A School-To-Adulthood Transition Follow-up System for Youth with Disabilities in Manitoba

by

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Abstract

In this study, I develop a transition follow-up system (TFS) — a data-collection system that tracks information about persons with disabilities from high school to adulthood — that is socially valid in Manitoba. I investigate the current data-collection practices regarding persons with disabilities in Manitoba and analyze stakeholders' needs for a transition follow-up system using document review, surveys, focus groups, and individual interviews. There is currently no formal data-collection system documenting the transition from school to adulthood of persons with disabilities in the province. Stakeholders have acknowledged the need for such a data-collection system in order to improve current support systems. The key suggestions that stakeholders have made with regard to implementing a transition follow-up system are (a) ensuring impartial, reliable data management, (b) minimizing any additional work required for schools and adult services programs/agencies, (c) utilizing existing data collection practices, (d) applying various data collection methods, (e) carrying out longitudinal data collection regarding individuals with disabilities, (f) including persons with various disabilities, from mild to severe, (g) involving various government departments in the transition process, (h) protecting privacy and confidentiality, and i) ensuring user-friendly data collection and reporting. The most significant concern that stakeholders express relates to securing the financial and human capacity to develop and maintain a transition follow-up system. Based on these suggestions and the current Manitoba context, I propose a transition follow-up system model, recommending operative aspects such as scope, purpose, administrators, target youth, information to collect, data collectors, data-collection methods, data sources, timeline of data collection, reporting, confidentiality and privacy,

and methods of ensuring the reliability and validity of data. Although the model proposed

is relevant to the Manitoba context, it also offers a useful set of general guidelines on

critical issues that need to be considered in developing and implementing a transition

follow-up system.

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Background

Over the past few decades, the inclusion of individuals with disabilities in community and in general education has increased[1]. Increasing numbers of people with disabilities live and work in the community in North America (Lewis & Doorlag, 2006; Wehmeyer, Agran, & Hughes, 1998). Their interest in the careers and community life is greater than it has ever been (Greene & Kochhar-Bryant, 2003; Israelite, Swartz, Huynh, & Tocco, 2005; Wehman, Brooke, & Katherine, 2001; Wehman & Kregel, 1998). These changes have led educational and social service professionals to be concerned about the transition of youth with disabilities from school to adult life (Anderson & Asselin, 1996; Aspel, Bettis, Quinn, Test, & Wood, 1999; Aston, Dewson, Loukas, & Dyson, 2005). For youth with disabilities who will require social supports in adulthood, the transition from secondary education to those postsecondary supports is particularly critical (Anderson & Asselin; Powers, Turner, Matuszewski, Wilson, & Loesch, 1999).

During this time, the jurisdictions authorities – federal, provincial, state, and territorial – and professionals in North America have devoted a great deal of effort to providing transition planning and services for youth with disabilities. For example, Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, Ontario, and Saskatchewan have articulated in their policies that schools develop individualized transition plans (ITPs) or infuse transition issues into individualized education plans (IEPs) for students with special needs (Alberta Learning, 2000; British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2001, 2005; Manitoba Education, Citizenship, and Youth, 2005; Manitoba Education and Training, 1989b;

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[1] The general term 'disabilities' in this study includes various types of disabilities, such as physical, intellectual, emotional/behavioral, and sensory disabilities while specific types of disabilities will be specified as such.

Ontario Ministry of Education and Training, 1998, 2002; Saskatchewan Learning, 1989,

2005)[2]. In Manitoba in particular, a proclaimed inter-department protocol, Transition

Planning Process, makes an ITP mandatory for students with special needs (Manitoba

Education and Training). In the United States, the Individuals with Disabilities Education

Act of 1990 (IDEA 1990) also mandated transition services to be provided for all

students with special needs across the country (Kochhar-Bryant, 2003c).

Despite the earlier initiatives of professionals and policy makers, many youth with

disabilities still experienced difficulties in the transition process from school to adult life

(Anderson & Asselin, 1996; Powers et al., 1999). Many students with special needs and

their families undergo stress, depression, or fear about the unknown future and often have

limited access to information about the transition process or services (Mactavish,

Lutfiyya, & Manwaring, 2004; Park, 2008; Salmon & Kennealey, 2007). In addition,

many students with special needs failed to complete high school (Kortering & Braziel,

1998; National Organization on Disability, 2000).

The post-school outcomes of youth with disabilities continued to appear

significantly poorer than those of their counterparts in terms of employment, social

activities, community involvement and independent living (Anderson & Asselin, 1996;

Freeze, 1996; Kochhar-Bryant, 2003c). Freeze argued that many students with special

needs in Canada are at risk of unemployment, social maladaptation, and low self-esteem

in their adulthood. According to the Participation and Activity Limitation Survey

(PALS), for example, in 2006 the employment rate of Canadians with disabilities

(56.2%) was much lower than that of those with disabilities (80.2%) (in Manitoba, 61.5%

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[2] Manitoba Education and Training and Manitoba Education, Citizenship, and Youth are both former
names of Manitoba Education, which is the education department of the Manitoba Government.

and 82.2% respectively) (Statistics Canada, 2010). In the USA, the National Organization on Disability (2000) reported that among the subjects of their survey who are between ages 16 and 64, only 34% of those with disabilities were employed (full-time or part-time), while 81% of their non-disabled counterparts had jobs. In addition, many adults with disabilities suffered low self-esteem and experience difficulties in developing social relationships (Chadsey & Sheldon, 1998; Clark & Kolstoe, 1995; Gajar, Goodman, & McAfee, 1993; Salmon & Kennealey, 2007; Wehmeyer et al., 1998).

The continuing challenges and poor adult outcomes that youth with disabilities experienced raised questions about the efficacy and accountability of the current transition support system and its services (Johnson et al., 1993). First, accumulated research underscored the need to improve current transition services (Baer et al., 2003; Benz, Lindstrom, & Yovanoff, 2000; Benz, Yovanoff, & Doren, 1997; Brown, 2000; Colley & Jamison, 1998; Frank & Sitlington, 2000; Harvey, 2002; Izzo, Cartledge, Miller, Growick, & Rutkowski, 2000). Gajar et al. (1993) claimed, for example, that poor employment outcomes stemmed from (a) a lack of appropriate career-related programs and services, (b) limited parental involvement, (c) absence of work experiences in community, and (d) the lack of cooperative programming and support systems for youth with disabilities. In addition, parents and educators expressed dissatisfaction with the way schools prepared youth with disabilities for career or postsecondary education and argued for improving transition planning and support for students (Louis Harris and Associates, 1989). In the same vein, Freeze (1996) recommended that secondary education in Canada provide students with special needs with more effective transition services.

Second, among many studies concerning accountability measurement, student performance or outcome was one of the most critical issues (Elliott, Thurlow, & Ysseldyke, 1996; Owings, Hennes, Lachat, Neiman, & Facchina, 1990; Thurlow, Elliott, & Ysseldyke, 2003; Thurlow, Langenfeld, Nelson, Shin, & Coleman, 1998). Given that one of the foremost goals of the education system and also of transition services is to properly prepare students for adult life as productive, participating, and healthy citizens, the poor adult outcomes of youth with disabilities and the lack of efforts to accurately track outcome data undermine the accountability of the current educational and transition support system (Mooney & Phelps, 2001).

Many researchers emphasized the necessity of a transition follow-up system (Kochhar-Bryant, 2003a; Thurlow et al., 1998). A transition follow-up system, which will be referred to as TFS hereafter, is a database system that tracks the student outcomes (educational achievements and results) and post-school outcomes (work and adult life) of youth with disabilities. A TFS can help to ensure the accountability of services and to identify critical factors that affect adult outcomes (Halpern, 1990; Johnson et al., 1993; Owings et al., 1990). Browning, Rabren, Whetstone, and Dunn (1995) noted that much effort had been devoted to assuring that youth with disabilities received transition services without much attention paid as to how successful those services are. It is essential to establish a statewide or national system which allows consistent data-collection on the outcomes of youth with disabilities (Elliott et al., 1996; Owings et al.; Nebraska Special Education Accountability Commission, 1996; Thurlow et al.).

A TFS also can be a critical tool for improving the existing transition support system and services. A systematic approach to obtaining information regarding the school

experiences and adult outcomes of youth with disabilities permits determining the factors

that affect their successful adjustment to adulthood (Blackorby & Edgar, 1992;

DeStefano & Wagner, 1992; Halpern, 1992). Such approach is also useful to identify any

gaps or problems with current transition services.

DeStefano and Wagner (1992) noted that such a TFS for youth with disabilities

can be used to: (a) measure school outcomes of students with special needs, (b) identify

ways to improve educational and social services and policies, (c) ensure the

accountability of programs and services, (d) provide an accurate picture of the adult

outcomes of individuals with disabilities (e.g., employment, residential placement, and

community integration), and (e) examine the effects of a specific intervention or system

change.

In response to the increasing recognition of the significance of a TFS for youth

with disabilities, many US states had initiated state-wide models during the last two

decades (National Post-School Outcomes Center, 2003). In 2003, of the 50 states in the

United States, 25 reported that they had developed and implemented a state-wide TFS for

youth with disabilities (National Post-School Outcomes Center, 2003). Supporting this

trend, in 2004 the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) required that all

states monitor the performance of transition services by reporting the outcomes of youth

with disabilities (Office of Special Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education,

2008). Furthermore, the National Post-School Outcomes Center was founded in 2004 to

facilitate states' transition follow-up practices for youth with disabilities (National Post-

School Outcomes Center, 2003). The Center's purposes were to establish the knowledge-

base of transition follow-up practices and to develop and provide technical assistance and strategies to efficiently implement these systems.

Unlike the United States, there are no existing TFSs in Canada. In Manitoba no provincial or school-divisional initiative for tracking post-school outcomes of youth with disabilities has ever been implemented. Furthermore, very little is known about how and what transition practices are provided for Canadian youth with disabilities and what their post-school outcomes are. While there is a mounting body of research on transition in the United States, very little research has been conducted in Canada in this critical area (e.g., Freeze, Kueneman, & Moffat, 1994; Hunter, MacKinlay, Manning, Podetz, & Ronaghan, 1993; Kueneman, Freeze, & Moffat, 1994; Ministry of Labour & Ministry of Education, Province of Ontario, 1988; Moffat, Freeze, Kueneman, & Jones, 1994; Pearpoint, O'Brien, & Forest, 1993).

Research Purpose and Questions

In recognition of the importance of a TFS and the absence of TFS in Canada, I aim to develop a TFS model in this study that is socially valid in Manitoba. A socially valid model must reflect the local context, including history, culture, resources, and service systems, as well as the stakeholders' perspectives and values (Baer et al., 2003; Rabren, Dunn, & Chambers, 2002). In the process of developing a model for a TFS, I will seek to obtain answers to the following questions:

1. What information needs to be obtained through a TFS?

2. How should a TFS be implemented?

3. What are the local barriers and needs when implementing a TFS?

Significance of the Study

I hope that the TFS proposed by this study will ultimately encourage Manitoba and the other jurisdictions in Canada to initiate their own model and will provide them with an empirically-based set of guidelines for their efforts. Implementing a TFS will help policy makers and professionals identify the factors that impact the adult outcomes of youth with disabilities and eventually improve the transition support system by addressing those factors. Furthermore, implementing a TFS will also promote accountability of educational and social services in Canada by yielding consistent and chronological data about student-and adult-outcomes of youth with disabilities. Lastly, the findings of this study will also help policy makers and professionals understand stakeholders' perspectives on the key aspects of the transition of youth with disabilities.

Context in Manitoba

When developing a TFS model that is socially valid for youth with disabilities in Manitoba, it is essential to understand the province's infrastructure, such as history, policies and current practices of transition planning and services for youth with disabilities, since that infrastructure will affect the development and implementation of a TFS. Hence, this section examines the Manitoba context in these areas and also the current data collection practices about persons with disabilities in the province.

History of Special Education in Manitoba

The provision of universal public education programs for students with special needs has only been in practice in Manitoba in recent few decades. Until the 1960s, students with special needs were not entitled to public education in the province (Lutfiyya & VanWalleghem, 2001). Many students with special needs, such as

intellectual disabilities and sensory impairments, were denied access to public schools

and in some cases attended special schools (e.g., institutional schools such as the

Manitoba School for the Deaf or the Brantford School for the Blind in Ontario)

(Association for Community Living, 1989; Blais & Kemp, n.d.; Lutfiyya &

VanWalleghem). In the 1960s, groups of parents whose children had disabilities initiated

and advocated educational programs for students with special needs. For example, in the

1950s, a small group of parents started classes and schools for students with intellectual

disabilities who were excluded from the public school system (Lutifyya &

VanWalleghem).

In 1967 the province finally enacted amendments to the Public School Act

requiring that public schools provide programs for students with special needs (Manitoba

Education and Training, 1998b). However, it was not until 1989, when the province

published a policy document, "Special Education in Manitoba: Policy and Procedural

Guidelines for Education of Students with Special Needs in the Public School System",

that the province proclaimed inclusive education as the educational standard for students

with special needs in Manitoba. The document stated:

> It is the policy of Manitoba Education and Training to support the education of
>
> students with special learning needs in regular classroom settings whenever this is
>
> in the best interests of the students. A variety of special supports are available to
>
> facilitate such integration. Support is also available for students who require
>
> alternative learning environments for a portion or all of the school day (Manitoba
>
> Education and Training, 1989a, p.1).

Since this policy was introduced, many schools in Manitoba have moved to facilitate inclusive education (Manitoba Education and Training).

During the last few decades, inclusive education for students with special needs has been significantly promoted and programs and services for them have been developed. Inclusive approaches to the education of students with special needs became a common practice in the province (Manitoba Education and Training, 1998b). However, the educational services provided for students with special needs varied not only from student to student but also across the province, such as from teacher to teacher, school to school, and division to division as to their level of inclusion (Lutfiyya & VanWalleghem, 2001; Manitoba Education and Training). In fact, in some schools in Manitoba, inclusive education is not standard practice yet (Park, 2008).

In describing services during the 1980s and 1990s, researchers attributed the wide range of quality in educational practice for students with special needs in Manitoba, at least partly due to the minimal statutory standards from the province during the last few decades (Henteleff, 1993; Lutfiyya & VanWalleghem, 2001; Smith, 1994; Whitley, 1998). Regulations and policies pertinent to public education in Manitoba allowed schools and divisions to develop their own policies with little direction and minimal standards. In particular, Lutfiyya & VanWalleghem noted that there was the lack of clear stipulation in Manitoba on the rights (e.g., entitlement to inclusive educational placements, individualized educational planning, nondiscriminatory assessment, and appeal process) of students with special needs to special education programs and services.

