *Essential Tool*). In general, transition personnel should ensure that youth and their families have the capacity and/or the support of knowledgeable individuals to meet technology access needs after high school.

Financing Postsecondary Education

Financial barriers often cause low-income youth, both with and without disabilities, to decide not to attend postsecondary education programs or to drop out of or interrupt their programs if they do attend (Choy, 2000). CLD youth with disabilities are more likely than their White peers to come from low-income backgrounds and therefore face financial barriers to postsecondary education programs. In addition, the postsecondary education options of CLD youth with disabilities from middle-class backgrounds may also be limited by financial barriers. Numerous federal, state, and private programs offer grants, loans, scholarships, tuition waivers, and work-study assistance specifically for students from low-income backgrounds, and in some cases to students with disabilities, however, youth and their families are often unaware of these opportunities and therefore fail to take advantage of them (Horn, Chen, & Chapman, 2003).

Implications for Transition Personnel Regarding Financing Postsecondary Education

It is possible for almost any youth in America to obtain a postsecondary education, although some may require substantial support to address difficult barriers. Transition personnel should make sure that youth and families know that there are usually a number of different sources of support to address financial barriers, including vocational rehabilitation programs, culturally-oriented scholarship programs, and others. Some relevant resources available on the Internet are provided at the end of this *Essential Tool*. This section summarizes supports that may be available through the Social Security Administration, because many families and personnel are not aware that these federal benefits can be used to finance postsecondary education.

The Social Security Administration provides Supplementary Security Income (SSI) to people with disabilities who meet income and resource eligibility criteria and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) to those unable to work because of disabilities. During 1999-2000, approximately 8% of all college students with disabilities received either SSI or SSDI funds (Berry & Jones, 2001). However, many eligible youth with disabilities do not take advantage of these programs, in part because transition personnel often lack expertise to provide information as well as guidance in dealing with complex application procedures (Johnson, 2002).

Since SSI and SSDI benefits are modest, many student recipients may need to work to afford postsecondary education. However, an area of particular concern and confusion for many recipients of SSI and SSDI is whether these benefits might be reduced or ended if they work (Brooke, 2002). A number of Social Security programs exist to encourage beneficiaries to enter the work force, including Impairment Related Work Expenses (IRWE), Plan for Achieving Self-Support (PASS), Special Payments for People Who Work, Continued Medicaid Eligibility, Study Abroad Provision, Student Earned Income Provision (for students up to age 22), Blind Work Expense, and Trial Work Period Policy (TWP) (Golden & Jones, 2002; Jensen, Silverstein, & Folkemer, 2002). Unfortunately, many beneficiaries do not know about the various work incentives, which are highly underutilized as a result (U.S. General Accounting Office, 1999).

The Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999 also offers options to people with disabilities to overcome various employment barriers (Silverstein, 2002). Many SSI and SSDI recipients, for example, are eligible for services and financial support from vocational rehabilitation agencies to attend postsecondary education programs. In 1998, about 17% of vocational rehabilitation cases that were closed successfully had been supported to attend colleges or universities and about 15% to attend business or vocational/technical training institutions (Gilmore, Bose, & Hart, 2001).

Conclusion

The challenges reviewed in this section that commonly impact CLD youth with disabilities in transition are summarized in Table 3 (see next page) along with some of the possible responses of transition personnel. While it may be possible to address these challenges on an individual basis, solutions for most of them really require action and change at the broader school or system level. Transition personnel can contribute by advocating for change and also encouraging youth and families to communicate their opinions and needs to the appropriate decision-makers.

Table 3. Challenges that Often Impact CLD Youth with Disabilities and Possible Solutions

Challenges	What Transition Personnel Can Do
CLD youth with disabilities may not be well included in the social life of the school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide individualized social skills training. • Link youth with peer or adult mentors to support social skill development. • Advocate establishment of school-wide climate of acceptance. • For youth with more severe disabilities, create “circles of support.” • Involve family and community.
CLD youth with disabilities may lack attitudes, skills, and knowledge for self-determination and self-advocacy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support youth to meaningfully participate in, and preferably lead, their IEP/ ITP planning meetings. • Conduct training using culturally sensitive self-determination and/or self-advocacy curricula and include family and community in the training. • Link youth with peer or adult mentors to model attitudes and skills.
CLD youth with disabilities may be at risk for poor academic achievement or dropping out.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convey high expectations to youth. • Link youth with mentors to encourage commitment to academic excellence. • Advocate for increased cultural competence of instruction. • Seek the input of cultural experts. • Advocate for disciplinary approaches that do not encourage youth to drop out.
CLD youth with disabilities may have poor English proficiency.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access school or community English tutoring programs. • Link youth with mentors to practice English.
CLD youth with disabilities may lack access to assistive and/or information technologies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify technology needs of youth for different transition settings. • Support youth/families to identify and access needed technology resources.
CLD youth with disabilities may lack financial resources for postsecondary education.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support youth/families to identify and apply for sources of financial aid. • Support youth/families to identify and apply for Social Security Administration programs.

PART III — Continuum of “Individualistic” and “Collectivistic” Values

Introduction

Transition policies and practices typically assume that youth with disabilities and their families give priority to individual-oriented outcomes such as self-determination, self-reliance, and independent living. However, not *all* youth and families share these values (Bui & Turnbull, 2003). This section of the *Essential Tool* explores the role of culture in the transition process. Culture refers to the patterns of values and learned behaviors that are shared and transmitted from generation to generation by the members of a social group. “Values” as used here includes beliefs, assumptions, and attitudes. “Worldview” is another term that could be used in this way. Values in this broad sense are assumed to guide how people live their lives, including their moral judgments, goals, and behaviors. Exploring and understanding the values of youth and their families is therefore an important key for planning and providing transition services and supports, and in achieving better outcomes.

However, it is beyond the scope of this *Essential Tool* to explore the many different values shared within all ethnic/racial subgroups. It is possible, however, to identify an area of contrast between the values of American mainstream culture and the values characteristic of many other cultures (Niles, 1998). This contrast—between “individualistic” and “collectivistic” values—will be discussed in this part, focusing on related implications for the transition process. An example using self-determination will illustrate the importance of understanding and addressing the contrast between individualistic and collectivistic values.

It is important to realize that values, like any human characteristic, fall along a continuum. There are elements of both individualism and collectivism in any culture (Trumbull, Rothstein-Fisch, Greenfield, & Quiroz, 2001). For example, a culture oriented to individualism might highly value being able to work independently, while a culture oriented to collectivism might highly value being able to work as part of a group. However, the first culture almost certainly also values being able to work as part of a group, and the second culture also values being able to work independently. The difference is in the relative importance that each culture places on these contrasting values. The concept of a continuum also applies to individuals within a culture. Most members of a collectivistic culture will hold values at the collectivistic end of the continuum, although each will be at a different spot on the continuum, and some will even be at the individualistic end. Where they are on the continuum of values depends on such factors as how closely they identify with traditional culture, their level of education, and the ethnic mix of their community. This variability among people again illustrates the need for individualization in transition services and supports (Atkins, 1992).

As Trumbull et al. (2001) note, it is important for personnel to understand the basic differences between individualism and collectivism because these two orientations

guide rather different developmental scripts for children and for schooling; and conflicts between them are reflected daily in U.S. classrooms. Keener awareness of how they shape goals and behaviors can enable teachers and parents to interpret each other's expectations better and work together more harmoniously on behalf of students (p. 6).

Alternative Views of People as Independent or Interdependent

Individualism and collectivism are subsets of broad worldviews, which have been called, respectively, atomism and holism (Shore, 1996). Atomism is prominent in the western hemisphere and refers to the tendency to view things in terms of their component parts. This orientation has supported advances such as scientific discoveries about how the physical world works and the development of assembly line manufacturing. Holism is characteristic of most CLD cultures and refers to the tendency to view all aspects of life as interconnected.

Atomism and holism lead to differences in how the boundaries between people are conceived, which, in turn, lead to differences between individualistic and collectivistic values (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). The primary individualistic view is that there are sharp boundaries between people, with each person being a complete unit. In other

words, people are considered to be *independent*. They are generally also thought to have rights and responsibilities that are more or less the same. A person's identity (i.e., the sense of self) in an individualistic society tends to be based mainly on one's personal experiences—accomplishments, challenges, career, relationships with other people, etc.

