TRANSITION OF INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE DEAF or HARD of HEARING: A Literature Profile

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(from the cover) The first comprehensive study of severely and profoundly hearing-impaired youth, “Deaf Students and the School to Work Transition” discusses laws and regulations, reviews available services, examines existing relationships between educational programs and vocational rehabilitation agencies, and provides parents' perspectives on the transition process. Prepared by researchers in the field of hearing impairment, this innovative resource focuses on the “reality” of transition. Current legislative, public policy, and systems initiatives are explored, in addition to employment realities for individuals who are hearing-impaired. From first-person accounts by parents of young people with hearing impairments to data from unique national surveys on transition, this valuable research guide provides additional insight into smoothing the transition process.


Reports the results of a survey of 326 secondary education programs for adolescents who are deaf and severely hearing-impaired. Residential and mainstream programs were surveyed. The goal of the survey was to establish a profile of transition programs nationally. Respondents were asked to rate the value of several items and also whether the items had been implemented in their programs. The survey covered five general areas: curriculum and instruction, documentation, transition planning, administrative support, and adult services. All of the programs valued the survey items more than they implemented them. The residential schools had higher implementation rates than the mainstream or other programs. This survey indicates that there is a need to encourage more interaction between schools and adult service agencies, and to provide schools with information to assist them with implementing transition programs.


This article outlines the development and preliminary psychometric properties of the Transition Competence Battery for Deaf Adolescents and Young Adults (TCB). The TCB is a 3-option multiple choice test which has both written and videotaped instructions. It has three subtests on employment and three subtests on independent living. Students from both mainstream and residential settings were used to standardize the instrument.


Contributing authors review efforts that have been made to develop and refine career preparation services for individuals with hearing impairments. The titles of the six articles and appendix are:

1. Career Education: A Literature Review
2. A Current Profile of Career Education Programs

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3. A Dilemma: Who and What to Teach in Career Education Programs?
4. Vocational Decision-making: A Career Education Approach
5. Where Do We Go from Here?
6. A Directory of Career Education Curricula Used in State Schools and Postsecondary Institutions


This literature summarizes 43 empirical studies of the school-to-community transition of individuals who are deaf or hearing-impaired and developmentally disabled. The studies chosen were conducted between 1975 and 1989. The areas discussed include: demographics, educational practices and procedures, career/vocational preparation, independent living skills, social/interpersonal behavior, communication, assessment and evaluation, family issues, service-provider training and programs, and community outcomes. The authors found many gaps in the research and recommend conducting more research on this population. They also point out some weaknesses in the empirical research and suggest several ways these can be rectified. It is pointed out that a significant amount of the research on this population is published in nondeafness-related journals. The authors recommend that more research in this area be reported in deafness-related journals so that it will be more readily available to individuals in the field.


This qualitative study examines ten hearing-impaired students' perceptions of their personal changes during a year-long transition program. All ten of the students had a severe to profound bilateral hearing loss. Eight of them had been mainstreamed in the public school system throughout elementary school and high school. The ten young adults participated in three in-depth interviews at the beginning, middle, and end of the program. They were also observed during daily activities. Several themes were found to be consistent across informants. These included issues of identity (did they see themselves as deaf?), personal values, family and social relationships, communication style, plans and expectations for the future, and perceptions of change.


Examines the needs of deaf and hard-of-hearing students in moving from school to adult life. A community outreach program in Arizona has developed a transition model which emphasizes a student-centered team approach. The team includes the student and the significant adults in his/her life. This team assists the student with all aspects of transition, including independent living skills, vocational skills and goals, and development of community resources. This model stresses allowing the student to develop their goals. The other members of the team then assist by determining ways to help the student reach those goals. Examples of adult team members include school staff, vocational rehabilitation staff, training program staff, counselors, and parents.


The question examined in this study is whether a separate theory of career development is needed, exclusively for individuals who are hearing-impaired. Two causal models of career development were developed. The second of these included five variables exclusive to individuals who are hearing-impaired. It is suggested that the second model is more descriptive of the career development process for individuals who are hearing-impaired but, statistical analyses did not confirm the need for a separate theory of career development for those individuals.