Bartlett and Freeze (2005) identified several problems with the Manitoba support system for students with severe emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD). The researchers noted that the current support system for students with EBD is still fragmented and inflexible. For example, a provincial protocol, the Interdepartmental Protocol Agreement for Children and Adolescents with Severe to Profound Emotional and Behavioural Disorders, mandates that each eligible child and youth have a case manager who coordinates interdisciplinary services. However, there are no guidelines or resources (e.g., time, training, information) provided for case managers to effectively work with the various agencies involved. Additionally, no interagency agreements and funding are in place to facilitate the interagency coordination. Furthermore, Bartlett and Freeze noted the imparity of resource distribution across the province in favour of urban areas in comparison to rural and reserve (First Nation) areas. The province's service system relied on the family's initiative in seeking services to identify eligible children and youth; in effect, this might disservice youth whose families were uninformed or unable to take such an initiative. Although Bartlett and Freeze focused on the support system for children and youth with EBD in Manitoba, the problems discussed above may represent the province's existing barriers in support systems for youth with disabilities in general.

In 2005, Manitoba proclaimed the Public Schools Amendment Act (Appropriate Educational Programming) that includes specified mandates and standards for the delivery of special education programs (Manitoba Education, Citizenship, and Youth, 2006). Under the Act, all students are entitled to appropriate educational programming, which must include inclusive placements, reasonable accommodation, and necessary

resources and services. In addition, the Act specifies that, for most students, the provincial curriculum was the appropriate education programming and for those who require significant accommodations from the regular curriculum, IEPs are required. The Act also provided directions regarding school policies, early identification, assessments, educational planning, student discipline, dispute resolution, service coordination, professional supports, and the roles of stakeholders (e.g., students, parents, teachers, administrators, etc.).

The Public Schools Amendment Act (2005) was expected to promote coherent, high-quality special education services across the province (Manitoba Government, 2009). However, ensuring quality special education services required more than clear regulations and policies. Researchers identified Manitoba's limited accountability measures regarding the outcomes of educational programs and services for youth with disabilities as a major area of concern (Lutfiyya & VanWalleghem, 2001; Manitoba Education and Training, 1998b; 2001). The province monitored the delivery of educational services for students with special needs to some degree, annually reviewing the school divisions' practices in the areas of the provision of IEPs, program plans, and expense reports. However, the province did not examine the outcomes for students with special needs or of programs and services provided for them. Thus, the provincial government collected no data that account for the success or failure of the special education programs provided or for effective approaches to positive service outcomes (Manitoba Education and Training, 1998b). To address this, researchers suggested that the province develop a consistent, reliable system that evaluates student learning

outcomes and program outcomes (Lutfiyya & VanWalleghem; Manitoba Education and Training, 1998b; 2001).

The transition services for students with special needs in Manitoba have evolved along with the development of inclusive special education. The development and challenges of special education in Manitoba have affected the policies regarding transition services and other pertinent policies for students with special needs. I will examine the history and practices of transition services for youth with disabilities in Manitoba in depth below.

History of Transition Planning and Services in Manitoba

Although transition services were being delivered locally in various forms and levels in Manitoba, the first governmental initiative to provincially address transition issues for students with special needs occurred in 1989. In that year, Manitoba published an interdepartmental protocol on transition services, the "Transition Planning Process", with the departments of Education and Training, Family Services, and Health (Manitoba Education and Training, 1989a). Further, in 1999 the government issued a support document for the implementation of the protocol, the "Manitoba Transition Planning Process Support Guidelines", providing detailed procedural guidelines. In 2006, Appropriate Educational Programming in Manitoba (Bill 13) mandated transition planning and services for high school students who are 16 years old or older and require an IEP (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2006). Nearly two decades after the protocol on transition services was introduced, a support document entitled 'Bridging to Adulthood: A Protocol for Transitioning Students with Exceptional Needs from School to Community' was published, providing clarified guidelines regarding the process,

timeline, stakeholders' roles, and resources for the transition planning for students with special needs. The protocol and support documents have been developed to facilitate the efforts of the government, local schools, and support professionals to develop transition services and the support system for students with special needs in Manitoba.

Manitoba Policies on Transition Planning

If implemented, the transition planning process assists students with special needs to prepare for adult life in the areas of employment, independent living, social relationships, and community participation (Healthy Child Manitoba, 2008). The transition protocol and support documents in Manitoba guide students with special needs, their families, schools, and other support professionals as to how transition planning and services should be delivered. Firstly, the Transition Planning Process mandates that schools initiate individualized transition planning at age 16 or older for students who would require long-term adult support services after leaving school; however, the latest support document, Bridging to Adulthood, strongly suggests beginning individualized transition planning as soon as the student enters high school, which is usually at age 14. Applicable students may have various disabilities, such as mental, learning, physical, psychiatric, visual, and hearing disabilities.

In the transition planning process, Manitoba schools are expected to collaborate with other community service providers as well as with the students and their families in order to ensure that the youth receive coordinated transition services while transitioning from school to adult life. Other community service providers include community workers from Manitoba Family Services and Consumer Affairs, Manitoba Health, and other advocacy and support organizations, such as the Society for Manitobans with Disabilities

(SMD), and the Canadian Paraplegic Association Manitoba Inc. (CPA). A case manager

from school staff, who is expected to take the major responsibility for coordinating the

transition planning process, is to be designated for a student with special needs by the

principal. The document Bridging to Adulthood specifies the roles of the case manager as

follows (Healthy Child Manitoba, 2008): (a) scheduling and facilitating transition

planning meetings, (b) determining graduation dates in conjunction with students, parents

or legal guardians, (c) determining members of transition planning teams in consultation

with students and parents, (d) facilitating agreement about the roles and responsibilities

of members, (e) monitoring the actions that arise from the transition plan, (f) maintaining

transition planning documents (e.g., student assessments, transition planning file,

documentation of the plan, meeting notes and other related materials), (g) updating plans

annually and keeping pupil files current, (h) maintaining communication with team

members, students, parents or legal guardians, (i) helping the student and parents find

services and resources available in the community, and (j) ensuring appropriate referrals

are made to the necessary adult support programs. The transition planning process

continues until the student leaves school which is in or before June of the calendar year in

which the student turns 21.

     In summary, Manitoba policies on the transition planning provide solid grounds

for the development and implement of a transition support system for students with

special needs: mandating individualized transition planning; encouraging early initiation

for transition planning; undertaking a comprehensive approach to the transition to adult

life; promoting coordinated transition services among the several associated departments;

providing a clear timeline of the transition process; and articulating the roles of stakeholders.

Transition Practices in Manitoba

Documentation of the current transition practice for youth with disabilities in Manitoba or on their adult outcomes is limited. The sketchy picture of the current Manitoba transition practice depicted by a few studies shows that there has been significant progress in the transition support system; however, many issues remain in the delivery of transition services that interfere with the transition process of youth with disabilities to adult life (Freeze, 1996; Mactavish et al., 2004; Manitoba Education and Training, 1998b; Park, 2008).

According to the Manitoba Special Education Review, educators noted the poor transition support for students with special needs as one of the biggest issues in the Manitoba education system (Manitoba Education and Training, 1998b). In addition, in spite of strong policies on transition services in Manitoba, a great inconsistency in the quality of transition services among schools has been reported (Manitoba Education and Training, 1998b; Park, 2008). According to Park, the current transition planning practices in Manitoba schools appear diverse in terms of the case manager's roles, the supports and resources for students, families, and professionals involved in the process, school programs and transition services provided for students, the degree of student and family involvement, and the extent of internal and interagency collaboration.

One of the most consistently reported issues in the Manitoba transition support system for youth with disabilities is the service gap for adults between the ages of 18 and 21 (Mactavish et al., 2004; Manitoba Education and Training, 1998b; Park, 2008). For

example, Supported Living Program, an adult service program from the Manitoba government for individuals with extensive support needs, is only available for those at age 21 or older. Because no support services are available to them until they reach that age, many of the eligible individuals remain at school regardless of their desire to graduate. This service gap has been a great barrier to a smooth transition for youth with disabilities who want to graduate from school before age 21 and begin their adult life.

Another commonly raised issue in regard to the transition planning for youth with disabilities is the lack of accessible information on the transition process and on the resources for students, families, teachers, and other professionals (Mactavish et al., 2004; Park, 2008). The families of youth with disabilities often identify limited access to the information on the transition process and services as the greatest challenge in assisting their children in the process (Mactavish et al.). While some of the transition planning case managers in Manitoba, special education teachers who are responsible for coordinating transition services for students with special needs, admit that informing families about the transition process and services is one of the most difficult tasks for them, they relate the difficulties to a complicated service system and a lack of information sources for themselves (Park, 2008). Evidently, without addressing this issue, it is difficult to expect an effective transition planning process for youth with disabilities.

It appears that there are limited supports for students, families, teachers, and other professionals to deliver effective transition services. Some case managers report that very little support and few resources are provided for them to efficiently perform the role of transition coordinator. Access to a legitimate authority to oversee the transition process, flexible timetables, financial and human resources, information, and pre- and in-service

training would facilitate their ability to perform more effectively and efficiently (Park, 2008). Kochhar-Bryant (2003c) noted that the lack of resources for team members was one of the barriers to effective interagency collaboration.

The key issues discussed above show that there is much room to improve the transition planning system and services for youth with disabilities in Manitoba. As a result of the current system and services, youth with disabilities have limited access to employment, community involvement, and post-secondary education or training after graduation (Freeze, 1996).

Transition Follow-up Practice in Manitoba

While the Transition Planning Process requires that schools review transition plans on an annual basis, no initiatives, either at the provincial government level or at the local level, are known to follow-up the transition outcomes of youth with disabilities in Manitoba. According to The National Council on Disability (2000), transition planning was the area with the second highest level of non-compliance in the United States. Given the absence of follow-up reports or a monitoring system of local practices in Manitoba, the level of enforcement of the existing transition policies raises a significant question of accountability. In addition, we have very little knowledge of how youth with disabilities in Manitoba adjust to adult life after leaving school or of how effective the transition services provided for them are. Therefore, Manitoba needs to establish a follow-up system, which regularly examines the transition outcomes of youth with disabilities in order to ensure an effective, accountable transition support system.

Target Youth for the Development of a Transition Follow-up System

The target population of the TFS of this study are those youth with disabilities who had or have had an Individualized Education Plan (hereafter IEP) or an Individualized Transition Plan (hereafter ITP) during high school in Manitoba. Manitoba Education and Training (1998a, p. 1) defined an IEP as "a written document developed and implemented by a team, outlining a plan to address the individual learning needs of students". Wehman (2001, p. 62) explained an ITP as follows:

An ITP addresses the educational needs of the student as related to later postschool needs and must also involve pertinent adult service agencies. The intention is to develop a plan to manage a smooth transition of services and life options for the individual with disabilities when he or she leaves public school.

Manitoba mandates that an IEP should be developed for students who require adapted educational support to meet the outcomes of the provincial curriculum. The adaptations may include alternative instructional strategies (e.g., use of interpreters, visual cues, and aids), formats (e.g., Braille, books-on-tape), and assessment procedures (e.g., oral examinations, additional time) (Manitoba Education and Training, 1998a). In Manitoba, an ITP is also mandatory for students with special needs who require supports from the provincial government, its agencies, and/or Regional Health Authorities after leaving school (Manitoba Education, Citizenship, and Youth, 1999). In addition, it is suggested that individualized transition planning begin when the student reach the age of 14 (Healthy Child Manitoba, 2008). Eligible youth may have various disabilities such as a mental disability, learning disability, physical disability, emotional/behavioral disorder,

psychiatric disability, hearing impairment, visual impairment, and multi-disabilities

(Manitoba Education and Training, 1998a; Healthy Child Manitoba)[3].

I believe that this group of youth would make a suitable target population for a

TFS in Manitoba for several reasons. First, as mentioned above, an IEP or ITP is

mandatory for these individuals in Manitoba. Second, this group forms the vast majority

of youth who require on-going adult support services after leaving school. Third, students

with an IEP or ITP are identifiable while in school or after leaving school, which is a

critical when implementing a follow-up system. For these reasons, I propose that the

target population for the TFS model that I will develop should be youth who have or have

had an IEP or ITP during their high school years.

Conceptual Framework

The transition from school to adult life for youth with disabilities is a dynamic,

complicated process and often requires the involvement of various personnel. A clear

understanding of the transition process is essential in developing a TFS. The conceptual

framework of this study depicts the general transition process and the relationships

between the key players of the process. Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework as a

diagram. This diagram is a simplification of DeStefano and Wagner's (1992, p.179)

'conceptual framework of transition experiences and outcomes of youth with disabilities'.

The conceptual framework consists of five key aspects related to the transition

process of youth with special needs: (a) youth/family/community characteristics, (b)

school programs/transition services, (c) student outcomes, (d) adult services, and (e) adult

outcomes. Each aspect consists of the features identified by both empirical and non-

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[3] The term 'youth' used in this study refers to individuals aged 14 to 25, including students in secondary education and recent school leavers.

empirical literature of the transition process and/or adult outcomes of youth with

disabilities. Youth/family/community characteristics include the features of the youth

demographic and significant environmental factors, such as disability, IQ, ethnicity,

family's social status, residential area (i.e. rural or urban) (Baer et al., 2003; Benz, Doren,

& Yovanoff, 1998; Benz et al., 1997; Blackorby & Wagner, 1996; DeStefano & Wagner,

1992; Dunn & Shumaker, 1997; Harvey, 2002; Heal, Khoju, Rusch, & Harnisch, 1999;

McDermott, Martin, & Butkus, 1999; Rabren et al., 2002; Spreat & Conroy, 2001;

Walker, 1999; Wehmeyer & Kelchner, 1995).