By contrast, the primary collectivistic view is that people are not separate units, but rather are part and parcel of a larger group (i.e., extended family, village, or tribe). In other words, people are *interdependent*. A person's identity in a collectivistic society tends to be based on one's roles and experiences within the group context. For example, people in traditional Pacific Island cultures have been described as developing "shared identities" as the result of "sharing food, water, land, spirits, knowledge, work, and social activities" (Linnekin & Poyer, 1990, p. 8). Similarly, according to Lieber (1990), "The person is not an individual in our Western sense of the term. The person is instead a locus of shared biographies: personal histories of people's relationships with other people and with other things. The relationship defines the person, not vice-versa" (p. 72).

This traditional Pacific Island view of the person falls at the extreme collectivistic end of the continuum, while the American mainstream view of the person is widely considered to fall closer to the extreme individualistic end than any other culture (Lasch, 1978; Shore, 1996). Yet even these cultures each reflect elements from the other end of the continuum to varying degrees. Americans, for example, develop a kind of "shared identity" when they cheer together for the same sports team. When they identify a part of themselves with the team, they tend to feel a bond with each other and experience similar emotions of joy, pride, sadness, etc. at the same time, depending how the game unfolds and whether the team wins or loses.

Where a person's preference falls on the collectivistic-individualistic continuum depends on his or her culture, socioeconomic status, and historical era. Interdependent values appear to be stronger among people living in conditions of scarcity and threat, because they depend more on each other for survival. For example, settlers of the American West during the 1800s probably had a more interdependent orientation than most Americans today, as reflected in how they helped each other build barns and harvest crops.

The relatively extreme individualism of American mainstream culture today is made possible by a high and dependable standard of living that allows self-sufficiency (i.e., independence) to be the expected norm. Youth of American mainstream culture almost always have ready access to a substantial store of economic and social capital accumulated by their families. This capital allows them to begin practicing independence and self-sufficiency at an early age and to be supported to achieve independence and self-sufficiency as they transition to adulthood.

By contrast, Americans living in poverty generally have much lower levels of economic and social capital that can support independent lifestyles. Unfortunately, the social fabric of many low-income communities has become so frayed that effective interdependence may not be possible for many residents. If one's friends and relatives are unemployed, there's little chance they can help the person get a job. Government and private programs have been developed to fill the gaps, but an unintended consequence has apparently been to foster *dependence* in many program participants, who may rely heavily on agency personnel rather than interdependent natural support networks (Zuckerman, 2000).

Contrasts Between Individualistic and Collectivistic Values

The basic individualistic and collectivistic views of people as either independent or interdependent lead to contrasting sets of values. Nearly three-fourths of the world's cultures can be described as collectivistic (Triandis, 1989). CLD groups generally fall at the collectivistic end, although American Black culture has absorbed some of the prominent values of American mainstream individualism (Ellison, Boykin, Towns, & Stokes, 2000). This section summarizes some common contrasts in values of particular relevance to the transition process (Black, Mrasek, & Ballinger, 2003; Lynch & Hanson, 1998; Triandis, 1995; Trumbull et al., 2001; Yamauchi, 1998).

Orientation to Self or Group

The individualistic view of people as independent units leads to emphasis on a range of self-oriented values and skills that support independent living. These values include self-sufficiency, self-determination, self-advocacy, self-

competence, self-direction, self-efficacy, self-regulation, self-reliance, and self-responsibility. On the other hand, the collectivistic view of people as interdependent leads to emphasis on group-oriented values and skills that contribute to effectively filling roles within the family or other group. Instead of living independently or going away to college, the young adult may be expected to remain at home and fulfill roles within the family.

Decision-Making

Culture influences how decisions are made within a family. In traditional collectivistic cultures, there is likely to be a social hierarchy based on gender, birth order, and/or age. Family elders may be highly respected, and they often have roles of authority with responsibility to make sure family members do what is best for the family rather than what is best for themselves as individuals. Elders may have final say about how far their children go in school, who they marry, or where they work. Decisions by authority figures in collectivist cultures are likely to be obeyed with less questioning than is typical in individualistic cultures. There are, however, many collectivistic cultures with a strong egalitarian orientation that promotes shared decision-making, although most people of CLD backgrounds in America come from more hierarchical cultures. In American individualism, the ideal is for all people to be able to freely make their own decisions. The opinions of family elders may be respected, but as youth enter adulthood, they expect and are expected to make decisions about their own lives.

Dennis and Giangreco (1996) provide the following examples of how decision-making in some CLD families might differ from the American mainstream:

Hawaiian children are not given much personal choice/control in the family. They are “seen but not heard.” They are expected to be responsible for personal self, take care of younger siblings, respect their elders, contribute to family chores, and not “embarrass” the family by drawing attention to themselves (p. 108).

In many Hispanic families, control of important decisions remains with the parents (or grandparents) until the child reaches adulthood or marries and moves away from the family....To assume that the student with disabilities’ choice supersedes that of the parents may violate the cultural patterns of the particular family and inject conflict into the family system (p. 108).

Knowledge Transmission

Social hierarchy also strongly influences how knowledge is obtained and transmitted. In many collectivistic cultures, people of high social status may be seen as holding important cultural and technological knowledge. This knowledge may have traditionally been memorized (i.e., rather than recorded in writing) and transmitted orally. Much of this knowledge may be reserved only for people who have passed ceremonial milestones or belong to a restricted group, so that they can effectively fill their social roles. It may be considered disrespectful for children to express their opinions to or ask many questions of their elders. Instead they may be expected to absorb and then reflect back the knowledge provided to them by their elders, who determine when youngsters are ready to learn. In individualistic cultures, it is more likely that children are encouraged to form and express opinions and to seek knowledge at a pace they self-determine. An important individualistic value is that knowledge should be freely available to anyone who wants it.

Individual Choice and Personal Responsibility

All cultures seem to acknowledge that how people behave affects what will happen to them, whether in this life or a presumed afterlife. However, there are different views of the responsibility for those outcomes. American individualism highly values the freedom to choose for oneself. People are assumed to have free will, and from an early age they may be reminded that each choice has consequences for which they will be held personally responsible. In collectivistic cultures, the ideals of individual choice and free will are less likely to be highly valued, and less emphasis may be placed on personal responsibility for outcomes. Collectivistic cultures are more likely than individualistic ones to allow for external explanations for the cause of a good or bad event (e.g., fate, spiritual intervention, or the demands of social superiors). People in individualistic cultures may be allowed or even encouraged to make

choices based on what is best individually, while people in collectivistic cultures are more likely to be expected to give priority to what is best for the group.

Concepts of Progress

A widely shared value in American mainstream individualism is that people should continually be improving themselves and advancing in their educations, careers, and other endeavors. Everyone's individual efforts combined are expected to generate progress at the national level as well, especially in terms of a higher standard of living. Traditional collectivistic cultures, however, may not place a strong value on this kind of progress. For one thing, time may be viewed less like an arrow into the future and more like a circular process, as seasons change in their regular order and humans repeat their traditional activities, such as planting or harvesting crops. The concern of the family and community may be mainly on faithfully carrying on the activities that have sustained their lives over generations, rather than trying to improve on the system into which they were born. In addition, there may be a focus on spiritual rather than material advancement.

Competitiveness

In American individualism, people can show that they have valued characteristics—such as mastery of certain skills or being able to perform under pressure—by competing with and doing better than others. From the perspective of many collectivist cultures, however, Americans are often considered too competitive and focused on material rewards (Kohn, 1992). Collectivistic cultures are more likely to emphasize cooperation among group members as the basis for success in competition with other groups, whether at the level of the family, business, or nation. Members of successful groups take pride in what the group has accomplished.

Shame and Guilt

People are likely to feel shame or guilt if they do poorly in competition or behave in ways that others criticize. Fear of failing or losing may keep people from tackling a challenge or entering a competition. As social emotions, shame and guilt naturally vary across cultures. Because people with an individualistic orientation tend to view themselves as being more in control of their own lives, they may be more likely to blame themselves and feel shame or guilt if they do not meet expectations. Because people with a collectivistic orientation are more likely to identify strongly with their family or some other group, they tend to be more likely to feel shame or guilt if their behavior is judged to bring disgrace on the group.