This article is a discussion of the issues relating to preparing the individual who is deaf or hearing-impaired for employment. The author outlines the history of vocational education and employment of the deaf, and discusses current activities and needs in these areas. Also discussed is the process of
preparing for, entering, and transitioning from postsecondary training programs. The conclusions include that the hearing-impaired person needs a solid foundation, that preparation needs to begin at an early stage in development, that career development is a lifelong process, and that the individual with the hearing impairment must be actively involved in the decision-making process.


According to the Ericksonian perspective, the adolescent has two overriding tasks to accomplish. They must develop a personal identity and a capacity for intimacy. This article explores the family's involvement in the solving of these tasks. The authors discuss the issues of independence, vocational choice-making, sexual roles, and intimacy for the adolescent. These issues are discussed within the framework of the transition from school to adult life.


Although this article does not discuss adolescents per se it is about the entrance of deaf individuals into the work force. The author outlines several issues that influence the vocational attainment of deaf individuals. These issues include special developmental issues (such as the presence of other disabling conditions in addition to deafness), educational issues, employment issues, and rehabilitation and career-counseling issues. Professionals in the field must consider experiential deficits and developmental lags in these areas. The author recommends the use of actual job try-outs in a variety of work settings to provide learning experiences for the client and diagnostic information for the counselor. He also emphasizes the need for appropriately training counselors who specialize in this population and have the ability to community effectively with them.


Reviews research dealing with career decision-making among young adults who are deaf. Points out the deficits that exist in career decision-making ability and career education among deaf adolescents. Focuses on the roles of parents, school personnel, vocational rehabilitation agencies and employers in facilitating the student's career development. Makes recommendations for each of these areas to enhance this process.


Interviewed 189 seniors from 16 residential and day high schools to determine if career development interventions have positive effects on the career decisions of deaf seniors. School staff evaluated the seniors' career decisions, career decision-making skills, and probable post-high school placements. This study indicates that there are several factors that influence seniors' career decisions including career counseling, vocational training, career education courses, and the availability of postsecondary placement options in their area. The study indicated that all of these factors increased the seniors' ability to make sound decisions. Therefore, the case is strengthened that whatever can be done to enhance the capacity of high schools to offer meaningful career development activities is a worthwhile investment.


This study sought to answer three questions. These questions were how much discourse about future plans occur between parents and their deaf adolescents, what are characteristics of the individual and their family that might influence parental involvement in future planning, and what techniques do parents use to help their child prepare for the future. One hundred eighty-nine students who are deaf from 16 residential and day high schools were interviewed. Their parents were surveyed by mail.

Examines issues that affect the deaf adolescent's transition from school to adult life. These include the characteristics of these youth, their schools, their training, and the availability of vocational rehabilitation services. The article also considers conditions within the labor market which have relevance for deaf youth.


A total of eighty-six vocational rehabilitation agencies and special education agencies responded to a survey on the transition, from school to community, of students with hearing impairments. The survey covered state-level transition agreements, definitions of client/student hearing loss, educational personnel involved in transition, rehabilitation personnel involved in transition, and cooperative planning in residential and mainstreamed settings. Survey results suggest that there are large gaps in transition services for students with hearing impairments and that special education and vocational rehabilitation must communicate and work together to fill these gaps.


This article discusses a model for the transition of students who are deaf or hearing-impaired from school to adulthood. The author focuses on three central players in this process: the school, the student/parents and the state vocational rehabilitation agency. A team approach to the transition process is encouraged. The transition team would include representatives of each of the above-mentioned groups. This team would develop a written individual transition plan for each student. The plan could be incorporated into the Individual Education Plan (IEP), the Individual Rehabilitation Plan (IWRP), or could be a separate document. The article also discusses the need for a structured plan for implementation at the state, school district, and local levels and the need to develop training programs to train staff to implement the programs.