School programs/transition services and student outcomes are associated with

youth's experiences while in school. School programs/transition services refer to the

educational and social services provided for youth with disabilities. These services may

include individualized transition planning (e.g., IEP, ITP), educational placement (e.g.,

regular class, resource room), educational programs (e.g., academic, vocational, life skill

courses), support services (e.g., counselling, technical assistance), and work experiences

(Baer et al., 2003; Benz et al., 2000; Benz et al., 1997; Colley & Jamison, 1998;

DeStefano & Wagner, 1992; Harvey, 2002; Izzo et al., 2000). Student outcomes can be

examined in terms of attendance rate, GPA, performance test scores, school completion

status (e.g., graduation, drop-out, age-out), and degree or certificate (e.g., regular high

school degree, modified degree) (Benz et al., 1997; Blackorby & Wagner, 1996;

DeStefano & Wagner; Donahoe & Zigmond, 1990; Dunn & Shumaker, 1997; Rabren et

al., 2002; Wagner, 1990; Wagner & Shaver, 1989; Schellenberg, Frye, & Tomsic, 1998;

Thornton, Liu, Morrow, & Zigmond, 1987).

The adult services and adult outcomes aspects examine the postsecondary experiences of youth with disabilities. Adult services refer to the services that youth with disabilities receive after leaving school, such as postsecondary educational, vocational, health, residential services or programs (Benz et al., 1997; Brown, 2000; DeStefano & Wagner, 1992; Frank & Sitlington, 2000; Sands & Kozleski, 1994). Adult outcomes that may be considered include features of (a) employment (e.g., income, type of jobs, full-/part-time), (b) residence (e.g., independent home, group-home), (c) postsecondary education, and (d) other aspects of life (e.g., social network, leisure activities, transportation, community involvement, autonomy, satisfaction) (Baer et al., 2003; Benz et al., 1997, 1998, 2000; Blackorby & Wagner, 1996; Colley & Jamison, 1998; DeStefano & Wagner; Dunn & Shumaker, 1997; Harvey, 2002; Heal et al., 1999; Izzo et al., 2000; McDermott et al., 1999; Rabren et al., 2002; Schellenberg et al., 1998; Spreat & Conroy, 2001; Walker, 1999).

The relationships between the five key aspects of the conceptual framework in the transition process are shown by arrows in Figure 1. Although the key aspects may each influence the others, the arrows indicate only distinct, direct relationships between them, which have been suggested by DeStefano and Wagner (1992) and also by other researchers (Baer et al., 2003; Benz et al., 1997, 1998, 2000; Blackorby & Wagner, 1996; Colley & Jamison, 1998; Dunn & Shumaker, 1997; Harvey, 2002; Heal et al., 1999; Izzo et al., 2000; McDermott et al., 1999; Rabren et al., 2002; Schellenberg et al., 1998; Spreat & Conroy, 2001; Walker, 1999; Wehmeyer & Kelchner, 1995). The youth/family/community characteristics of an individual with disability are likely to affect the other four aspects. For example, a student's demographic features, such as

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Youth/Family/Community Characteristics

- Youth characteristics (e.g. gender, disability, ethnicity)
- Family characteristics (e.g. social status, income)
- Community characteristics (e.g. rural, urban)

School Experiences

Post-school Experiences

School Programs/Transition Services

- Individualized transition planning (e.g. IEP, ITP)
- Educational placement (e.g. regular class, resource room)
- Educational programs (e.g. academic, vocational, life skill education)
- Support services (e.g. counseling, therapy)
- Work experiences (e.g. community based, sheltered)

Adult Services

- Employment services
- Residential services
- Health services
- Others (e.g. transportation, respite)

Student Outcomes

- Attendance
- Student performance (e.g. GPA, reading, Math)
- School completion (e.g. graduation, drop-out)
- Degree and certificate (e.g. regular/modified high school degree)

Adult Outcomes

- Employment (e.g. income, full-/part-time)
- Residence (e.g. independent living, with family)
- Postsecondary education (e.g. college, university)
- Quality of life (e.g. social network, community involvement, autonomy, satisfaction)

disability type and IQ may have impacts on his or her school or adult outcomes. In addition, their residential area, whether in a rural or urban setting, may influence the educational or social service system for youth with disabilities. Finally, all the other four aspects may have impacts on the adult outcomes of youth with disabilities.

I designed this study based on this conceptual framework, which helped determine its variables, participants, process, and analysis. In the following section, I will discuss the literature regarding the transition from school to adulthood and TFSs for youth with disabilities, examining key concepts, theoretical backgrounds, previous studies, and earlier and current practices relevant to this topic.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

As the transition from school to adulthood for youth with disabilities has received much attention from individuals, families, professionals, and scholars, a great deal of research on this area has accumulated. The extensive literature now available provides a background of knowledge about the transition practices for youth with disabilities and the development of TFSs. I undertook a three-pronged approach to locate relevant literature on this topic: (a) a manual review of journals available in Bison, the library network of University of Manitoba; (b) a computer search of the on-line database of Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC), Google search engine, and the government websites of jurisdictions in English speaking countries, such as Canada, the United States, Britain, Australia, and New Zealand (i.e. national, provincial and territorial, and States' websites); and (c) a search of reference lists from the articles identified by the above two measures or from other literature on transition. The key words used to locate the literature included the following: special education, disabilities, special needs, transition, outcomes, adult, adulthood, postsecondary, post-school, quality of life, effects, follow-up/along, tracking, accountability, and assessment.

In the literature review, I focused on contemporary resources published after 1990. The vast majority of the literature identified in the process was published either in Canada or the United States, although I did not exclude publications from other geographical areas, such as Britain and Australia. This may be partly because the literature of the two countries is more easily available in Canada and partly because I am more familiar with exploring databases of Canada and the United States than those from elsewhere.

In this section, I discuss the literature reviewed in terms of definitions of key concepts related to the transition, best practices of transition planning and services, transition planning process, follow-up/along studies conducted, educational accountability, and TFSs for youth with disabilities. In regards to the transition planning and services, I examine the best practices, planning process, and services recommended by the literature. Numerous researchers have investigated adult outcomes of individuals with disabilities. I discuss the findings and methodological approaches of such studies. Researchers have also expressed some concerns about the accountability and efficiency of educational and transition services provided for youth with disabilities. Many scholars underscore the significance of systematic measures to ensure the accountability of the transition services for youth with disabilities and to track the outcomes of those services provided. Therefore, I discuss issues raised regarding the accountability of services for youth with disabilities. Finally, I look into the literature on the development and implementation of TFSs and the current practices of TFSs for youth with disabilities.

Definitions

There are several key terms that individuals with disabilities, families, and professionals commonly use in regards to transition, where meaning may differ among the stakeholders. Hence, I review in this section the definitions and concepts of those terms proposed by researchers or jurisdictions and clarify how those words are used in this study. The terms examined below include transition, transition services, transition planning, special needs, disabilities, and intellectual disabilities.

Transition Services and Transition Planning

Transition is generally defined as the process or period of changing from one state or condition to another. Transition in education usually includes different phases from pre-school to primary school, grade to grade, and school to postsecondary placements. This study focuses specifically on the period from secondary education to adult life.

Historically, many researchers have focused particularly on employment issues in defining transition from secondary education to adulthood. For example, according to Rusch and Phelps (1987) and Wehman, Kregel and Seyfarth. (1985) transition is viewed as the process from school to work.

In the past two decades, the approach to transition for youth with disabilities was broadened. While acknowledging the significance of employment in adult life, many scholars agreed that the concept of transition should be more holistic and comprehensive (Greene & Kochhar-Bryant, 2003; Kochhar, West, & Taymans, 2000; Wika & Rudrud, 1992). The concept of transition was extended from the previous focus on employment to include various aspects of adult life, such as social relationships, daily living, community activities, and independence. Wika and Rudrud also emphasized that transition needs to encompass a "holistic approach to employment, independent living in the community, and leisure" in order to be successful. Bates, Sutter, and Poelvoorde (1986) defined transition as "a dynamic process involving a partnership of consumers, school-age services, post-school services, and local communities that results in maximum levels of employment, independent living, integration, and community participation" (Greene & Kochhar-Bryant, 2003, p.14). The Council for Exceptional Children provided a well-

developed definition of transition with a description of the planning process as follows

(Greene & Kohchar-Bryant, 2003, p.15):

> Transition refers to a change in status from behaving primarily as a student to
> assuming emergent adult roles in the community. These roles include
> employment, participating in post-secondary education, maintaining a home,
> becoming appropriately involved in the community and experiencing satisfactory
> personal and social relationships. The process of enhancing transition involves the
> participation and coordination of school programs, adult agency services, and
> natural supports within the community. The foundations for transition should be
> laid during the elementary and middle school years, guided by the broad concept
> of career development. Transition planning should begin no later than age 14, and
> students should be encouraged to the full extent of their capabilities, to assume a
> maximum amount of responsibility for such planning.

As is apparent from the definitions of transition presented above, adjustment to the

community is another common feature that scholars and professionals emphasize in

understanding the transition from secondary education to adult life.

Similarly, IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of USA) defined

transition services as "a coordinated set of activities including instruction, community

experiences and development of employment opportunities that promote movement from

school to post secondary education, vocational training, employment, continuing and

adult education, adult services, independent living or community participation" (Greene

& Kochhar-Bryant, 2003, p.55).

Transition planning is a continuous and evolving process intended to deliver transition services to youth with disabilities and thus assist their transition to adult life (Greene, 2003b). Manitoba Transition Planning Process Support Guidelines (Manitoba Education, Citizenship, and Youth, 1999, p.1) described transition planning as follows:

As students reach adulthood, supports shift from education and children's services to the adult service system. Students with disabilities require more intensive and coordinated planning than most high school students because of their need for long-term supports from adult service agencies. The service system for adults is complex and often more specific in terms of eligibility, availability, and funding. Planning for this change to adult supports is called transition planning.

Students with Special Needs

The meaning of the term "students with special needs" varies significantly among schools and professionals. Many researchers and educational professionals commonly perceive students with special needs as including all students who require special assistance (in addition to the regular education) to meet their potential. Lewis and Doorlag (2006) and Smith, Polloway, Patton, Dowdy, and Heath (2006) described students with special needs as those with the following characteristics: students with disabilities, gifted and talented students, culturally and linguistically diverse students, and students at risk of failure in school. "Students at risk", such as drug and alcohol abusers, those who speak English as a second language, pregnant teenagers, and students who are in trouble with the legal system, are likely to experience difficulties in achieving a performance level in school that corresponds to their abilities (Smith et al., 2006).

Nonetheless, some educational professionals and researchers identify students with special needs more narrowly, focusing on those with specific disabilities. For example, some of the jurisdictions in Canada, such as Nova Scotia, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba, define students with special needs as those with intellectual, physical, behavioral, communicational, and sensory disabilities and health impairments (Manitoba Education, Citizenship, and Youth, 2006; Smith et al., 2006). Various jurisdictions apply diverse categories of disabilities to students with special needs (Smith et al., 2006).

Disabilities

Like the term "special needs", a wide range of perceptions of disabilities exists in the general public, and among scholars and professionals. Several U.S. federal laws provide definitions of disabilities. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act 2004 (IDEA 2004) in the USA, for example, defined students with disabilities as those who have mental retardation, hearing impairments, speech or language impairments, visual impairments, serious emotional disturbance, orthopedic impairments, autism, traumatic brain injury, other health impairments, or specific learning disabilities (Lewis & Doorlag, 2006).

Another federal law, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), identifies three conditions that determine a disability: (a) a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, (b) a history of having such an impairment, or (c) being regarded as having such an impairment (U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 1997). Major life activities include hearing, speaking, seeing, walking, learning, working, and managing manual tasks (Griffin & Targett, 2001). Whereas the ADA considers conditions like epilepsy, paralysis, a

substantial hearing or visual impairment, mental retardation, or a learning disability as substantial impairments, it does not apply this definition to temporary, short-term conditions, such as pregnancy, a sprain, or infection. The ADA also includes people who had, yet do not currently have, a substantial impairment as they may be subject to discrimination or bias caused by the original impairment. In addition, according to the ADA, individuals with certain characteristics, such as epilepsy, disfigurement, and HIV, which are likely to limit their social functioning due to societal myth or fears, are also considered to have a disability.

As discussed above, the use and understanding of "special needs" and "disabilities" varies depending on individuals, agencies, and jurisdictions. Nonetheless, I use the terms "special needs" and "disabilities" in this study to refer to existing, long-term, substantial impairments, such as physical, intellectual, sensory, and health impairments. In this study I focus on youth who require on-going long-term support, even after high school, in order to successfully maintain their adult life. Following the practice of many contemporary scholars and educational professionals, I do not distinguish between the terms "students with special needs" and "students with disabilities".

Intellectual Disabilities

The concept of intellectual disability in this paper refers to mental retardation and learning disabilities including a wide range of functioning levels from mild to more severe limitations. The definition of mental retardation has been continuously developed and revised. Throughout this development, two dimensions have been consistently considered in defining intellectual disabilities: intellectual functioning and adaptive skills (Smith et al., 2006). In 1973, when the American Association on Mental Deficiency (now

the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities [AAIDD])

lowered the qualifying score on IQ tests from 85 to 70 (Wehman, 2001), the focus on

functional limitations in defining mental retardation increased. In 2002, the AAIDD

definition retains the focus of earlier AAIDD definitions on the two key dimensions of

intelligence and adaptation as well as the modifier of age of onset. However, the

definition reflects the individual's functioning within the community rather than mainly

focusing on the psychometric and clinical aspects of the person, such as IQ scores (Smith

et al., 2006). In addition, the aspect of supports required for the individuals is emphasized

in defining mental retardation as well as considerations of personal attributes other than

intellectual ability. The 2002 definition of AAIDD, still in use in 2006, described mental

retardation as follows (American Association on Intellectual and Developmental

Disabilities, 2006):

> Mental retardation is a disability characterized by significant limitations both in
>
> intellectual functioning and in adaptive behavior as expressed in conceptual,
>
> social, and practical adaptive skills. This disability originates before age 18. The
>
> following five assumptions are essential to the application of the stated definition
>
> of mental retardation.
>
> 1. Limitations in present functioning must be considered within the context of
>
> community environments typical of the individual's age peers and culture.
>
> 2. Valid assessment considers cultural and linguistic diversity as well as
>
> differences in communication, sensory, motor, and behavioral factors.
>
> 3. Within an individual, limitations often coexist with strengths.

4. An important purpose of describing limitations is to develop a profile of needed

supports.

5. With appropriate personalized supports over a sustained period, the life

functioning of the person with mental retardation generally will improve.

Within the group of people with intellectual disabilities there are several levels of

abilities, and individuals with mild disabilities are those in the moderate to mild range on

the continuum of severity of a disabling condition (Gajar et al., 1993; Smith et al., 2006).