Help Seeking

In some collectivistic cultures, great importance is placed on maintaining the family reputation by not shaming it. This perspective can delay or prevent getting help if conditions such as mental illness or disabilities are viewed as sources of shame. Furthermore family members in a collectivistic culture may desire or feel obligated to care for relatives in need, so accepting help from others may be viewed as evading family responsibilities (Boone, 1992). In American mainstream culture families also take care of their own, however, often people feel they should take care of their own needs and only turn to their families as a “last resort.” This is reflected in statements by parents who say they do not want to be a “burden” on their children in their old age, while in collectivistic cultures it is often expected that children will care for their elderly parents (Mason, 1992). For example, CLD youth may be expected to remain at home after exiting high school to care for a sick relative.

Expression of Identity

American mainstream culture promotes self-expression. Cars, clothes, cosmetics, and most other consumer items are often marketed in terms of how they help people to express their inner selves (Shore, 1996). In collectivistic cultures, by contrast, people are more likely to adopt an appearance appropriate for their social status, with less concern for expressing what makes them unique as individuals.

Property Ownership

Individualistic notions of property generally emphasize that objects, land, ideas, etc., are owned by individuals who give consent for others to use their property or who are due compensation when their property is used. However, the collectivistic perspective on social relationships is often associated with a more communal view of ownership. Personal items such as clothes or toys, for example, might be considered to be family rather than individual property, and therefore more freely shared.

Interaction Style

Each culture has its own norms for how people should behave with each other. Misunderstandings are therefore likely when people from different cultures interact. Common tendencies in American individualism include directly raising topics or issues, freely expressing personal opinions, and asking personal questions, even of strangers. All of these tendencies are generally less prominent in collectivistic cultures. Norms vary a great deal across cultures for the distance at which people feel comfortable talking to each other or for appropriate touching (e.g., it may be customary for people to greet each other by hugging, shaking hands, or bowing). In all cultures, interaction norms depend on people's social status. In many collectivistic cultures it is especially likely that younger or socially lower people are expected to behave in a respectful and obedient way when interacting with older or people of higher social rank. This is an extremely common source of misunderstanding between American mainstream educators and CLD students. For example, many Pacific Island, American Indian, and Asian children are raised to look away when talking to social superiors, because looking someone in the eye is equated with being disrespectful or challenging authority. However, American mainstream educators may interpret looking away as being inattentive or disrespectful.

Expectations for Adulthood

All cultures have expectations about how children typically behave and how their behaviors should change as they mature and demonstrate readiness for adulthood. In individualistic cultures, expectations tend to fall at the independent end of the continuum: Adults should be self-sufficient, set and pursue personal goals, be true to their personal values, and meet their civic responsibilities in a context of social equality. In collectivistic cultures, expectations tend to fall at the interdependent end of the continuum: Adults should contribute to the group, work with others to achieve mutual goals, adhere to the traditional values of the group, and understand their place within the social hierarchy and perform their expected roles.

Table 4. Contrasts in Emphasis between Common Collectivistic and Individualistic Values

Continuum of Values	
Collectivistic	Individualistic
Interdependence	Independence
Obligations to others	Individual rights
Rely on group	Self-sufficiency
Adhere to traditional values	True to own values and beliefs
Maintain traditional practices	Continuously improve practices (progress)
Fulfill roles within group	Pursue individual goals/interests
Group achievement	Individual achievement
Competition between groups	Competition between individuals
Group or hierarchical decision-making	Self-determination and individual choice
Shame/guilt due to failing group	Shame/guilt due to individual failure
Living with kin	Independent living
Take care of own	Seek help if needed
Property shared within group	Strong individual property rights
Elders transmit knowledge (often oral)	Individuals seek knowledge (often textual)
Objects valued for social uses	Objects valued for technological uses

Implications for Transition Personnel: The Example of Self-Determination

What are the implications of the individualistic-collectivistic continuum of values for transition? This section briefly explores these implications through the example of self-determination. Self-determination is widely considered to be essential for transition success, but is typically defined from an individualistic perspective that gives high priority to personal autonomy and independence (MacGugen, 1991). For example, Field and Hoffman (1994) define self-determination as “the ability to identify and achieve goals based on a foundation of knowing and valuing oneself” (p. 164)—a definition that omits important collectivistic values such as knowing and attending to one’s roles and responsibilities within the group.

Given that CLD groups commonly stress group participation and interdependence, transition practices and procedures may need to be modified if they are to be effective with youth and families from collectivistic backgrounds (Black, Mrasek, & Ballinger, 2003; Greene, 1996; Leake, Black, & Roberts, 2004; Luft, 2001). For example, transition teams may decide to focus on enhancing different skills depending on the cultural context of the youth and family. If the context is individualistic with an emphasis on personal autonomy and freedom of choice, then skills such as self-observation, self-evaluation, self-reinforcement, self-awareness, self-knowledge, and self-advocacy are likely to be important (Black, Mrasek, & Ballinger, 2003). In contrast, from the interdependent collectivistic standpoint, many highly valued skills for adulthood are likely to be other-oriented rather than self-oriented. Such skills might include understanding one’s roles in the group, perceiving and responding appropriately to the emotional status of others, and being able to work as part of a team (Yamauchi, 1998). Self-determination and maturity from a collectivistic perspective are likely to include giving priority to the group’s well-being. In order to help make self-determination a reality, skills such as goal-setting may need to be gained by the family as a unit.

For most social-service personnel educated in the western hemisphere, the family or society in general might be viewed as an obstacle to individual choice and self-determination (Ewalt & Mokuau, 1995). As a result, “rarely is contributing to the group’s well-being considered integral to self-determination, and rarely is placing the group’s well-being first seen as signifying maturity” (p. 169). Yet people who grow up in a collectivistic culture are likely to give very high priority to their social relationships and to have strong feelings of affiliation with, concern for, and obligation to members of their group. These feelings tend to lead people to develop goals that are more group-oriented than self-oriented. “As paradoxical as it may seem from an individualistic perspective, self-directedness may require a strengthening rather than a dissolution of the person’s connection with and commitment to the group” (p. 170).

Transition personnel should recognize that self-determination for youth with disabilities means they should be able to define what self-determination really represents for them and their families. Is it a matter of independent people, on their own, making choices and setting goals to promote their self-sufficiency, autonomy, and individual advancement? Or is it a matter of interdependent people, in collaboration with significant others, making choices and setting goals to maximize ability to function as a valued group member and promote the well-being of the group?

A similar contrast may be seen with regard to the concept of self-efficacy, which is closely related to that of self-determination. Self-efficacy refers to having essential attitudes and skills for meeting one’s values and achieving one’s goals, such as managing and regulating one’s own behavior and emotions according to the demands of the social environment. Psychologist Albert Bandura is well-known for his promotion of self-efficacy as a key to personal success and good mental health. Some critics have contended that self-efficacy is an individualistic concept that is not relevant for collectivistic cultures. Bandura’s (1997) response is that all people want to be efficacious (i.e., effective) in their roles, whether working individually or collectively.

It has also been argued that self-determination research and interventions have been limited by an atomistic orientation that leads to too much focus on the component skills of self-determination. The focus on self-determination skills is understandable, because they can be taught through direct instruction in much the same way that academic skills such as math, reading, and writing are taught (Field & Hoffman, 2002). However, according to Mithaug (1996), a

...difficult obstacle has to do with what must be taught in order for students to become self-determined. The difficulty here is that the perceptions, knowledge, and abilities comprising the process of self-deter-

mination are not easily deconstructed or task-analyzed, taught separately, and then reconstructed into the functional process of self-determination–problem solving to meet personal goals. In fact, the very processes of deconstruction, of building skills one at a time, and then of reconstructing the learned components to solve real-life problems can take so long that the learner loses sight of the purpose and value of what she or he is learning (p. 150).

According to Turnbull et al. (1996), the focus on teaching self-determination skills is in line with the widespread “fix-it” approach in special education, which is oriented to identifying and remediating deficits within the individual. They propose a holistic alternative to this “unidimensional emphasis on individual skills” (p. 237), suggesting that self-determination has two other key components in addition to individual skills, namely motivation and a responsive context that provides appropriate opportunities for self-determination. Their analysis is highly relevant for CLD youth, because the self-determination skills that are typically taught are rooted in individualistic values that give priority to personal autonomy over group participation. They recommend that in working with youth and families from collectivistic backgrounds, transition personnel should:

- Consider acculturation², family composition, and community supports to determine if self-determination skills are congruent with cultural values, and whether these skills will be appreciated if expressed in a culturally relevant manner;
- Discover and build on the family’s problem-solving process; and
- Consider if self-determination skills determined in a culturally relevant manner will have utility within American mainstream culture.

Youth and Family Involvement in the Transition Planning Process

The involvement of youth and their families is critical to the success of education and transition planning. However, CLD parents are often not as involved as they could be, because of barriers related to socioeconomic circumstances, language, or cultural/ideological values (Boone, 1992; Harry, 1992). According to Dennis and Giangreco (1996), educators need to be aware of factors that shape the priorities and perspectives of youth and families and influence the level of involvement they are willing or able to achieve. These factors include:

- The emotional climate of racial, religious, or ethnic discrimination;
- The implications of poverty;
- Differences in family composition;
- Family work practices and roles;
- Neighborhoods and living environments;
- The nature, degree, and duration of acculturation into the dominant cultural group; and
- The experience of living in a family who has a member with disabilities or special needs.

Part IV describes approaches and tools that transition personnel can use for enhanced family involvement and the culturally sensitive individualization of transition planning and supports. As personnel get to know a youth and family on a more personal level, they may be more likely to uncover and have to address a difficult challenge: There may be conflict within the family about the appropriate roles of members in the transition planning process, what appropriate transition goals for the youth should be, or other issues. Conflict within a family is often related to generational differences that result when youth strive for acculturation to American mainstream culture while their elders focus on maintaining collectivistic cultural traditions, although in some families the youth may be more committed to traditional ways. Transition personnel can play a positive role in helping to resolve family conflicts and support CLD youth with disabilities when they adopt “cultural reciprocity,” an approach described

² Acculturation, as used in this document, refers to the cultural modification of an individual or group through the adoption and integration of traits from a different culture.

in Part IV. This approach can help both personnel and youth and families to better understand their own and each other's cultural assumptions, so they are better able to engage in effective dialogue.

Conclusion

Because transition systems are typically rooted in individualistic cultural assumptions, they often fall short in accommodating collectivistic values and behaviors. In order to effectively support the transition of CLD youth with disabilities, transition personnel need to be aware of the contrasts between individualism and collectivism and of the cultural basis of their own values and practice. This part outlined many of the contrasts between relevant individualistic and collectivistic values, but at a very general level. Obviously, transition personnel should be familiar with the common values and traditions of specific CLD groups with whom they work. An excellent resource in this regard is the most widely used book on cultural competence, *Developing Cross-Cultural Competence: A Guide for Working with Children and Their Families* (3rd Edition), edited by Eleanor W. Lynch and Marci J. Hanson (1998). The book provides an overview on cultural competence and includes nine chapters on different CLD groups written by experts from the respective cultures. The chapters summarize the demographics, traditions, values, beliefs, attitudes toward child rearing and disability, and groups' history in America as well as advice on how to effectively collaborate with families.

PART IV — The Culturally Sensitive Individualization of Services and Supports

Introduction

Given the great diversity among CLD youth with disabilities and their families, there are no universal rules for transition planning aside from one: the principle of individualization. Culturally competent strategies need to be used to support CLD students with disabilities and their families to express and develop their own transition goals and appropriate ways to achieve them (Wolfe, Boone, & Barrera, 1997). While it is not necessary to have a great deal of culturally specific information, it is important to establish a “cultural reciprocity” in which transition personnel develop cultural self-awareness and take the lead in establishing with youth and families a two-way process of cultural learning (Harry, Kalyanpur, & Day, 1999). The next section defines the process of cultural reciprocity, followed by several tools that can be used for individualized transition planning from a posture of cultural reciprocity.

Cultural Reciprocity

The concept of cultural reciprocity is rooted in the idea that people cannot be sensitive to cultural differences unless they are first aware of the cultural assumptions that guide their own thinking and behavior. Like fish unaware of living in water, people tend to be unaware of being totally enveloped by their culture (Kalyanpur & Harry, 1997; 1999). One cultural assumption common in the American mainstream that is related to transition planning is that it is natural and desirable for adults to live independent of their parents. It becomes possible to be sensitive to cultural differences when you become aware of cultural assumptions. In this example, we become aware that it can also make cultural sense for adults to continue living in the household of an extended family that includes their parents.

Cultural reciprocity is a general approach that transition personnel can use to enhance relationships with all youth and families, regardless of their cultural backgrounds. If youth and families feel they have good relationships with personnel, then they are more likely to share their feelings and become real partners in transition planning and services.

The book *Culture in Special Education: Building Reciprocal Family-Professional Relationships*, outlines five key features of the posture of cultural reciprocity (Kalyanpur & Harry, 1999). It is a useful resource for transition personnel to use in developing effective collaborations with youth and their families.

Cultural reciprocity:

1. *Goes beyond awareness of differences to self-awareness.* Collaboration is enhanced when both sides are aware and respectful of their differences. However, being able and willing to take another’s point of view does not come naturally to everyone. Transition personnel therefore need to take the lead and model this behavior. A posture of cultural reciprocity promotes self-reflection and self-awareness, which is the foundation that allows personnel to establish relationships of mutual respect with people from all groups. Through self-reflection, personnel become more aware of their family, religious, moral, political, and social ideals, social and cultural environments, and values they have adopted as the result of their upbringing and professional training.
2. *Aims for subtle levels of awareness of difference.* Too often our awareness of difference is only at a level of stereotypes. Cultural reciprocity helps personnel go beyond stereotypes of how a particular youth and family might differ from the American mainstream (e.g., differences in dress or food customs). The goal is to establish the kind of relationship where personnel can gain more in-depth insight into the values and worldviews of the youth and families with whom they work.
3. *Has universal applicability.* An important core concept of cultural reciprocity is that effective communication and collaboration comes from listening to and respecting all perspectives. In fact, the posture of culture reciprocity is appropriate for any situation requiring communication and collaboration among people, not just when transition personnel interact with youth and families. If personnel adopt cultural reciprocity as a way of life, it has the potential to enhance all of their interpersonal relationships and effectiveness in playing their various professional and nonprofessional roles.

4. *Avoids stereotypical solutions.* When personnel adopt a posture of cultural reciprocity, they are better able to avoid the trap of stereotypical solutions. Stereotypical solutions are common solutions applied from a one-size-fits-all perspective. While such solutions may fit the situations of many youth and families, they are likely to be inappropriate for many others. For example, parents are often observed to remain silent at IEP meetings. Many reasons are possible, such as discomfort discussing sensitive issues, fear of appearing ignorant, mistrust of professionals, deference to authority, or frustration at being silenced in the past. Silence itself is a form of communication, but it must be decoded and addressed if the high level of communication required for cultural reciprocity is to be achieved. In order to address silence, personnel must explore individualized solutions, rather than relying on stereotypical ones.
5. *Ensures that both families and personnel are empowered.* A posture of cultural reciprocity facilitates communication and dialogue that can provide both sides with new insights into each other's culture. They can then use this understanding to better fill their roles, meet their needs, and achieve their goals. For example, an individualistic approach to discipline is to make children responsible for their own moral choices and to learn from the consequences that result from their own behavior. This approach may be relatively ineffective with children from some CLD groups, where parents may instead emphasize that there are certain ways to do things and make their children accountable to their families or even the entire community. If personnel and families gain a better understanding of the beliefs and values underlying these different approaches, they are more likely to be able to support the appropriate behavior of children in various cross-cultural situations.

Using Cultural Reciprocity

Effectively using the process of cultural reciprocity includes four steps:

Step 1: Identify the cultural values underlying interpretations of the situations involving youth and families. The key to this step is to ask, "Why?" Why, for example, might it seem important and natural to recommend that a youth in transition with developmental disabilities move from the family home to supported living and, eventually, independent living? Through self-reflection, the answer might turn out to be that independence and self-sufficiency are strongly held values that may or may not be shared by the youth and family. Self-reflection is a continuous process and the question "Why?" needs to be asked in each situation with each youth and family in order for individualization to be achieved.

Step 2: Explore the extent to which values and assumptions are recognized and accepted by the youth and family. If the youth and family do not view independent living as a milestone to adulthood, then this may not be an appropriate transition goal.