Individuals with mild intellectual disabilities made up 80% of this category (Smith et al.,

2006). MacMillan, Siperstein, and Gresham (1996) noted one problem with applying the

diagnostic category of mild intellectual disabilities, arguing that many of individuals with

Intelligence Quotient (IQ) between 85 and 100 are now diagnosed as having learning

disabilities instead of mild intellectual disabilities, but still face the same functional and

life adjustment challenges. MacMillan, et al. therefore contended that mild intellectual

disabilities should be considered with a person's relative difficulty in responding to

cognitive demands of the environment, which may include learning disabilities,

emotional disturbance, or mental retardation.

Wehman (2001) contended that individuals with mild intellectual disabilities can

succeed in most aspects of their lives with the necessary supports, while they may

demonstrate lack of adaptive skills, such as social behavior or functional academic skills,

when compared to their age peers. In particular, a lot of individuals with mild intellectual

disabilities showed problems with peer relationships, difficulty in compliance with adult-

initiated directions, or academic challenges. For individuals with mild disabilities, the

discrepancy in these areas can be relatively subtle and may not be readily apparent in a casual situation.

Individuals with severe intellectual disabilities are those with the lowest intellectual functioning, comprising 1-3% of the population (Wehman, 2001). Snell (1993) described individuals with severe disabilities as a diverse group of people who may have multiple disabilities, autism, deafness, blindness, or physical disabilities. These people experience difficulties in generalizing and maintaining learned skills, acquiring complex skills, and synthesizing information. TASH (The Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps) defined individuals with severe disabilities as follows (TASH, 2000):

Individuals with disabilities of all ages, races, creeds, national origins, genders and sexual orientation who require ongoing support in one or more major life activities in order to participate in an integrated community and enjoy a quality of life similar to that available to all citizens. Support may be required for life activities such as mobility, communication, self-care, and learning as necessary for community living, employment, and self-sufficiency.

However, Wehman contended that rather than focusing on definitions, it is more important to understand the unique learning characteristics of individuals with severe intellectual disabilities.

I will examine the concepts or definitions of other key terms relevant to this study, such as person-centred planning and TFS, in the respective sections in the literature review.

Best Practices of Transition Planning and Services

Researchers showed that students who received transition services in their secondary education achieved a more successful adjustment to adult life than those who did not (Blackorby, Hankock, & Siegel, 1993; Hasazi, Gordon, & Roe, 1985; Roessler, Brolin, & Johnson, 1990; Roessler, Brow, & Reed, 1996). While highlighting the importance of transition services, Roessler et al.(1990) emphasized that it is critical to identify the best practices in transition in order to provide effective and successful services.

Despite the common use of the term 'best practice' in the academic arena and in the field of special education, there is a lack of consensus on its definition (Peters & Heron, 1993). Best practice has been used with various meanings. Some use the term to refer to exemplary methodologies and strategies (Robinson, Patton, Polloway, & Sargent, 1989; Wallace, Cohen, & Polloway, 1987), while others utilize it as an indicator of program quality (Fox et al., 1986; Meyer, 1985). In other cases, best practices were also understood as valued principles (Reschly, 1989; Salisbury & Vincent, 1990) or desirable student outcomes (Meyer & Eichinger, 1987). The most commonly agreed criteria adopted by researchers for best practice included empirical evidence of effectiveness or superiority, consensus with existing literature, and verification of social validity or value (Baer, 1986; Meyer, Eichinger, & Park-Lee, 1987; Peters & Heron, 1993).

In regards to the transition for students with special needs, Greene (2003a, p.155) defined best practices as "a number of specific recommendations for facilitating successful movement from school to adult life for youth with disabilities." Furthermore, Greene reviewed recent literature on best practices of transition services for students with

special needs and identified the most frequently cited 10 components: (a) interagency collaboration; (b) interdisciplinary collaboration; (c) integrated schools, classrooms, and employment; (d) functional life-skills curriculum and community-based instruction; (e) social and personal skills development training; (f) career and vocational assessment and education; (g) business and industry linkages with schools; (h) development of an effective ITP; (i) student self-determination, advocacy, and input in transition planning; and (j) family/parent involvement in transition planning.

The best practices identified by Greene (2003a) are categorized into five groups: (a) person-centred transition planning, (b) functional and comprehensive approaches, (c) inclusive placements and experiences, (d) interagency collaboration, and (e) development of self-determination and self-advocacy. Each group of best practices is briefly discussed below.

Person-Centred Transition Planning

Research suggested that person-centred transition planning is critical for the successful preparation for adulthood of students with special needs (Miner & Bates, 1997; Pearpoint et al., 1993; Reid, Everson, & Green, 1999; Whitney-Thomas, Shaw, Honey, & Butterworth, 1998). Flexer, Simmons, Luft and Baer (2005, p.492) defined person-centred planning as "a number of planning approaches that tailor services and supports to meet the needs of the individual, as opposed to programs that try to fit individuals into available services". The goal of person-centred approaches is to assist youth with disabilities in experiencing self-directed lives and participating in the community. In order to achieve this, transition planning should take approaches that

facilitate the leadership of youth with disabilities in the assessment, planning, and service delivery process (Wehman, Everson, & Dennis, 2003).

The two best practices which have been identified through literature review as promoting the person-centred transition process are: (a) the development of individualized transition planning and process and (b) students' and families' involvement in the process. Firstly, a well-developed individualized transition planning and process are essential meeting individual students' transition needs accounting for their interests and capabilities. Wehman et al. (2001) made some suggestions regarding individualized transition planning: (a) to initiate individualized transition planning at an early age; (b) to clearly identify transition objectives and activities, responsibilities, required support, timeline and follow-up procedure in the Individualized Transition Plan; and (c) to effectively coordinate individualized transition team meetings.

Secondly, in order to reflect the students' needs, interests, and capabilities in the transition process, the involvement of the students and their families is essential (Kochhar-Bryant, 2003a). Many researchers demonstrate educational benefits to student involvement (Wehmeyer, 2001). In Agran's (1997) research, students' involvement in instruction resulted in positive adult outcomes. In addition, Doll and Sands (1998) reported that student involvement in goal setting and decision-making enhances their performance and motivation. According to Wehmeyer (2001, p.43), student involvement refers to "the degree to which the student is an equal partner in his or her learning and, to the greatest extent possible, in control of his or her learning" rather than independent performance of transition planning. Wehmeyer explained that student involvement in

educational planning includes from generating their own ITP/IEP goals and objectives to follow-up their progress on self-selected goals or objectives.

Researchers have asserted that schools should provide systematic instruction and guidance for students to be meaningfully involved in the transition process (Agran & Hughes, 2008; Clark & Kolstoe, 1995; Freeze, 1996; Flexer et al., 2005; Martin et al., 2006; Powers et al., 2001). In particular, without specific ITP/IEP meeting instruction, students often do not understand the language, goals, and outcomes of the meetings and therefore cannot meaningfully participate in them (Lehmann, Bassett, & Sands, 1999; Morningstar, Turnbull, & Turnbull, 1995; Powers et al.). Agran & Hughes reported that few students with special needs received instructions that helped them understand the IEP/ITP process and actively participate in their IEP/ITP meetings. Martin et al. showed that students with special needs who received such instructions more actively participated in their IEP meetings than their peers who did not. The former group also had more positive perceptions about their IEP meetings than the latter.

Freeze (1996) presented strategies to facilitate the involvement of students in the transition: (a) involving the student in deciding the participants of the meeting, (b) previewing the student's role and contribution to the meeting, (c) respecting student choice and self-determination in the planning process, (d) clarifying the student's dream for the future, (e) sharing samples of the student's school work and hobbies with the participants in the meeting, (f) encouraging the student to invite personal advocates such as friends, (g) providing the student with experiences of future options prior to the meeting, (h) avoiding jargon during the meeting, and (i) sharing the student's favourite snack at the meeting.

Parents and families must also assume a major role in promoting meaningful career development and transition for their youth with disabilities by providing guidance and support. Transition from school to adulthood can be successful, positive, and constructive when parents take a significant role in the planning process (Brolin & Loyd, 2004; Hudson, Schwartz, Sealander, Campbell, & Hensel, 1988; McNair & Rusch, 1991; Salmon, & Kennealey, 2007; Wehman, 2001). Researchers have noted that families are the key information resource in the transition planning process (Brolin & Loyd; McNair & Rusch). In addition, as students become older and go through different service systems, families are often the only party to maintain the continuity of support. A lot of research has demonstrated that the high involvement of parents/families in the transition process affects positive career and adult outcomes of the students. For instance, Heal, Gonzalez, Rusch, Copher, and Destefano (1990) studied determining factors between successful and unsuccessful employment, and home support was indicated as one of the key factors determining success. Morningstar et al. (1995) also found that families had a major influence in shaping and achieving the student's career goals. In addition, Tekin-Iftar (2008) showed that parents were effective in teaching their youth community-associated skills, such as shopping, cooking, and doing house chores.

Researchers also recommended certain roles for the parents/family of students with special needs in the career development and transition process to be assumed in partnership with the professionals (Ryndak, Downing, Lilly, & Morrison, 1995; Wehman, 2001). Ryndak et al. described the roles of parents in the transition process in three stages. Firstly, they should be aware of the Individualized Education Plan and the transition process of their child with special needs. Secondly, they should conduct regular

follow-up to ensure that the transition plan is being implemented. Thirdly, parents should ensure that the transition plan leads to positive outcomes.

Quality relationships with professionals and positive experiences with working with them are critical to promoting parents' involvement in the transition process of youth with disabilities (deFur, Todd-Allen, & Getzel, 2001). Researchers suggest specific strategies for professionals to promote family involvement and to establish effective partnerships between family and professionals. The strategies examined by a literature review are listed below (Brame, 1995; Brolin & Loyd, 2004; deFur et al.; Flaxman & Inger, 1991; Freeze, 1996; Hutchins & Renzaglia, 1998; McNair & Rusch, 1991; Salembier & Furney, 1997; Sinclair & Christenson, 1992; Singer & Powers, 1993; Wehman, 2001):

1. Accommodate the time and place of the meeting to the family's convenience.

2. Inform the family about the transition process and available services.

3. Maintain frequent and continuous communication.

4. Help the family develop positive aspirations and expectations for their youth's future.

5. Encourage shared responsibility and collaboration in the decision making process.

6. Respect cultural beliefs and differences.

Despite agreement on the significance of student and family involvement, numerous researchers report that the involvement of students in transition planning is very limited (Eisenman & Chamberlin, 2001; Wehman, 2001; Wehmeyer, 2001; Williams & O'Leary, 2001). Wehman noted that in many cases professionals make critical decisions in the transition process for students with special needs, rather than

encouraging the youth's involvement. In addition, many schools do not invite students to

their own IEP meetings (Williams & O'Leary). Further, research reports that a lot of

parents/families are not aware of the career development and transition process for their

child with special needs, and therefore, their involvement in the process is very limited

(Brolin & Loyd, 2004; Chambers, Hughes, & Carter, 2004; Gallivan-Fenlon, 1994;

Greene & Kochhar-Bryant, 2003; Schwartz, Mactavish, & Lutfiyya, 2006). Furthermore,

researchers contend that families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

experience even more difficulty in getting involved in the transition process for their

youth with disabilities than their counterparts (Goupil, Tassé, Garcin, & Doré, 2002; Kim

& Morningstar, 2005, 2007; Kueneman & Freeze, 1997; Landmark, Zhang, & Montoya,

2007). This situation has been a historical problem and a cause for concern with

transition planning (Greene & Kochhar-Bryant). Salembier and Furney (1997) surveyed

and interviewed parents of youth with disabilities on their involvement in transition

planning and its process. The majority of the parents indicated that while they were

involved in the process, they were still not fully aware of the process or potential post-

school outcomes for their child. Furthermore, they did not feel welcome to voice their

opinions in meetings.

Barriers that often interfere with the involvement of parents and families in the

transition process have been identified. Salmon and Kennealey (2007) reported that some

parents in Nova Scotia attributed the primary cause of being burnt-out to the constant

struggle with schools, communities and government agencies. Timmons, McIntyre,

Whitney-Thomas, Butterworth, and Allen (1998) indicated that families of youth with

disabilities experience 4 major challenges during the transition process: (a) inconsistent

and inflexible service delivery systems, (b) day-to-day living, (c) difficulty gaining access to resources including transportation, and (d) uncertainty about the future. In addition, a family's stress, dysfunction, and restricted resources, such as transportation, child-care conflicts, or work schedule, may interfere with their involvement in the transition process (Brame, 1995; Brolin & Loyd, 2004; Brotherson et al., 1988). In order for professionals to effectively assist youth with disabilities in their transition process, these issues need to be addressed.

Functional and Comprehensive Approaches

It has been shown that secondary education's focus on academic skills fails to prepare students with special needs for adulthood (Zigmond & Millers, 1992). Researchers emphasized that secondary education for students with special needs should focus on post-school goals in a variety of transition areas (Kochhar, 1996; Schwartz et al., 2006). Functional skills are (Greene, 2003a, p. 165):

those that are both academic and critical for successful functioning in the community and in adult life. A functional skills curriculum emphasizes learning in areas such as personal-social skills, independent living, occupational skills, recreation and leisure, health and grooming, communication skills, and other skills and abilities that generalize to the community.

Career development should be an integrated part of the regular curriculum (Gajar et al., 1993; Humes & Hohenshil, 1985). In particular, it takes a long time for students with special needs to develop the appropriate attitude, knowledge, and skills required for a successful career life. Brolin and Loyd (2004) explained career development in four stages: Career awareness, career exploration, career preparation, and career assimilation.

Career awareness is the process of learning the personal and social values of work, appropriate work habits and behaviors, various types of careers, and career aptitudes, interests, and abilities. At the stage of career exploration, students explore their interests, aptitude and abilities in relation to lifestyle and occupations through hands-on community experiences. Career preparation is the stage at which students select an appropriate occupational area and develop specific occupational skills. Career assimilation draws together what has been learned in the three previous stages and so enables the student to successfully obtain and maintain employment. At the high school level in particular, career preparation becomes the main focus of career development (Brolin & Loyd). While job choice is still provisional, specific vocational skill development should begin in their school years (Hursh & Kerns, 1988).

Some social skills are particularly significant for youth with disabilities to make the transition to adult life; therefore, transition planning should focus on developing those skills in the process (Brolin, 1995; Greene, 2003a; Schwartz et al., 2006). The social skills that school programs and transition services should help youth with disabilities develop include: (a) showing respect for the rights and property of others, (b) recognizing authority and following instructions, (c) demonstrating appropriate behaviour in public places, (d) recognizing important character traits, (e) understanding personal roles, (f) initiating and maintaining communication, and (g) establishing and maintaining close personal relationships and friendships (Greene, 2003a).

Besides career development and social relationships, many youth with disabilities may experience difficulties in living in the community, such as using transportation, shopping and financial management, engaging in social and recreational activities,

managing a household, and maintaining personal care and health (Dattilo & Schleien, 1994; West, 2001; West, Barcus, Brooke, & Rayfield, 1995). In the transition planning, professionals and families need to identify potential needs of the youth with disabilities in these areas and to help the youth address these issues.

Researchers acknowledged that high school programs for students with moderate and severe disabilities became more functional, community-based, employment-oriented, and age-appropriate, with an increased emphasis on postschool goals (Brown, 2000; Zhang & Ivester, 2005). However, Brown also noted that educational programs and transition services often fail to attend to comprehensive needs of students with mild disabilities (e.g., learning disabilities). In fact, learning disabilities are not simply related to academic challenges (Price & Shaw, 2000). Prince and Shaw argued that many students with learning disabilities experience difficulties in functional skills, such as social skills, banking and budgeting, exercising civil rights (e.g., voting). Hence, educational programs and transition services need to help students with mild disabilities prepare for various aspects of adult life.

Inclusive Placements and Experiences

Postsecondary environments for youth with disabilities are, and should be, inclusive environments (Flexer et al., 2005). It is unreasonable to expect youth with disabilities to live successfully in the integrated community as adults if they are not provided with integrated placements and experiences during the transition planning period (Flexer et al.; Greene, 2003a). Research has demonstrated a positive relationship between participation in integrated classrooms and improved transition outcomes, in terms of social relationships and career (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996; Ferguson & Asch,

1989; Schwartz et al., 2006). In addition, it has been reported that youth with disabilities achieve more academic gains as well as becoming more adept in daily life, communication, and social skills through sustained interactions with their peers (Karagiannis, Stainback, & Stainback, 1996; Madden & Slavin, 1983). However, there exist many challenges in the delivery of inclusive services for youth with disabilities. The most commonly identified barriers to inclusive education are a lack of resources, unprepared professionals, and time constraints for planning and preparation (Dymond, Renzaglia, & Chun, 2008; Mastropieri et al., 2005; Pivik, McComas, & Laflamme, 2002).

Researchers also have stressed that the instructions and services for students with special needs should be combined with community-based experiences (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996; Brown, Farrington, Suomi, & Ziegler, 1999; Cook, 2002; Gaumer, Morningstar, & Clark, 2004; Heward, 1996; Flexer et al., 2005). Many special educators continued to confine teaching and training students with special needs in classroom settings to the use of simulations, such as filling out job applications, conducting mock interviews, planning a snack or meal, and role playing social interactions, and so on (Brown et al.; Lynch & Beare, 1990; Stowitschek & Kelso, 1989). Although these activities may be helpful in preparing students with special needs for daily life in the community, a lot of students with special needs, those with moderate or severe intellectual disabilities in particular, have difficulties generalizing their learned skills from classroom to real-life situations (Flexer et al.; Greene, 2003a; Johnson & Rusch, 1993; Wehman, 2001). Therefore, it is important for students with special needs to learn and to practice functional skills in environments where they are likely to occur; for

instance, work experience at community job sites, transportation at bus stations and on buses, and cooking in home kitchens.

Interagency Collaboration

Youth with disabilities often have complex transition needs which require coordinated services from various professionals. These professionals from multiple disciplines are involved directly or indirectly in preparing youth with disabilities for transition. Supporting students with special needs in preparing for adulthood requires coordinated services from multiple agencies and programs (Greene & Kochhar-Bryant, 2003; Kohler, DeStefano, Wermuth, Grayson, & McGinty, 1994). Schools, the local government, adult service providers, and businesses are required to play central roles in the transition services for students with special needs. In order to effectively help youth with disabilities prepare for adult life, it is critical for the involved professionals in the transition process to establish strong interagency collaboration (Asselin, Hanley-Maxwell, & Syzmanski, 1992; Certo et al., 2003; Greene & Kochhar-Bryant; Noyes & Caren, 2004; Pearman & Elliott, 2004). For example, Certo et al. reported that when the schools and adult service agencies that participated in their study worked collaboratively, incorporating their transition services into one support system for students with moderate or severe disabilities, the youth achieved significantly more positive employment outcomes after leaving school. Of the 234 students with moderate or severe disabilities, 63% were competitively employed at graduation and 71% at three years after graduation. A collaborative partnership of a transition planning team is the strong indicator of quality transition services for youth with disabilities (McMahan & Baer, 2001).

For effective interagency collaboration, many researchers suggested the formation of interagency transition teams (Asselin et al., 1992; Bates, Bronkema, Ames, & Hess, 1992; Greene & Kochhar-Bryant, 2003). An interagency transition team is a systematic approach to effectively delivering transition services by: (a) facilitating interagency linkages, (b) improving the capacity of the transition support system to respond to the changing needs of youth with disabilities in the process, (c) reducing fragmentation of local services, and (d) competition for external funding for services among agencies within the same community (Asselin et al.; Bates et al.; Greene & Kochhar-Bryant). More specific tasks that an interagency team may undertake include the following (Wehman et al., 2003): (a) sharing information and referral process; (b) identifying the support needs of the youth and matching the needs with appropriate supportive agencies; (c) assessing the youth's strengths, needs, goals, and objectives, environment conditions, and available resources, and planning for the evaluation process and outcome criteria; (d) developing individual program planning; (e) linking and coordinating required services; (f) monitoring the progress of the individual's development and the process; (g) advocating the individual and developing self-advocacy; and (h) evaluating the outcomes of the services and following-up. Furthermore, it is essential for an interagency transition team to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the team members and to understand each agency's regulations and policies relevant to the collaboration and available resources (Wehman et al., 2003).

Development of Self-Determination

Wehmeyer (1996, p. 22) defined self-determination as "acting as the primary causal agent in one's life and making choices and decisions regarding one's quality of

life". In regards to the transition planning, researchers define self-determination in connection with setting and achieving goals (Field, Hoffman, & Spezia, 1998; Ward, 1991). Field et al. defined self-determination as one's ability to define and achieve goals based on a foundation of knowing and valuing oneself. Further, Martin and Marshall (1996) explained self-determination by its seven components: self-awareness, self-advocacy, self-efficacy, decision-making, independent performance, self-evaluation, and adjustment. Other researchers explain self-determination in both its personal and environmental aspects.

Mithaug (1998) described self-determination as having two components: a social component embodying an individual's right to self-governance and a psychological component pertaining to self-determination as an individual characteristic. According to Mithaug, exercising self-determination depends on both opportunity (i.e., social component) and capacity (i.e., psychological component). For example, in a study by Carter, Lane, Pierson, and Glaeser (2006), students with emotional problems demonstrated lower self-determination than those with learning disabilities and the former had much less opportunity to exercise self-determination, both at home and in school, than the latter. Additionally, Field and Hoffman (1994) proposed a conceptual model of self-determination. According to this model, self-determination is affected both by factors within the individual's control, such as values, knowledge, and skills, as well as by environmental variables (e.g., opportunities for choice-making, attitudes of others).

The concept of self-determination has been gaining considerable recognition recently as an important educational need for students with special needs (Brolin & Loyd, 2004). Researchers have stressed that the development of self-determination and

advocacy is critical to empowering students with special needs in the transition process (Brolin & Loyd; Greene & Kochhar-Bryant, 2003; Halpern, 1994; Lukose, 2001; Schwartz et al., 2006). Research has reported that students with special needs with higher levels of self-determination in high school achieve more positive post-school outcomes than students with lower self-determination (Getzel & Thoma, 2008; Litner, Mann-Feder, & Guerard, 2005; Lukose, 2001; Martin, Mithaug, Hushc, Oliphint, & Frazier, 2002; Wehmeyer & Palmer, 2003; Wehmeyer & Schalock, 2001; Wehmeyer & Schwartz, 1998). College students with disabilities also identified self-determination skills as critical for success in postsecondary education (Thoma & Getzel, 2005; Webster, 2004).

Researchers have demonstrated, however, that self-determination is still an overlooked part in the transition planning for students with special needs (Agran, Snow, & Swaner, 1999; Lukose, 2001; Powers et al., 2005). Powers et al., for example, examined 399 IEPs and ITPs for students with special needs and self-determination was not incorporated in most of the plans. According to Wehmeyer, Agran, and Hughes. (2000), whereas teachers identified self-determination as an important educational issue, the inclusion of transition goals pertaining to self-determination was limited. According to Lukose (2001), postsecondary educational institutions identified self-determination and autonomy as the most critical skills for students with special needs to obtain in order to adjust successfully to postsecondary education. However, they also noted that few high schools promoted this area in their programs.

Self-determination skills often need to be systematically taught for students with intellectual disabilities to exercise the skills in their daily life (Flexer et al., 2005; Martin, Mithaug, Peterson, Vandycke, & Cash, 2003; Wehmeyer et al., 2000). Martin et al.

showed that students with special needs who learned to use some strategies exercising self-determination improved their performance in both academic and functional areas. Wehmeyer (2001) presented a few instructional strategies to promote self-determination. Firstly, teachers should infuse components of self-determination in educational instructions. The components include the followings: (a) choice making; (b) decision-making; (c) problem solving; (d) goal setting and attainment; (e) self-management; (f) independence, risk-taking, and safety skills; (g) self-advocacy and leadership; (h) internal locus of control; (i) positive attributions of efficacy and outcome expectancy; (j) self-awareness; and (k) self-knowledge. Secondly, teachers are encouraged to use student-directed learning strategies. Wehmeyer (2001, p. 53) explained: "student-directed learning strategies, sometimes referred to as self-regulated learning or self-management strategies, involve teaching students to modify and regulate their own behavior and are key strategies to promote students' self-determination." The most commonly used student-directed learning strategies include permanent prompts, self-instruction, self-monitoring, self-reinforcement, and goal setting. Lastly, teachers should promote self-determination by involving students in transition planning. Given that the transition planning is the process that helps youth with disabilities to lead a more independent adult life, the development of self-determination needs to be a critical part of it.

Regardless of whether they are viewed as principles, strategies or outcomes, best practices must always be in the forefront of the minds of the professionals who support youth with disabilities in the transition process.

Transition Planning Process

Collaborative, well organized individualized transition planning is essential to assist a student with special needs efficiently to prepare for adult life. An individualized transition planning process is the foremost tool enabling the student, family, and support professionals to work together and for them to set the future goals for students with special needs, to develop action plans to achieve those goals, and to arrange and deliver resources and services. How an individualized transition planning process proceeds may vary on a case-by-case basis. However, the models of transition planning processes that researchers suggested share similar stages (Goodson, 1995; Greene, 2003b; Izzo & Shumate, 1991). For example, the transition planning process that Wehman et al. (2003) propose exemplifies the common stages recommended by many other researchers. They suggested the following six basic steps:

1. building an ITP team

2. gathering information and conducting assessment

3. developing an ITP

4. implementing the ITP

5. updating the ITP and implementing follow-up procedures

6. holding an exit meeting

This section examines each step of the transition planning process.

Step 1. Building an ITP Team

As schools are the primary providers of services for youth with disabilities during the transition planning years, Wehman et al. (2003) suggested that schools play the major

role in transition planning. However, the collaboration between schools and other professionals is critical to coordinating various transition services.

The initial task in the transition planning is identifying a student who requires transition planning and services (Everson, Filce, Zhang, Guillory, & Kimberly, 1999). Special attention needs to be paid to students who have an IEP since these pupils are often the ones who require such assistance (Wehman, 2001). Students, parents, teachers, social workers, counsellors, and/or other personnel may need to be involved in the process to identify students in need.

Once a student with special needs is identified as being in need of transition services, school personnel, such as teachers, counsellors, and therapists, who have been involved in the individualized educational planning for or who have had meaningful contact with the student, need to be identified. It needs to be noted that although all the relevant school personnel need to be identified, the number of participants attending the ITP meeting should be kept to a minimum in the interest of efficiency. In addition, researchers strongly contend that specific personnel should be designated as transition coordinators, with clearly defined roles and responsibilities that assume a leadership role in the transition planning process (Flexer et al., 2005; Greene & Kochhar-Bryant, 2003; Zhang, Ivester, Chen, & Katsiyannis, 2005). Transition coordinators may be best chosen from among the relevant school personnel (Wehman et al., 2003). For a collaborative partnership, the ITP team should determine the role of each member, including the youth and the parents, in clear, specific terms (Kochhar-Bryant, 2003a).

Adult services agencies that provide necessary transition services for the student with special needs also need to be contacted. While the involvement of adult service

agencies may be beneficial in the early stage of the transition planning process by providing consultation or information, it is suggested that their in-depth participation in the process be invited when their services can be best used. The participation of adult service agencies in the planning process often is particularly valuable in the final two years of school for students with special needs, by providing information about the available and the most appropriate adult programs and services and arranging for them prior to school leaving (Wehman et al., 2003). Many researchers recommend that the transition team establish an interagency agreement among the participant agencies. An interagency agreement can be a crucial tool for efficient collaboration, clarifying the shared goals and philosophy and the responsibilities and commitment of each agency (Kochhar-Bryant, 2003b; Wehman et al.).

The members of the transition team naturally vary depending on the needs and preferences of students with disabilities and their families. The transition coordinator determines the transition team members in consultation with the student and his or her parents. The core members of the team usually include the student, his or her family, a special education teacher, and the transition coordinator. A general educator, vocational educator, representative(s) of adult service agencies, and the student's other network (e.g., extended family members, an advocate, or a friend) may also be team members.

Step 2. Gathering Information and Conducting Assessments

Like individualized educational planning, the transition planning for a student with special needs should be developed based on comprehensive assessments (Rojewski, 2002; Sitlington, Neubert, Begun, Lombard, & Leconte, 2007). Transition assessment refers to:

an ongoing process of collecting information on the student's strengths, needs,

preferences, and interests as they relate to the demands of current and future

living, learning, and working environments. Information from this process should

be used to drive the IEP (Individualized Education Program) and transition

planning process… detailing the student's academic and functional performance

and postsecondary goals" (Sitlington et al., 2007, pp. 2-3).