Step 3: Acknowledge any cultural differences, and explain to the youth and family how and why American mainstream culture promotes different values. For example, how the value of independent living has benefited other youth and families might be described, helping the youth and family to understand the cultural basis for professional recommendations.

Step 4: Collaborate with the youth and family to determine the most effective way of adapting professional interpretations and recommendations to the family value system. If, for example, parents understand the reasoning of personnel—that there will probably come a time when they won't be there to support their child—then they may be more likely to want to develop a transition plan that enhances skills for independence and self-sufficiency.

Two barriers can make cultural reciprocity difficult to achieve (Kalyanpur & Harry, 1999). One barrier is the extra time that might be needed to get to know youth and families and engage in dialogue:

The posture of cultural reciprocity cannot be seen as a bag of tricks to be pulled out during situations of conflict or in emergencies but almost as a value that is internalized and applied in all contexts. If we seek to understand ourselves and the families whom we serve at every interaction, however small, then the task will seem less onerous. If when we send that quick note or make that phone call we reflect on our action and ask ourselves why we are saying what we are saying, then we will be more likely to understand when the families do not say what we want them to say and more likely to make the effort to learn why (pp. 130-131).

The other barrier is the mistaken belief that only personnel who are themselves of CLD heritage can work effectively with CLD youth and families (Kalyanpur & Harry, 1999). Research has indicated that personnel who have little or no affiliation with the culture of the families with whom they work can indeed establish effective collaborative relationships:

The issue is not that we must have had the same experiences in terms of culture, ethnic background, race, socioeconomic status, or gender as the families we serve—because we cannot—but that we have the willingness to learn about and understand their experiences, that we are willing to understand how our own experiences have shaped us, and that we respect and accept these differences in our various experiences (p. 131).

The following sections describe approaches demonstrated to be effective for customizing planning and services for people with disabilities. Adopting a posture of cultural reciprocity will help maximize the effectiveness of these approaches when working with youth and families from CLD backgrounds.

Person-Centered Planning

Person-centered planning is a proven approach for individualizing planning and services for people with disabilities (Artesani & Mallar, 1998; Flannery et al., 2000; Hagner, Helm, & Butterworth, 1996; Holburn, Jacobson, Vietze, Schwartz, & Sersen, 2000; Mount, O'Brien, & O'Brien, 1997; Whitney-Thomas, Shaw, Honey, & Butterworth, 1998). It is called “person-centered” to emphasize how it differs from the service-centered or program-centered approaches that were commonly used in the past. Service- or program-centered planning focuses on fitting the person into services or programs that are readily available. Program goals guide planning, with little consideration given to the wishes and goals of the person and his or her family.

Person-centered planning is a large step forward because it focuses on the person's wishes and desires. A person with a disability chooses who he or she would like to be involved and sets the agenda for IEP or other service-planning meetings. Service providers, educators, family members, and other key people in the life of the individual explore his or her wishes, strengths, areas of needed support, and fears, and on this basis develop goals for the future and a plan to reach them. The process is flexible and readily adapted for use in cross-cultural situations (Callicott, 2003).

In person-centered planning, different goals may be appropriate along an individualistic-to-collectivistic continuum. It is therefore possible to identify individualistic and collectivistic models of person-centered planning. The contrasts between program-centered, individualistic person-centered, and collectivistic person-centered approaches are summarized in Table 5 (see next page). A key characteristic of the collectivistic model of person-centered planning is that it is attuned to empowering individuals through empowering their families and communities.

Table 5. Comparison of Planning Approaches

	Program-Centered Planning	Person-Centered Planning	
		Individualistic	Collectivistic
Why	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To coordinate services across disciplinary lines and agencies. To clarify roles of different people responsible. To meet legal requirements and avoid punishment by regulators. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To establish and support a personal vision for an individual. To make voluntary commitment by people who are interested in helping someone they care for. 	To build family/community support and action on behalf of the focus person.
Primary Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To match people with existing programs, identify which agencies are best for the person, and outline the location of these services and how they will be delivered. If more than one agency or program is involved, the plan is a way to coordinate services and the actions of staff and professionals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Independence of the target individual. Focus upon the individual's whole life, not just a type of service. Focus on a vision for the future, practical ways to get there, and building commitment to help the person attain those dreams. The emphasis is on the person's strengths, gifts, and talents—building on them and supporting the person in areas of individual needs—not a preoccupation with deficits and assessments of what's "wrong" with the person. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interdependence of the target individual with people in one's own community to develop a network of support. Focus is on the person and his or her spokesperson, family, friends, and associates. Focus is on strengths of the family/community and what they can bring to the process.
Who	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professionals as specialists. An array of professionals. 	The people involved in the planning are there at the person's invitation—no agency decides who should or must be involved.	There is an emphasis on involving friends and family in the planning—professionals participate to advise and provide support, not control.
Where	Human-service setting, conference room, or centralized site.	School or community settings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community settings: home, church room, or library meeting room. Places close to where the members live.

How	Team leader initiates to meet requirements of regulations.	Focus person initiates to reach goals toward independence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus person or spokesperson initiates to reach goals they are unable to accomplish working alone. • The challenge is how the individual, family, friends, <i>and</i> services (not <i>only</i> services) can work together to achieve the vision.
Product	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goals and objectives that fit within existing program options. • Completed forms, paperwork, and specific goals and objectives to evaluate program effectiveness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision that reflects desire of focus person. • Significant quality-of-life changes for the focus person. • The person's plan may serve as a focus for discussions about what services should be provided; a service plan may then result. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision that reflects desire of focus person and family. • Commitments to action by community members. • Significant quality-of-life changes for the focus person and the family.

Note. Adapted from Mount, Beeman, and Ducharme (1988) as cited in Knoll and Wheeler (2001, p. 525); and Partners in Policymaking, 2004.

Respectful and trusting relationships are the foundation of success in any collaborative activity. Transition personnel are best able to establish such relationships and prepare for planning meetings if they take the time and make the effort to become familiar with the background of the youth and family. Obtaining answers to the following questions will help determine where the values of a youth and their family may be along the continuum of individualistic and collectivistic values (Greene, 1996, p. 27):

- What languages are spoken in the home and by which members?
- What are the family's norms for personal and social development for the youth with disabilities (e.g., what degree of independence is encouraged)?
- What residential and work-related goals for the youth are held by the family?
- What are the family's views on disabilities, and how does this affect their view on treatment for the youth?
- How is the family conceptualized—as a nuclear unit or as an extended family structure?
- What are the family's decision-making practices? Are they hierarchical, where elders hold the decision-making power, or are they oriented to individual rights with children expected to self-advocate?
- How much legal knowledge about parental rights and advocacy does the family possess?

Person-centered planning tools use interviewing and family involvement to create a plan of action for transition activities. These tools may be especially useful for CLD youth. Before describing some of these tools, it is important to note that culture influences parental styles of communication in transition planning meetings. For example, parents from Hispanic and Asian groups may have established patterns of interaction characterized by roles based on hierarchy, deference to authority, indirect confrontation, and maintenance of harmony and good relations. Because teachers are often viewed as being in positions of authority, parents from these groups may be reluctant to ask questions, fearing they might be viewed as questioning the teacher's authority (Boone, 1992;

Dennis & Giangreco, 1996). These communication styles seem counter to transition principles emphasizing equal partnerships of parents and teachers in the decision-making process and an assertive, direct communication style by all involved. Alternative communication styles must be honored and respected rather than viewed as lack of involvement or agreement by the parents.

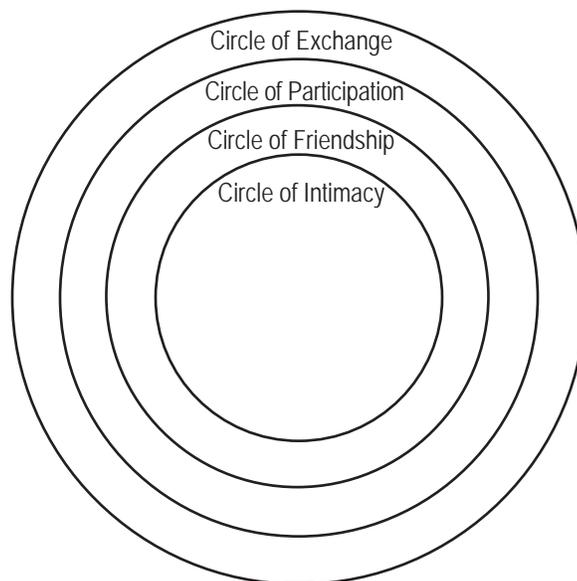
Described below are several tools that provide frameworks for effectively involving youth and families in transition planning and also for giving personnel insight into each unique circumstance.

The concept of a “circle of friends” provides a social scan to identify the important people and activities in a youth’s life (Falvey, Forest, Pearpoint, & Rosenberg, 1997). This step provides a visual representation or foundation of the youth’s network of social support. It can be done informally with the youth and/or family prior to more formal planning meetings, in which case the completed circle would be presented and discussed at a planning meeting, or it can be done as part of a planning meeting.

A “circle of friends” starts with drawing four concentric circles (see Figure 1) and then writing the names of the appropriate people in each circle. The innermost circle is the “circle of intimacy.” These are the people closest to the youth, who are always there for help and support. The second circle moving towards the outer edge is the “circle of friendship.” This circle includes people who are friends, but not as close to the youth as those in the inner circle. Moving outward, the next is the “circle of participation.” These people may be considered acquaintances. The youth may say “hello” to these people or know their names, but they are not close friends. The youth knows these people by sight, but does not know much about their personal lives. Finally, the outermost circle is the “circle of exchange.” This circle includes the professionals who are paid to give help and support.

These circles reveal the areas where social support is strong and where it needs to be strengthened. The circles also help identify key people who need to be involved in the planning process. A grandmother or uncle may actually be more involved in the youth’s day-to-day life than a parent and should therefore be invited to all school meetings where transition planning for the youth is taking place. Determining people of importance in the youth’s life is very important in planning next steps. While paid support people are necessary for some services (e.g., therapy or medical care), natural supports should be identified for as many situations as possible (e.g., community access, recreation, or employment).

Figure 1. Circle of Friends



Falvey, M. A., Forest, M., Pearpoint, J., & Rosenberg, R. L. (1997).

Once the members of the planning team have been identified, it is time to bring them together to examine hopes and dreams. This process is called “making action plans” (MAPS). The MAPS process involves asking questions to gather important background information about the youth and family. This information is then used to create an action plan to achieve the transition goals of the youth and family.

Transition personnel can support the youth and family to prepare for the MAPS meeting. The youth and family should understand the purpose of the meeting and the roles of the various transition team members. The youth and family should also be encouraged to prepare by thinking about important issues related to individual transition goals and desires before the meeting. Tool 1 (see next page) is an exercise that can help youth think about issues in preparation for a MAPS meeting and help personnel explain to the youth that this can help identify transition settings and outcomes that best match his or her strengths and interests.

Tool 1. Issues for Youth to Think About Before Transition Planning Meetings

Name at least four places or situations that make you feel good or relaxed, and explain why...

1. A place or situation that makes me feel good or relaxed is:

Why?

2. A place or situation that makes me feel good or relaxed is:

Why?

3. A place or situation that makes me feel good or relaxed is:

Why?

4. A place or situation that makes me feel good or relaxed is:

Why?

Name at least four places or situations that make you feel stressed out, and explain why...

1. A place or situation that makes me feel stressed out is:

Why?

2. A place or situation that makes me feel stressed out is:

Why?

3. A place or situation that makes me feel stressed out is:

Why?

4. A place or situation that makes me feel stressed out is:

Why?

Name at least four things you like to do, and describe the skills involved in these activities...

1. Something I like to do is:

What skills for this activity do I already have?

What skills for this activity do I need to improve?

2. Something I like to do is:

What skills for this activity do I already have?

What skills for this activity do I need to improve?

3. Something I like to do is:

What skills for this activity do I already have?

What skills for this activity do I need to improve?

4. Something I like to do is:

What skills for this activity do I already have?

What skills for this activity do I need to improve?

Tool 2 includes standard questions used to help transition personnel plan for MAPS meetings. Below these questions are specific questions that will help personnel gain a more comprehensive “map” of the experiences and background of the youth and family.

Tool 2. MAPS Questions

1. *Who is the youth?*

- a. How does the youth fit into the family constellation? Youngest child, oldest child? Son, daughter? How many siblings?
- b. What kind of experiences has the youth had? Has he or she been included in the community? Has he or she been integrated with same-age peers? Has he or she interacted with people of different ages, cultures, and backgrounds?
- c. What are the defining personal, social, and academic characteristics of the youth?

2. *What is the youth's history?*

- a. What job situations has the youth tried?
- b. What environments does the youth like and dislike?
- c. Does the youth's family/culture value cooperation rather than competition?
- d. Would a specific job that values individual, independent achievement conflict with the youth's or family's values and patterns of interpersonal interactions?
- e. What is the youth's communication and personal interaction style? Does the youth have well-developed interpersonal communication skills? Does the youth rely more on nonverbal communication than the spoken word? Does the youth prefer to remain relatively quiet or tends to “speak only when spoken to”?
- f. The youth's story should also include difficult times for the youth and his or her family and how they coped with those difficulties (often disability-related).

3. *What is the youth's dream for his or her life?*

- a. What are the family's expectations—is the youth expected to work in a family business or traditional family occupation?
- b. Does the family have ideas about what occupations are appropriate or inappropriate for their children? What jobs are valued and not valued? Are certain jobs seen as shameful?
- c. Does the family have certain expectations about the type of postsecondary education appropriate for the youth? Does the family want the youth to attend a certain kind of training/school after high school (e.g., university, technical college, vocational school, apprenticeship without formal schooling, etc.)? Can the youth's family financially afford tuition at postsecondary schools? Considering the career goals of the youth/family, would a community college or vocational school provide a more appropriate education at less expense to the family?
- d. The youth's dream, no matter what it is, should be listed. From those dreams, friends, family members, and professionals will gain insight into how they can support this youth in the future.

4. *What are the family's apprehensions regarding their youth?*

- a. Does the extended family view relocation as unacceptable? If so, transition planning must include looking for occupations and/or postsecondary opportunities within the youth's community.
- b. Does the family view moving out of the parental home as unacceptable? If so, plans with agencies that provide independent-living services would be inappropriate.

5. *What are the youth's gifts, talents, and strengths?*

- a. What are the talents of the family and community?
- b. What are the family's or community's unique strengths and characteristics that could serve to support the youth?
- c. What talents does the youth possess within his or her culture/community that may not be noticed in traditional school settings?

6. *What are the youth's needs?*

- a. Who does the youth need in his or her life?
- b. What activities does the youth need in his or her life?
- c. Who can provide natural supports that would meet the youth's needs?

7. *What should the action plan be?*

- a. What are the responsibilities of each person involved?
- b. What are the steps needed toward making the youth's/family's dream a reality?

Tool 3 shows a sample of a completed MAPS form by a Native Hawaiian youth named Kaleo.

Tool 3. MAPS Sample: Putting It All Together—Kaleo's Profile

What's unique about me?

Hi, my name is Kaleo. I am very unique. In fact, there are only a few people that know certain things about me. For example, I am very interested in becoming a forest ranger or someone who maintains hiking trails. I might also be interested in doing something out-of-doors with animals. Very few people know that I'm quite self-sufficient when I'm in the "woods." I can come up with creative ideas about how to set up camp and the best ways to cook and take care of myself. I think I have good "survival" skills.

There are certain situations where I thrive. If I'm in an environment like the following, I do VERY well:

Outside as opposed to inside, in the country as opposed to the city, in calm as opposed to hectic settings, where it is quiet, and around very few people as opposed to lots of people. I like slow-paced, easygoing tasks as opposed to fast-paced, think-on-your feet tasks. I like safe, planned, routine tasks where you work with your hands as opposed to academic tasks.

There are certain things I've learned about myself. For example, I've learned that the following situations stress me out:

Indoors in the city, around a lot of people where things are constantly changing. When I'm pressured to do many things at once without much direction, I get nervous and upset. Sometimes when I'm nervous, I get angry and say mean things to people. I like to avoid these situations.

Things I like to do, that make me feel good and relaxed are:

Being outside, listening to music, and talking with a few friends.

Environments that make me feel tense or situations that stress me out are:

Time limits, lots of noise, lots of people, writing by hand in front of people, and reading in front of people.

Who is Kaleo?

Kaleo was born April 1, 1986.

Kaleo is the middle child in his family—his older sister lives away from home while she is attending college, and his younger brother is in eighth grade.