Sitlington and Clark (2007) proposed that transition assessment examine both academic

and functional performance including comprehensive areas, such as (a) interests, (b)

preferences, (c) cognitive development and academic achievement performance, (d)

adaptive behavior, (e) interpersonal relationship skills, (f) emotional development and

mental health, (g) employability and vocational skills, and (h) community participation.

Wehman et al. (2003) suggested other beneficial information that should be obtained

through transition assessments including: (a) information about people in the student's

life, (b) where the student spends his or her time, (c) things contributing to the student's

positive and/or negative reputation, (d) choices made by him or her, (e) obstacles or

barriers, and (f) strategies to help the student overcome existing or expected challenges.

A team for transition assessments can be a critical tool in order to obtain these

kinds of information significant to the transition planning (Wehman et al., 2003). Like the

transition planning team, the transition assessment team needs to be composed of

members who know the student well, can support him or her during the transition

process, and are who the pupil and family choose to involve. Naturally, some may be the

members of the youth's transition planning team. The methods that the transition

assessment team may use to collect information about individual student with special

needs are (a) an analysis of background information, (b) interviews, (c) standardized tests, (d) curriculum-based assessment techniques, (e) performance samples, (f) behavioral observation techniques, and/or (g) situational assessment (Sitlington et al., 2007). In addition, as a desirable option for transition assessment methods, Wehman et al. (2003, p.106) proposed an approach called "group graphics" or "mapping". This approach uses an interactive group process and records the information obtained from the process on large sheets of paper so that the entire team can easily follow the process and discuss it. Mapping uses color, symbols, words, and pictures to gather and record information about the student. It has been shown that this kind of group assessment can be a reliable and valid assessment approach that successfully involves all the members in the team (Miner & Bates, 1997; Reid et al., 1999; Whitney-Thomas et al., 1998).

Step 3. Developing an Individual Transition Plan

The transition team should develop an ITP, or infuse the particulars of the transition into the existing IEP, for the student as a tool to facilitate, organize, and document the transition planning for the youth. Through the transition team meeting, an ITP is to be developed, finalized, evaluated, and updated. An ITP identifies desired adult outcomes, strategies and approaches, and appropriate, available services and supports needed to achieve the identified outcomes (Wehman et al., 2003).

The goals of the ITP need to be identified to reflect the student's future vision and dreams. The goals and more specific objectives need to address the various aspects of life, such as employment opportunities, postsecondary education opportunities, living options, financial needs, friendship and socialization needs, transportation needs, health and medical needs, and legal and advocacy needs (Wehman et al., 2003, p. 110). For each

goal area, the team should determine the following factors: (a) desired outcomes (e.g., full-time computer programming job in regards to the employment area), (b) skills or competency required for the student to achieve the goal, (c) available services and supports; (d) responsibilities of the team members to help the student achieve the goal, and (e) barriers or service gaps to be addressed. Further, the ITP needs to specify the process of its implementation and timelines for the actions planned to help the student achieve the goals and objectives.

Step 4. Implementing the ITP

Obviously, once an ITP is developed, it should to be implemented as prescribed. Some services may need to be arranged immediately, while others are required for the later school years or even after graduation. The transition team should take action to help the student realize the goals and objectives specified in ITP. The team can facilitate the realization of goals and objectives by (Wehman et al., 2003): (a) providing the student with information, training, and experiences to supplement what is offered in the ITP; (b) making referrals; (c) accompanying the student and family on-site visits to interview and choose desired programs; (d) helping the student prioritize wants and needs; and (e) supporting the student to attend ITP meetings and other activities.

Step 5. Updating the ITP and Implementing Follow-Up Procedures

As the time for the student to leave school gets closer, the dynamic of the transition team is expected to change; while the school's roles in the transition planning decrease, the involvement of adult service agencies needs to increase (Wehman et al., 2003). The school is to transfer the information to adult service agencies and to engage with them in more collaborative approaches. Wehman et al. suggested that before the

student leaves school, an alternate agency, rather than the school, be designated to play the leadership role in monitoring the process of the youth's adjustment to adult life and ensure that the youth progresses towards achieving the ITP goals.

Step 6. Holding an Exit Meeting

Towards the end of the school, the transition team needs to plan an exit meeting with the youth and his or her parents/guardians (Wehman et al., 2003). At the exit meeting, the transition team needs to examine whether the prescribed ITP goals have been achieved. For the unachieved goals, the team should re-examine the viability of them. The team needs to make a plan on how to address the issues after school-exit or, if necessary, may need to modify the initial goals or objectives.

As described above, Wehman et al. (2003) and many other researchers explain the transition planning process in succession. However, this does not necessarily mean that the transition planning should or will always occur in such fashion. In reality, the transition planning for a student with special needs involves a complex, dynamic process. Even after building an ITP team, the team members may change throughout the process depending on the needs of the student or other external factors, such as conflicting schedules or lack of resources for certain team members. In addition, the execution of gathering information and assessment is often an on-going commitment required throughout the process. The transition team may need to modify or update an ITP in order to accommodate the changing circumstances, including changes in the student's needs, the team's capacity, and the progress of transition planning. In order to be successful, the transition team should take a flexible, comprehensive approach to transition planning.

Follow-Up/Along Studies of Postschool Outcomes of Youth with Disabilities

This section reviews a collection of empirical research that investigated the adult outcomes of individuals with disabilities. The following describes the findings of these studies about the adult outcomes of individuals with disabilities and examines their methodological approaches and issues.

Findings of Adult Outcomes

The research variables of these empirical studies that examined the adult outcomes of individuals with disabilities diverge significantly. Many researchers propose their own categories of adult outcome variables. After reviewing the empirical research and other literature on transition, I identified four general categories of adult outcomes: employment and finance, postsecondary education, residence and living, and other aspects of life (Darrow & Clark, 1992; Edgar & Polloway, 1994; Goode, 1990; Halpern, 1990, 1993; Johnson et al., 1993; Patton et al., 1996). Besides adult outcomes, some studies also examined the school programs and experiences of individuals with disabilities and the adult services provided for them after leaving school and their effects on adult outcomes. The findings about the adult outcomes of individuals with disabilities are described below.

Employment and Finance

In general, the employment and financial outcomes of individuals with disabilities lag behind those of persons without disabilities (Benz et al., 1997; Blackorby & Wagner, 1996; Sands & Kozleski, 1994). Sands and Kozleski, for example, showed that the median income of individuals with disabilities was $13,000 while for those without disabilities it was $17,500. The majority of individuals with disabilities were reported to

live in poverty and to be financially dependent (Frank & Sitlington, 1993; Sands, Kozleski, & Goodwin, 1992; Sitlington, Frank, & Carson, 1993). In addition, the rate of competitive employment of the participants with intellectual disabilities varied widely from 39% to 62%, a rate much lower than the average employment rate of persons without disabilities (Hoisch, Karen, & Franzini, 1992; Sitlington et al., 1993). In addition, there is consistent evidence that the wages of individuals in competitive employment are much higher than those of individuals working in sheltered workshops (Helms, Moore, & McSweyn, 1991; Frank & Sitlington, 1993).

The most common types of jobs that individuals with disabilities were engaged in were related to service, clerical, and sales jobs in the food, building, fabrication, and packaging industries (Dunn & Shumaker, 1997; Hoisch et al., 1992; Morgan, Ellerd, Jensen, & Taylor, 2000; Sitlington et al., 1993). Morgan et al. reported, for instance, that these categories accounted for 81% of the employment of their participants with disabilities.

Some studies identify the characteristics of individuals that might account for the differences in employment achievements such as wages, weekly working hours, and job retention. The most commonly reported indicators associated with employment achievements are ethnicity and gender; white and male individuals are more likely to obtain better employment outcomes than visible minorities and females (Baer et al., 2003; Benz et al., 1997, 1998; Blackorby & Wagner, 1996; Coutinho, Oswald, & Best, 2006; Dunn & Shumaker, 1997; Geenen, Powers, Vasquez, & Bersani, 2003; Harvey, 2002; Luecking & Fabian, 2000; McDermott et al., 1999; Rabren et al., 2002). Other factors identified as being favourable to employment outcomes include: residence in

urban areas; physical and learning disabilities, compared to those with mental retardation and behavioral disorders; high school graduates, compared to those who dropped out or aged out; many experiences in the community during high school; and high level of self-esteem and self-determination, adaptive skills, physical and emotional health; and IQ (Benz et al., 1998; Benz et al., 1997; Blackorby & Wagner; Dunn & Shumaker; Harvey; McDermott et al.; Rabren et al.; Sands & Kozleski, 1994; Wehmeyer & Palmer, 2003).

Postsecondary Education

The studies report low participation of individuals with disabilities in postsecondary education activities (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996; Frank & Sitlington, 1993; Sitlington et al., 1993). Levine and Edgar (1994) noted that the participation in postsecondary education is the component of adult outcomes with the largest discrepancy between the respondents with intellectual disabilities and those without disabilities. In the study of Sitlington et al. (1993), 70% of the respondents with mental retardation and 54% of those with learning disabilities answered that they had never had any type of postsecondary training or education. Page and Chadsey-Rusch (1995) stated that there existed low expectations for students with disabilities acquiring postsecondary education.

Residence and Living

Compared to individuals without disabilities, the number of persons with disabilities who owned their own house was much lower (Beadle-Brown, Murphy, & Wing, 2005; Colley & Jamison, 1998; Frank & Sitlington, 1993; Sands et al., 1992, Sands & Kozleski, 1994; Sitlington et al., 1993). In the study of Sands and Kozleski (1994), only 6% of its respondents with intellectual disabilities (adults of average age 32) had their own homes while 65% of those without disabilities were homeowners. The

majority of individuals with disabilities lived with their parents or guardians (Beadle-Brown et al.; Colley & Jamison; Frank & Sitlington; Sitlington et al.). Also, Frank and Sitlington showed that only 30% of the 322 participants with mental retardation paid all of their living expenses. The employment status, full-time or part-time, of the individuals did not appear to make a difference in their residential arrangements (Sands et al., 1992). Spreat and Conroy (2001) reported that individuals who lived in community-based accommodations, whether independently at home or in a group-home, exceeded others who resided in institutions in terms of community integration and daily functioning.

Many individuals with disabilities, in particular those with intellectual disabilities, experience difficulties in daily life skills such as using public transportation, money management, and domestic work (Beadle-Brown et al., 2005; Brown, 2000, Heal et al., 1999; Sitlington & Frank, 1993). The limited functioning in this area affects males more than females (Sitlington & Frank, 1993). However, some studies reported that the performance of life skills and the adjustment to adult life of individuals with intellectual disabilities improved over time (Frank & Sitlington, 1993, 2000; Wehmeyer & Palmer, 2003).

Other Aspects of Life

Besides employment, postsecondary education and training and residential conditions, researchers have also examined other critical aspects of daily life of individuals with disabilities to determine how they relate to adult outcomes. Those aspects of adult outcomes include social network, community involvement, marital status, physical and emotional well-being, satisfaction, and choice-making.

First of all, two of the most frequently investigated adult outcomes are social networks and community involvement. A great deal of research demonstrates limited social networks and community involvement of individuals with disabilities (Heal et al., 1999; Lichtenstein & Michaelides, 1993; Sands & Kozleski, 1994; Sands et al., 1992; Walker, 1999; Wehmeyer & Kelchner, 1995). According to Sands and Kozleski, people without disabilities developed wider social relationships and experience more social activities than do those with disabilities. Walker noted that the social network of individuals with disabilities often remains with family and support personnel. Sands et al. reported that individuals with disabilities who had full-time employment also showed the same limited pattern and degree of social activities as experienced by those with part-time employment. In addition, the lack of opportunities to make choices to engage in social activities and of transportation supports to enable those choices were identified as barriers to developing social networks of some individuals with disabilities (Walker, 1999).

Discrepancy of marital status among individuals were found depending on their gender and type of disability (Sands & Kozleski, 1994; Sitlington & Frank, 1993). In the study of Sitlington and Frank, one year after graduation, only 8% of male respondents with intellectual disabilities reported as married while 27% of their female counterparts did so. Sands and Kozleski, who studied adults aged between 18 and 70, with a mean age of 32, reported that 95% of the respondents with intellectual disabilities had never been married whereas 46% of those without disabilities answered likewise.

A few studies examined subjective aspects of adult outcomes of individuals with disabilities such as satisfaction, choice-making, and general well-being. Sands and

Kozleski (1994) showed that individuals with disabilities had fewer opportunities to make choices than those without disabilities. According to Wehmeyer and Kelchner (1995), individuals with intellectual disabilities in particular experience limited autonomy compared to others without intellectual disabilities.

School Programs and Experiences

The literature gives evidence that transition supports during high school for individuals with disabilities have improved during the last two decades. Brown (2000) and Frank and Sitlington (2000) noted an increase in the provision of work experiences and vocational and life-skill education for students with disabilities from 1985 through 1995. Although the respondents with disabilities of earlier studies, such as Lichtenstein and Michaelides (1993) and Wehmeyer and Kelchner (1995), reported poor transition support during high school, those of more recent studies (Baer et al., 2003; Benz et al., 1997, 2000; Colley & Jamison, 1998; Harvey, 2002; Izzo et al., 2000) were more positive about their experiences with high school programs in preparing for adult life. In addition, many studies demonstrated a strong relationship between high school programs providing transition supports and successful adult outcomes (Baer et al.; Benz et al.; Colley & Jamison; Harvey; Izzo et al.). Studies reported that individuals with disabilities who had received transition supports in high school were more likely to obtain higher earnings, competitive employment, postsecondary education or training, positive social relationships, independent life skills, and self-confidence than others with disabilities who had not had such services.

Adult Services and Needs

Very little has been investigated on the service or agency support needs of adults with intellectual disabilities. Only a few studies identify service/agency needs as a research variable; moreover, even fewer of them discuss their results in this area. Research shows that extended transition services beyond graduation significantly improve the employment outcomes of youth with disabilities (Flannery, Yovanoff, Benz, & Kato, 2008; Izzo et al., 2000). Izzo et al. demonstrated that youth with disabilities who received employment training and services after graduating high school exceeded the monthly income of those who did not obtain such training and services even five years after the services ceased. The specific transition services considered included vocational assessment, agency contacts, individualized plan and services, work-based vocational training, employability counseling, job club, job interview preparation, job development, and job coaching (Flannery et al., 2008; Izzo et al.).

Methodological Approaches and Issues

Studies that examined adult outcomes of individuals with disabilities have used various methods to determine their findings. Their methodological approaches and issues are discussed below in terms of the following: (a) years and nationalities of publication; (b) scope of studies; (c) sample design and selection (e.g., numbers, composition by disabilities, recruitment, and identification of participants); (d) collected data (e.g., demographic data, adult outcomes, programs provided in high school); (e) data collection (e.g., data sources, data collection methods, data-collectors); (f) validity and reliability measures; and (g) ethical considerations (e.g., confidentiality, informed consent).

Years and Nationalities of Publication of Studies

The majority of studies that investigated adult outcomes of individuals with disabilities were published between 1991 and 2000. In addition, the vast majority of them were American, while very few Canadian studies that examined the postschool outcomes of individuals with disabilities were found (Israelite et al., 2005; Litner et al., 2005; Salmon & Kennealey, 2007). The increase in interest in adult outcomes of individuals with disabilities seemed to be coherent with the enactment of IDEA 1994 in the USA which mandated transition services for students with special needs. Interestingly, in recent years far fewer studies have examined the postschool outcomes of youth with disabilities. Topics frequently addressed by recent studies about transition for youth with disabilities are student and family involvement in the transition process, self-determination of individuals with disabilities, and the development of transition services (Agran & Hughes, 2008; Carter et al., 2006; Gil-Kashiwabara, Hogansen, Geenen, Powers, & Powers, 2007; Goupil et al., 2002; Izzo et al., 2000; Kim & Morningstar, 2007; Mactavish et al., 2004; Madaus, Bigaj, Chafouleas, & Simonsen, 2006; Martin et al., 2006; Noyes & Caren, 2004)

The lack of research efforts in this area in Canada demands attention by professionals in the field. Examining adult outcomes of individuals with disabilities is critical to obtaining descriptive information on the current status of this group of people in order to evaluate the efficacy of the transition services provided and to improve transition policy and support programs (Johnson et al., 1993). The lack of knowledge of outcomes in Canada raises questions about the status of adults with disabilities in this country and the quality of current transition support services for them.

Scope of Studies

In terms of the scope of research, statewide studies were most common. Other studies were conducted either nationwide or as a joint project by a few states. The studies that utilized quantitative methods outnumbered qualitative studies. The vast majority of studies that investigated adult outcomes of individuals with disabilities were conducted by either follow-up or follow-along procedures. Greene (2003b, p. 299) defined follow-up and follow-along studies in the following:

> A follow-along study periodically gathers tracking data on youth with disabilities over an extended period of time. In contrast, a follow-up study gathers tracking data on youth with disabilities on a single occasion after a predetermined period of time has elapsed.

Slightly more studies took follow-up approaches to collect data than follow-along approaches. Not only were a smaller number of the studies reviewed conducted by a follow-along procedure, but also that even among the follow-along studies, only four actually addressed changes of adult outcomes or programs over time.

Many studies recommend the adoption of follow-along versus follow-up procedures in examining adult outcomes of persons with disabilities (Darrow & Clark, 1992; Greene & Kochhar-Bryant, 2003; Halpern, 1990; Johnson et al., 1993). Follow-up procedures may be beneficial because they can be conducted in a shorter time frame than follow-along approaches. However, follow-up studies on adult outcomes of individuals with disabilities rely on memory or old school records, which may be inaccurate, incomplete, or lost, for earlier experiences or programs provided. On the other hand, follow-along procedures allow researchers to track changes in the status or conditions of

individuals and to identify the relationships between programs provided and outcomes. This information obtained by follow-along procedures can provide valuable longitudinal information on improving transition support programs (Halpern; Johnson et al.).

Sample Design and Selection

The sample size of the reviewed studies varied considerably from a few to more than one thousand people. In addition, the composition of the samples also varied. The vast majority of the studies investigated the adult outcomes of only individuals with disabilities while four studies examined both persons with and without disabilities. Some studies examined the outcomes of individuals with certain disabilities, such as mental retardation, learning disabilities, or cerebral palsy. Samples of other studies were composed of those with various disabilities; however, in these studies learning disability was the dominating disability category of the participants, usually more than 60% of the total participants.

It is critical for researchers to provide a definition of the disability such as mental retardation or learning disability relevant to their study and to describe fully and clearly the characteristics of the subjects or participants (Mertens & McLaughlin, 2005). The lack of a definition of disabilities or of a description of the characteristics of the study's subjects/participants can create misunderstanding and confusion. However, the vast majority of the reviewed studies did not define the disabilities of the participants/subjects. Only a few studies specified the definition of mental retardation that they adopted (Beadle-Brown et al., 2005; Devlieger & Trach, 1999; McDermott et al., 1999; Sitlington et al., 1993). No study described the criteria for learning disabilities.

In addition, only a few studies distinguished between individuals with mild intellectual disabilities and those with moderate/severe intellectual disabilities (Brown, 2000; Spreat & Conroy, 2001; Walker, 1999). There is a wide range of capabilities and needs among individuals with disabilities. The characteristics and needs of persons with moderate and severe intellectual disabilities are often significantly different from those of individuals with mild intellectual disabilities (Gajar et al., 1993; Smith et al., 2006; Snell, 1993). Individuals with severe intellectual disabilities experience difficulties in generalizing learning skills, acquiring complex skills, and synthesizing information (Snell, 1993). In addition, these individuals often require ongoing support in major life activities, such as mobility, communication, self-care, and employment (TASH, 2000). Although individuals with mild intellectual disabilities may demonstrate difficulties in some of these areas, the intensity and consistency of required supports are often considerably less than those for individuals with moderate and severe intellectual disabilities. Therefore, these differences may create great diversity in the transition supports required and in adult outcomes. The lack of explicit and consistent definitions puts the validity and reliability of these studies in question.

Collected Data (Research Variables)

The data examined in adult outcome studies are largely grouped into three categories: demographic information, school programs and experiences, and postschool outcomes and experiences. All of the studies that investigated adult outcomes of individuals with disabilities collected demographic information of their samples. Common components of the demographic data examined were age, primary disability, gender, ethnicity, and high school completion status. Many studies examined the

information about the high school programs provided for individual with disabilities.

Variables regarding high school programs include: courses taken, work experiences,

vocational education, participation in regular classes, and transition support provided.

The variables of adult outcomes investigated by these studies include: employment and

financial status; postsecondary education; residential status; personal and social

networks; independent living and life skills; satisfaction, choice-making, and general

well-being; and services/agency needs. The most commonly examined variables of adult

outcomes were related to employment and financial status. Postsecondary education and

personal and social networks were the next most frequent variables investigated.

Among the common demographic information examined in many follow-

up/follow-along studies, researchers underscored gender and ethnicity as important

research variables that warrant a close examination (Coutinho et al., 2006). For example,

noting that significant differences exist in adult outcomes between male and female youth

with disabilities, Coutinho et al. contended that gender should be considered as a factor

contributing to the postsecondary outcomes of youth with disabilities. Ethnicity is another

demographic element that affects the adult outcomes of youth with disabilities: Adult

outcomes of youth of visible minorities in general are poorer than their counterparts

(Geenen et al., 2003; Gil-Kashiwabara et al., 2007; Trainor, 2007). Additionally,

postsecondary goals may be shaped by the culture-specific values and expectations of

youth with disabilities about employment, social network, and social

roles/responsibilities (Geenen et al.). Therefore, it is essential to understand the

relationships between ethnicity and transition outcomes and to consider issues associated

with cultural diversity when assisting youth with disabilities in the transition process (Gil-Kashiwabara et al.).

Some adult-outcome variables drew less research attention than others. Only a few studies looked into subjective aspects of adult outcomes such as satisfaction, choice, and well-being whereas the variables of employment and financial status were examined by most of the follow-up/along studies. This finding is consistent with the claim of several other researchers that subjective aspects of the lives of individuals with intellectual disability are often overlooked (McVilly & Rawlinson, 1998; Turnbull, Turnbull, Wehmeyer, & Park, 2003). McVilly and Rawlinson and Turnbull et al. argued that it is critical to take a holistic approach when inspecting adult outcomes of individuals. Subjective aspects of life such as satisfaction, choice-making, and general well-being are essential elements determining an individual's quality of life. In addition, even when examining objective indicators of adult life such as employment, educational attainment and residential status, it is recommended that researchers investigate the variable of the participants' perceptions of their conditions. Test, Eddy, Neale, and Wood (2004) also argued that schools need to collect data about students' and parents' satisfaction with school programs and transition services provided; however, only 36.3% of 280 teachers in their study reported that they collected data in this area.

Service/agency needs is another variable that was overlooked by many of the studies reviewed. As researchers note, many individuals with disabilities require ongoing support to maintain a meaningful adult life (Gajar et al., 1993; Smith et al., 2006; Snell, 1993; TASH, 2000). Many adults with disabilities require support and services to meet their needs in the areas of employment, residence, transportation, communication, and

emotional and physical health (Benz et al., 2000; Frank & Sitlington, 2000; Lichtenstein & Michaelides, 1993; Sands et al., 1992; Spreat & Conroy, 2001). Without investigating this essential requirement, research that studies adult outcomes of individuals with disabilities is very likely to miss important factors that affect the individuals' adult outcomes. Additionally, in order to develop the ground knowledge to improve the current adult services for individuals with disabilities, examination of the relationships between adult outcomes and adult services is essential.

Lastly, the indicators of programs and services provided during high school as research variables need to be examined. Researchers argue that it is crucial to examine the link between transition services provided for youth with disabilities and their adult outcomes, thereby providing valuable recommendations on how to improve both (Baer et al., 2003; Benz et al., 2000; Colley & Jamison, 1998; Frank & Sitlington, 2000; Johnson et al., 1993; Repetto, Webb, Garvan, & Washington, 2002). Researchers have identified specific school programs and transition services that affect adult outcomes of youth with disabilities (Baer et al.; deFur, 1999; Luecking & Fabian, 2000). The positive predictors identified for successful employment outcomes (e.g., full-time competitive employment) include paid employment during high school, vocational education, and work experiences. In addition, the number of hours spent in regular classes is the best predictor of the postsecondary education enrollment. Effective vocational activities include (a) job shadowing, (b) career fairs, (c) career exploration classes, (d) resume writing, (e) informational interviews, and (f) in-school jobs. In order to obtain more constructive information for the development of transition support programs and services, research variables need to be more specific.

Data Collection

I examine the data collection approaches of the follow-up/along studies reviewed in terms of who provided the data, how the data are collected, and by whom.

Data sources.

Most of these studies obtained, or at least attempted to obtain, data directly from the individuals with disabilities. Some studies obtain data about adult outcomes of people with disabilities from others, such as families or support personnel, only when the individuals were deemed unreliable as data source (Spreat & Conroy, 2001; Walker, 1999; Wehmeyer & Palmer, 2003). Only a few studies obtained information solely from family or support personnel of individuals with disabilities (Brown, 2000; Izzo et al., 2000; Harvey, 2002).

Data-collection methods.

Most of the follow-up/along studies reviewed undertook quantitative approaches rather than qualitative methods. The quantitative data-collection methods used included telephone interviews, face-to-face interviews, mail surveys, and document reviews. Among these, telephone interviews were most frequently used (Baer et al., 2003; Benz et al., 1998; Rabren et al., 2002; Wehmeyer & Palmer, 2003). Most of the studies that adopted qualitative data-collection approaches used multiple techniques, a mixture of in-depth interviews, document review, observations, and/or focus group interviews (Benz et al., 2000; Devlieger & Trach, 1999; Page & Chadsey-Rusch, 1995; Walker, 1999).

Data collectors.

In the vast majority of follow-up/along studies, independent researchers or trained agents collected data about adult outcomes of individuals with disabilities. Some other

studies, though only a few, hired former teachers or school personnel of individuals with disabilities to obtain data about adult outcomes through telephone interviews with individuals with disabilities (Baer et al., 2003; Dunn & Shumaker, 1997). According to Baer et al., school personnel, who telephone-interviewed their former students with disabilities to obtain information about their adult outcomes acknowledged some advantages of using teachers or school personnel as data collector. Due to the established relationships of former teachers or school personnel with individuals with disabilities, the youth and their families were more willing to share their information. Also, they could be in a better position than independent agents to verify the responses from youth with disabilities, as they already had some knowledge about the individuals. The transition coordinators reported that they could understand responses from their former students who had difficulty in communication. Furthermore, they stated that they enjoyed the opportunities to contact their former students and the contacted individuals appreciated the follow-up.

Validity and Reliability Measures

In many of the follow-up/along studies reviewed, the measures taken to secure the validity and reliability of the research were not clearly specified. Among a few studies that reviewed documents as the research method, only one study described the measures used to ensure its reliability (Benz et al., 2000). The researchers of this research provided data collectors with training and a standardized form to organize data obtained by document reviews. Another staff member of the project reviewed the coded data to monitor the accuracy.

Most of the follow-up/along studies that adopted quantitative approaches failed to provide a description of the procedures used to establish the validity and reliability of the data (Levine & Edgar, 1994; Sands et al., 1992; Wehmeyer & Palmer, 2003). The measures used to improve the content validity of the interview or the survey questionnaire included field tests, pilot studies, or expert-reviews of research instruments. The reliability measures used included the training of interviewers/data-collectors, testing inter-interviewer agreement rates, and/or using language translators when interviewing participants for whom English was a second language.

All the studies that applied qualitative research approaches used triangulation techniques, employing multiple sources of information which increased the reliability (Benz et al., 2000; Devlieger & Trach, 1999; Page & Chadsey-Rusch, 1995; Walker, 1999). Only some of the qualitative studies specified other procedures used to ensure reliability such as member checks, examination of contradictory evidence to emerging themes, peer debriefing, and use of reflective memos (Benz et al.; Walker).

Ethical Procedures

Ethical procedures refer to approaches to protecting the rights of participants and to maintaining the integrity of research (Strike, 2006). These approaches include measures to ensure the confidentiality of and to obtain informed consent from participants. Ethical procedure was an element that was overlooked in most of the studies reviewed. In studying humans as research subjects, Sieber (1992) argued that researchers need to obtain informed consent from the respondents or participants. However, of the studies that involved respondents or participants in the data-collection process, only a few specified their procedures to obtain consent from them (Beadle-Brown et al., 2005; Sands

et al., 1992). In addition, many of the follow-up/along studies reviewed stated that they obtained the list of their samples (i.e., individuals with disabilities) from governments, service agencies, other research, or an advocacy group. Most of these studies indicated that the researchers approached potential participants on the list directly by mail or phone. It was not clear if many of these studies used measures to secure the confidentiality of the participants. Most of the papers reviewed either did not indicate their procedures for the protection of participant confidentiality, or they simply did not take any such measures.