Kaleo is a sophomore in an inclusive high school.

Kaleo likes to play computer games, camp, fish, and ride his skateboard around the neighborhood.

Kaleo gets uncomfortable around large groups of people, but feels good when he's around just a few close friends and/or family.

Kaleo has a very supportive family.

What are our dreams for Kaleo?

For Kaleo to have a close circle of supportive friends;

For Kaleo to live as independently as he wishes, with family nearby;

For Kaleo to have meaningful work which helps him feel connected and contributing to his community; and

For Kaleo to regularly enjoy recreation and leisure activities of his choosing.

What are our apprehensions?

For Kaleo to be taken advantage of by other people due to his caring and trusting nature;

For Kaleo to work and live in segregated environments away from people without disabilities;

For Kaleo to live away from his family; and

For social service agencies to be responsible for Kaleo's care, rather than his family supporting him in a way that will preserve his family's culture.

What are Kaleo's strengths, gifts, and abilities?

His memory and retention of facts;
Expressing himself, when allowed time to do it;
His skills on the computer; and
His love of nature, animals, and genuine caring for people.

What are Kaleo's greatest challenges?

Reading comprehension and writing;
Getting around independently in the community;
Being able to earn a living doing what he loves to do; and
Being able to calm himself when he gets stressed.

What supports are needed for Kaleo?

Community access education and preparation for driver's education;
Functional academics, community-based instruction;
Assistance from computer-literate teacher or peer; and
Calculator to strengthen math skills and writing software to strengthen writing skills.

What would Kaleo's ideal day look like, and what must be done to make it happen?

Kaleo's ideal day would be spent out-of-doors doing something physically active. He would be with one or two close friends, and they would have no time pressures to be at any certain place at a certain time. They would laugh and have fun, eat their favorite foods, and listen to music.

Who are people who can create opportunities for Kaleo?

Kaleo's science teacher—involved in nature-based clubs;
Mr. Pau, a neighbor, who works for the U.S. Forest Service;
Kaleo's father and mother, who will work with him on getting a driver's license; and
Kaleo's cousin who is majoring in educational technology at college, who will work with Kaleo on assistive technology for strengthening reading and writing skills.

Conclusion

The information and tools provided in this *Essential Tool* will prove enlightening and useful for transition personnel and others involved in supporting CLD youth with disabilities and their families. However, this *Essential Tool* only explores the surface of some very complex issues. For those interested in exploring these issues in greater depth, the following reference list provides a wealth of other relevant literature.

In addition, two books are specifically mentioned in the text: Lynch and Hanson's (1998) *Developing Cross-Cultural Competence: A Guide for Working with Children and Their Families* (3rd Edition) and Kalyanpur and Harry's (1999) *Culture in Special Education: Building Reciprocal Family-Professional Relationships*. Another book is a good companion to *Culture in Special Education*: Harry, Kalyanpur, and Day's (1999) *Building Cultural Reciprocity with Families: Case Studies in Special Education*. This book also describes the rationale and process of cultural reciprocity and illustrates how it has been successfully used in eight in-depth case studies. Another valuable book is *Bridging Cultures between Home and School: A Guide for Teachers*, by Trumbull et al. (2001), which provides a clear and comprehensive overview of key issues, common individualistic-collectivistic contrasts encountered in the field of education, and effective approaches to dealing with problems that often arise from these contrasts. Numerous other resources of value are also available on the Internet. Following the reference list, a section describes a number of these resources.

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Other Resources Available on the Internet

Assistive Technology

DO-IT (Disabilities, Opportunities, Internetworking, and Technology)

<http://www.washington.edu/doiit>

DO-IT has a strong assistive technology component that contributes to its overall mission of increasing the successful participation of individuals with disabilities in challenging academic programs and careers such as those in science, engineering, mathematics, and technology.

Career Development and Employment

Job Accommodation Network (JAN)

<http://www.jan.wvu.edu>

The JAN provides free consultation and information about job accommodations, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the employability of people with disabilities, and options for self-employment. The network is operated by the International Center for Disability Information at West Virginia University with funding from the Office of Disability Employment Policy, U.S. Department of Labor.

Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP)

<http://www.dol.gov/odep/welcome.html>

At ODEP's Web site you can download fact sheets, checklists, and other tools supporting people with disabilities to achieve their employment goals. You can also subscribe to three different e-mail newsletters providing the latest information on the U.S. Department of Labor's disability-related policies and programs.

Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Workplace Supports and Job Retention

<http://www.worksupport.com>

The purpose of this center is to identify factors that encourage or inhibit businesses from tapping into the pool of potential employees consisting of people with disabilities. The center's Web site provides a gateway to information, resources, and services regarding the employment of people with disabilities.

Youth to Work Coalition

<http://www.ncset.org/youthtowork>

The coalition connects and strengthens public and private sector programs supporting internships, mentoring, and school-to-work transition and partners with business associations and nonprofits serving youth and disability groups. It collects best practices and model programs around the country and provides technical assistance to businesses that plan to establish or strengthen programs to serve youth with disabilities. The Youth to Work Coalition is an initiative of the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, in collaboration with national businesses and business organizations and is supported by NCSET.

Cultural Competence

Cultural Competency Web Site

<http://cecp.air.org/cultural>

This Web site of the Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice (CECP) addresses a number of cultural competence topics and provides a comprehensive list of organizations and other resources (most with links to Web sites) that support enhanced cultural competence.

Division for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Exceptional Learners, Council for Exceptional Children

<http://www.cec.sped.org/dv/ddel.html>

Transition personnel can keep abreast of the latest developments and news related to improving educational opportunities for CLD exceptional learners by joining this division of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC).

National Center for Cultural Competence (NCCC)

<http://gucchd.georgetown.edu/nccc>

The NCCC supports the design, implementation, and evaluation of culturally and linguistically competent service-delivery systems. The focus is on health care and mental health systems, but the principles are applicable to education systems as well. The NCCC is an initiative of the Center for Child and Human Development at Georgetown University.

National Center for Culturally Responsive Educational Systems (NCCRESt)

<http://www.nccrest.org>

NCCRESt provides technical assistance and professional development to close the achievement gap between students from CLD backgrounds and their peers and reduce inappropriate referrals to special education. Its Web site includes an online library with numerous downloadable publications.

Dropout Prevention

National Dropout Prevention Center for Students with Disabilities *<http://www.dropoutprevention.org/NDPC-SD>*

The two main tasks of the NDPC-SD are to synthesize dropout prevention research and practice into usable information and to conduct effective technical assistance and dissemination activities. The center's Web site provides a range of resources and news as well as links to other relevant Web sites.

Empowerment

American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD)

<http://www.aapd-dc.org>

With more than 100,000 members, the AAPD is the largest cross-disability member organization in the United States. It advocates for the economic self-sufficiency and political empowerment of all Americans with disabilities. The AAPD Web site provides online access to a range of news sources and links to other relevant Web sites.

The Civil Rights Project, Harvard University

<http://www.civilrightsproject.harvard.edu>

The Civil Rights Project, based at Harvard University, provides ongoing assessment of prospects for justice and equal opportunity for CLD populations. The project's Web site provides numerous articles and summaries of research and opinion, including many on education, employment, and other topics relevant to transition.

Financial Supports

American Indian College Fund

<http://www.collegefund.org>

This organization provides privately funded scholarships for students at tribal colleges.

Disability Starter Kits from the Social Security Administration

http://www.ssa.gov/disability/disability_starter_kits.htm

The SSA manages cash benefit programs for people with disabilities (Social Security Disability Insurance—SSDI, and Supplemental Security Income—SSI), and also funds services to assist people with disabilities to find and maintain employment. This Web site provides links to download SSA Disability Starter Kits for both adult and child beneficiaries, in both English and Spanish formats. The starter kits contain: 1) a fact sheet that answers questions most people ask about applying for disability benefits, 2) a checklist of documents and information that SSA requests, and 3) a worksheet to help gather and organize the information.

Hispanic Scholarship Fund (HSF)

<http://www.hsf.net>

Since its founding in 1975, HSF has awarded more than 68,000 scholarships worth more than \$144 million to Hispanic students. Scholarship opportunities are available for high school seniors, college undergraduates, community-college transfer students, Gates Millennium scholars, and graduate students.

U.S. Department of Education, Federal Student Aid (FSA)

<http://ifap.ed.gov/FSACounselors/about.html>

The U.S. Department of Education's Federal Student Aid (FSA) programs are the largest source of student aid in America, providing nearly 70% of all student financial aid. Help is available to make education beyond high school financially possible for high school students. The information provided on this Web site is designed to assist school counselors to help students plan their education beyond high school. It provides access to and information about the products and services needed throughout the financial aid process.

United Negro College Fund (UNCF)

<http://www.uncf.org>

Since its founding in 1944, the UNCF has raised more than \$2 billion to help a total of more than 300,000 students attend college. It has distributed more funds to help minorities attend school than any entity outside of the government.

Vocational Rehabilitation State Offices

<http://www.jan.wvu.edu/SBSES/VOCREHAB.HTM>

This Web site provides links to state offices of vocational rehabilitation, which assist individuals with disabilities to pursue meaningful careers. VR helps those individuals obtain employment compatible with their abilities through local job searches and awareness of self-employment and telecommuting opportunities.

Limited English Proficiency

National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition & Language Instruction Educational Programs

<http://www.ncela.gwu.edu>

Formerly known as the National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education, NCELA (based at George Washington University) collects, analyzes, and disseminates information on effective education of learners with limited English proficiency. This Web site provides access to a large proportion of NCELA's special collection of more than 22,000 items addressing the education of English-language learners.

Mentoring

CareerConnect, American Foundation for the Blind

<http://www.afb.org/careerconnect>

The foundation operates CareerConnect, a targeted mentoring program for people who are blind or have vision impairments, with a focus on career development and job-seeking.

Partners for Youth with Disabilities, Inc.

<http://www.pyd.org>

This organization provides one-to-one and group mentoring programs where adult mentors with disabilities act as positive role models and provide support, understanding, and guidance for youth as they strive to reach their personal, educational, and career goals. The organization is based in Boston but serves a national audience through its Partners Online program.

Youth Mentoring Web Topic, NCSET

<http://www.ncset.org/topics/mentoring/?topic=32>

This Web page at the NCSET Web site explores how mentoring provided to youth by caring adults can help youth and adults to grow and develop, and how mentoring can benefit the overall community. Included are an introduction, frequently asked questions, related research, emerging practices, Web sites, and additional resources.

Person-Centered Planning

Parent Advocacy Coalition for Educational Rights (PACER) Center

<http://www.pacer.org/tatral/personal.htm>

This page of the PACER Center Web site provides a concise summary of person-centered planning and numerous links to other online resources.

Person Centered Planning, PACER Center

http://www.peatc.org/NEXT_STEPS/Intro/brief.htm

The PEATC Web site provides online and downloadable versions of *The Guide to Future Planning: Planning the Next Steps to Adult Life for Students with Disabilities*.

Person-Centered Planning: A Tool for Transition

<http://www.ncset.org/publications/viewdesc.asp?id=1431>

At this Web site you can download the NCSET Parent Brief, *Person-Centered Planning: A Tool for Transition*.

The Person-Centered Planning Education Site: Courses

<http://www.ilr.cornell.edu/ped/tsal/pcp/courses.html>

This Web site offers online courses to introduce the basic concepts and tools of person-centered planning. Each course consists of an introduction and overview, activity, quiz, in-depth reading, and a links and resources page. The Web site is operated by the New York State School of Industrial and Labor Relations at Cornell University.

Positive Behavioral Supports

National Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports

<http://www.pbis.org>

This Web site provides numerous resources on effective school-wide disciplinary practices. The center is funded by the Office of Special Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education.

Postsecondary Education

Association on Higher Education And Disability (AHEAD)

<http://www.ahead.org>

This professional association works towards the full participation of persons with disabilities in postsecondary education. Numerous resources can be ordered through this Web site, including the book, *Expanding Postsecondary Options for Minority Students with Disabilities*.

CLD Transition Success Research Project

<http://www.cld.hawaii.edu>

This project of the Center on Disability Studies at the University of Hawaii at Manoa is working with four partner sites at other U.S. universities. Its Resource Links page has links to more than 200 relevant Web sites plus more than 100 documents that can be downloaded/viewed for free. Its CLD Bibliography page has an annotated bibliography of more than 400 print resources, and its Products page has articles and briefs produced by the project that can be viewed or downloaded.

The George Washington University HEATH Resource Center

<http://www.heath.gwu.edu>

HEATH, the national clearinghouse on postsecondary education for individuals with disabilities, is authorized by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). HEATH provides specialized educational information on postsecondary education options and services to people with disabilities, their families, and the professionals who work with them.

Self-Determination and Self-Advocacy

Center for Self-Determination

http://web.uccs.edu/education/special/self_determination

This center at the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs conducts research and demonstration projects on supporting individuals with disabilities to choose, set goals, and self-manage their lives.

National Research and Training Center on Psychiatric Disability

<http://www.psych.uic.edu/uicnrtc/self-determination.htm>

Although the five-year funding period has ended for this project at the University of Illinois at Chicago, this Web page is still accessible and provides more than a dozen self-determination tools that are particularly valuable for those who face major challenges in managing their own behavior. They include *Express Yourself! Assessing Self-Determination in Your Life* (11 page booklet), *This is Your Life! Creating Your Self-Directed Life Plan* (58 page person-centered planning workbook), and *Webcast: Using the Internet to Promote Self-Determination & Emotional Well-Being* (three sessions that can be viewed after free registration).

Self-Determination Synthesis Project

<http://www.uncc.edu/sdsp/home.asp>

This project, based at University of North Carolina at Charlotte, is funded by the U.S. Department of Education to review and synthesize the knowledge base and best practices for self-determination. The project's Web site provides information about numerous self-determination and self-advocacy curricula and initiatives as well as links to other relevant Web sites.

Social Inclusion

Yes I Can Social Inclusion Program

<http://ici.umn.edu/yesican>

This Web page provides information and ordering instructions for the *Yes I Can Social Inclusion Program*, a 20-module curriculum fostering the social inclusion of junior and senior high school students with disabilities through shared classroom and recreation activities with peers. The curriculum costs \$49.

Strengths-Based Assessment

Using Strength-Based Assessment in Transition Planning

<http://cecp.air.org/interact/expertonline/strength/transition/1.asp>

This Web page has a downloadable version of the article *Using Strength-Based Assessment in Transition Planning* by Michael H. Epstein and Susan Rudolph. The article describes one of the few available strengths-based assessment instruments, the Behavioral and Emotional Rating Scale, which assesses five areas of childhood strength: interpersonal strengths, family involvement, intrapersonal strengths, school functioning, and affective strengths.

Transition

Division on Career Development & Transition (DCDT), Council for Exceptional Children *<http://www.dcdt.org>*

Many transition personnel join this division of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC). It is a membership organization for persons and families interested in career and vocational issues for students with disabilities. Members receive the organization's journal and newsletter. A number of transition resources are available through the DCDT Web site.

Technical Assistance on Transition and the Rehabilitation Act (TATRA) *<http://www.pacer.org/tatra/tatra.htm>*

Sign up to receive this informative e-mail newsletter featuring announcements and resources to help parent organizations, advocates, and professionals better serve adolescents and young adults with disabilities and their families.

Transition Coalition

<http://www.transitioncoalition.org>

The Web site of the Transition Coalition, based at University of Kansas, provides information on the transition from school to adult life of youth with disabilities as well as links to other relevant Web sites. This site includes a searchable database of postsecondary programs for youth with disabilities as well as professional development modules for transition specialists.

Transition Research Institute

<http://www.ed.uiuc.edu/SPED/tri/institute.html>

The Web site of this institute, which is based at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, provides access to publications of the institute and links to other relevant Web sites.

Youthhood

<http://www.youthhood.org>

NCSET's Youthhood is a free, interactive Web site that young adults and their teachers, parents, and mentors can use to plan for life after high school. Grounded in the principals of universal design, the site addresses the future planning needs of all youth. Youthhood puts research into practice through a unique and extensive blend of content, interactive activities, links to related Web sites, and planning tools that tie youths' future goals to their current academic work.



National Center on Secondary Education and Transition

Institute on Community Integration (UCEDD)

6 Pattee Hall, 150 Pillsbury Drive SE

Minneapolis, MN 55455

t. 612.624.2097

f. 612.624.9344

e. ncset@umn.edu

w. www.ncset.org