In conclusion, the reviewed studies produced a valuable knowledge base of adult status of the individuals with disabilities in the areas of employment, daily living, social relationship, education, and general well-being and support services provided. However, the information that these studies produced tended to be fragmented. In addition, some research approaches undertaken by these studies were so problematic that their validity and reliability were compromised. Much improvement is required in developing and implementing useful research procedures in order to obtain knowledge that reflects the reality of the adult life of individuals with intellectual disabilities and to provide constructive information useful for the development of support programs.

Educational Accountability and Assessment

Although transition planning for students with special needs involves various agencies, in most cases an educational entity, such as school or an administrator from an education department, takes leadership in coordinating transition services and much of such supports are incorporated into the educational programs for the youth. Furthermore, many researchers view educators as the primary party that is accountable for transition

services for youth with disabilities. Therefore, in this section, I review the literature on

the accountability of educational services and assessment of students with special needs

and examine the relations identified by the literature between the accountability and

assessment and postschool outcomes for the youth.

Educational Accountability

Educational accountability refers to "the demand for evidence that the schools are

working effectively and that students are learning the skills they need" (Elford, 2002,

p.1). Researchers identified three major kinds of educational accountability (Beadie,

2004; Linn, 2004): student accountability, teacher accountability, and school

accountability. Student accountability is generally determined by diploma, certificate, or

test scores, whereas teacher accountability and school accountability may be determined

by various standards such as a certificate of pre- or in-services, programs or services

provided, and financial reports (Alberta Education, 1995). Among the various criteria

used for teacher and school accountability, however, student performance or outcome is

one of the most critical (Beadie; Linn; Oakes, Blasi, & Rogers, 2004).

Educational accountability must be systematic and shared, and it must account for

conditions and outcomes as well as the roles, responsibilities, and rights of all the

stakeholders (Oakes et al., 2004). Oakes et al. identify six key factors necessary for

systemic educational accountability. First, systemic accountability requires clear

standards for expectations not only about students' performance outcomes, but also about

the resources and conditions necessary to support educators and students. Second, clear

definitions of state, regional, and district responsibility are required to ensure the

provision of the learning opportunities and services required by state standards. Third,

valid, fair, and useful measures of student learning are critical. The information obtained

from such measures helps policy makers and the public determine whether inputs and

outcomes are meeting expectations. Fourth, accurate information on the performance of

the administrators above the school level is also critical; this includes providing and

facilitating the resources, conditions, and opportunities for adequate education for all

students. Fifth, systemic accountability requires mechanisms which ensure that schools,

educators, and students are accountable for outcomes. Finally, the roles of local

community, parents, and students in upholding educational accountability need to be

identified and encouraged.

Developing such accountability systems poses political and technical challenges

(Oakes et al., 2004). Regarding the political challenges, it is critical that an accountability

system be flexible and has a balance between the centralized authority, responsible for

providing resources and monitoring the local practice, and the local authority's autonomy.

Regarding the technical challenges, an accountability system should set clear standards

for accountability; for example, the system should indicate whether to focus on inputs,

process, or outcomes of educational services and resources. The feasibility of an

accountability system is also an issue that needs to be addressed. According to Oakes et

al., feasibility may be examined based on existing bureaucratic and service systems,

available resources, and on the commitment of stakeholders.

Educational Accountability for Students with Special Needs

Despite the widespread acceptance of student performance as the foremost

standard for educational accountability, the performance of students with special needs is

very often found to be the missing piece in the accountability system whether in general

education or special education (Thurlow et al., 2003; Thurlow et al., 1998). For instance,

according to Thurlow et al. (1998), who analyzed the accountability systems by

examining the education accountability reports of 49 states in the United States, the

educational accountability for students with special needs is unclear. Only 11 of the states

indicated that the outcomes of students with special needs are included in the student

performance of the test-based state assessments, and only five states presented a separate

special education report. In many states, even though students with special needs

participate in state assessments, their records are often not included in reports (Erickson,

Thurlow, & Ysseldyke, 1996). Furthermore, Thurlow et al. (1998) stated that few states

reported the performance or outcomes of students with special needs who were excluded

from the state tests.

Without tracking the outcomes of students with special needs, the accountability

of the educational programs provided for them may be compromised (Elliott et al., 1996;

Owings et al., 1990). Understanding this, stakeholders have increasingly demanded the

establishment of accountability systems for the performance and outcomes of students

with special needs.

Outcomes and Assessment of Students with Special Needs

Although the term 'outcome' has been used with various meanings (Bruininks,

Thurlow, & Ysseldyke, 1992; Educational Resources Information Center, 1991),

Ysseldyke et al. (1991) proposed that an educational outcome be perceived as an

important result of the interactions between individuals and their schooling experiences.

Reporting the outcomes of students with special needs is a process critical to the

accountability system of the educational services available to them. It was contended that

the outcome data of students with special needs be included in general accountability reports, and that it is essential to establish a state-wide or national system which allows consistent data-collection of outcomes of students with special needs (Nebraska Special Education Accountability Commission, 1996; Thurlow et al., 1998).

Thurlow et al. (2003, p. 78) identified four possible ways outcome assessments of students with special needs can be included in an accountability system: "(a) in the regular assessment without accommodations, (b) in the regular assessment with accommodations, (c) in an alternate assessment, and (d) partially in an alternate assessment and partially in the regular assessment". An alternate assessment should be developed for students who cannot participate in regular assessments in order to obtain information of their educational outcomes. Many States in the United States utilized alternate assessments (Thompson, Thurlow, Johnstone, & Altman, 2005). The alternate assessments used by various states include a portfolio, a rating scale/checklist, and an analysis of IEP goals. According to Hager & Slocum (2008), teachers from Utah perceived that the alternate assessment system of the state enabled schools to be more accountable for students' progress and to include all students in the state assessment system. Salvia and Ysseldyke (2001) proposed observation, interviews and checklists, tests, and record reviews as useful means for alternate assessments.

It is critical to define common domains of student outcomes as standards in developing an accountability system for students with special needs (Owings et al., 1990; Thurlow et al., 2003). Furthermore, Bruininks et al., (1992) argued that in order for these efforts to be successful and also to contribute to improving the effectiveness of

educational programs, it is important to identify and focus on meaningful and significant outcomes.

On the one hand, the outcomes of students with special needs who can participate in provincial or state assessments should be included in the student performance data such as absence and out-of-school suspension rates, the achievement of a diploma, grade performance, and student satisfaction with school programs and experiences (Owings et al., 1990). On the other hand, for students who require alternate assessments, alternative criteria should be developed. Potential outcome domains for these students may include communication, personal and social adjustment, functional academics, responsibility and independence, contribution and citizenship, and satisfaction with school programs and experiences (Siegel & Allinder, 2005; Snell & Brown, 2006). Besides these outcome domains, the National Center on Educational Outcomes at the University of Minnesota requests that additional information be included in the assessment documents of students with special needs as follows: use of IEP or ITP, primary disability, educational settings, amount of time spent in the educational settings, and level of intellectual functioning (Bruininks et al., 1992).

Madaus et al. (2006) made a proposal suggesting what kind of information schools should maintain about students with special needs. The necessary data included: (a) demographic information, (b) student's postsecondary goals, and (c) student performance. They noted the primary disability and the data of its initial diagnosis and the list of the formal and informal assessments conducted for the student are also important components of the demographic information. In addition, in regard to student performance, Madaus et al. suggested that schools document the present level of

performance, the need for accommodations/modifications, and assistive equipments used while at school. The information about student performance needs to cover three areas: academic content area (e.g., reading, math, written language, learning skills), cognitive area (e.g., general ability and problem solving, attention and executive functioning, and communication), and functional area (e.g., social skills and behavior; independent living skills; transportation/mobility; self-determination/self-advocacy; and career/transition).

According to Siegel and Allinder (2005), it was not clear how the results of assessments of students with special needs were utilized for the development of educational programs. Siegel and Allinder reported that whereas schools frequently used standardized, norm-referenced tests, such as IQ tests, to assess students with special needs, the usage of criterion-referenced tests and ecological evaluations was less common. Norm-referenced tests are useful for the classification or identification of students in need (Grisham-Brown, 2000; Snell & Brown, 2006). However, for the development of the programs for students with special needs, criterion-referenced tests and ecological inventories are more useful (Siegel & Allinder; Snell & Brown). Criterion-referenced tests measure the degree to which a student obtains specific skills and ecological assessments identify the activities and skills required in certain environments (e.g., schools, worksites, home) (Beirne-Smith, Ittenbach, & Patton, 2002; Browder, 2001; Downing, 2002).

Accountability Practice for Youth with Disabilities in North America

In terms of assuring accountability of outcomes of students with special needs, the United States appears to be much better equipped than Canadian jurisdictions. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), a federal law reauthorized in 1997,

mandates that all students with special needs participate in state and district assessment processes, if necessary with accommodations or through alternate assessments (Office of Special Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education, 2008). In addition, all public reports of student performance should include outcome data of students with special needs. Erickson et al. (1996) conducted a five-year longitudinal study to examine the assessment practices of 50 states regarding educational outcomes of students with special needs. According to the study, an increased number of states indicated achievements of students with special needs such as academic performance in their educational accountability reports (55% of the states in 1995). The student outcomes reported include (a) academic achievements, (b) vocational experiences (e.g., employment during school years, enrolment in vocational education, and type of vocational program attended in school), and (c) postschool outcomes (e.g., employment status, wages or earning, enrolment in postsecondary education, and living arrangements).

New York and Oregon were two of the U.S. states that developed state-wide accountability systems of student outcomes (Thurlow, et al., 2003). New York established The New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSSA), a data-collecting system of outcomes of students with special needs. NYSSA aggregated data of students with special needs, ages 9-10, 13-14, and 16-17, based on alternate performance indicators, the student's written work, videotaping, audio-taping, or observation of applicable individual students and their tasks. Through the use of surveys, NYSAA also included data of parents' perceptions of their child's performance. Oregon developed a two-pronged approach to assessing the outcomes of students with special needs who are below the third grade benchmark level: (a) the Extended Career and Life Role

Assessment System and (b) Extended Assessments. The Extended Career and Life Role Assessment System was designed to assess the functional skills of students with moderate to severe disabilities in content areas of Career and Life Role Education, a state-wide curriculum established for students with special needs. In addition, Extended Assessments assesses reading, writing, and mathematics with accommodated tests.

The United States made an effort to ensure the accountability of student outcomes and to bridge the information gap between schools and the postsecondary service system for individual youth with disabilities with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (2004) (referred to as IDEA), a reauthorization of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. The Act requires that schools provide students with special needs who leave school (either graduate or age out) with a Summary of Performance (SOP), which documents the academic and functional performance of the individual student, and the supports recommended for the attainment of the student's postsecondary goals (Shaw, 2006).

Unfortunately, I have failed to locate an accountability mechanism, which tracks the outcomes of students with special needs in Canadian jurisdictions. In the process of this search, I have explored the provincial and territorial government websites, focusing on those for education and social service departments as well as on-line databases, such as ERIC, Bison, and Google. The unsuccessful search demonstrates that very little information is available about existing accountability mechanisms from Canadian jurisdictions for the transition outcomes of youth with disabilities. A few of the documents I reviewed demonstrate that the efforts from the Canadian jurisdictions to establish the accountability of the services for students with special needs are limited.

The following describes how some of the Canadian jurisdictions address the accountability for students with special needs.

In British Columbia, schools must track the outcomes of students who need Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 1994, 2006). The School Act of British Columbia requires that schools file student progress reports for students with special needs. In addition, the law specifies that the assessment of student outcomes be based on the achievement of the IEP goals and that the reports include the level of student performance, areas in which the student requires further attention, and support plans. The act also indicates the right of parents to access information on the performance of their child. However, although British Columbia prescribes the responsibilities of schools to track the performance of students with special needs, no provincial mechanism exists to aggregate the data, and there are no standards for obtaining consistent indicators of outcomes across schools.

The accountability report of Alberta, Accountability in Education: Policy Framework, specifies the procedure and standards that ensure educational accountability in the province (Alberta Education, 1995, 1998). The report stipulates publishing public reports of student outcomes, performance indicators that pertain to general curricula, and responsibilities of stakeholders in the process of data-collection, but there is no statement about alternate performance assessments for students who cannot participate in the regular assessment process. However, a recent policy review report by the province recommends the need to measure and report the outcomes of students with special needs (Alberta Learning, 2000).

In Manitoba as well, little effort has been made to develop an accountability system of outcomes of students with special needs. There is no report published on the outcomes of students with special needs (Manitoba Education and Training, 1998b); instead, the province focuses on the accountability of service provisions. The province mandates the development and implementation of IEPs for students with special needs and requires that school divisions provide annual School Plans and Division Plans that describe their current and future support services (Manitoba Education and Training, 2001).

Accountability Practice of Postschool Outcomes of Youth with Disabilities

Most educators agree that the major goal of public education is the development of individuals who are able to function successfully in society and be contributing members of the community (Owings et al., 1990). The U.S. Department of Labor (1991) also contended that meaningful educational outcomes need to be related to the skills that will be required in the work place and community life. In the same vein, researchers suggest that career development, personal management, and leisure be considered as outcomes to measure for students in secondary education (McDonnell, Wilcox, & Hardman, 1991; Wehman, 2001).

The National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO) proposed a model for conceptualizing the broad range of educational outcomes relevant to special education and the goal of productive adult status. The model includes eight outcome domains (Ysseldyke, Vanderwood, & Reschly, 1994): (a) presence and participation, (b) accommodation and adaptation, (c) physical health responsibility and independence, (d) contribution and citizenship, (e) academic and functional literacy, (f) personal and social

adjustment, and (g) satisfaction. Shriner et al. (1991) also investigated 59 state directors about outcome data of students with disabilities, which their state system maintains. The outcome data include academic achievement, participation, postsecondary status, attainment and retention, dropout and graduation, vocational skills, attitudes and aspirations, and functional life-maintenance skills.

In fact, a recent national survey of states conducted by the National Center on Educational Outcomes indicates that the assessment of transition and postschool outcomes is the approach most commonly used by special education to assess educational results for students with special needs (Shriner et al., 1991). An examination of how the jurisdictions in North America address the accountability of postschool outcomes of youth with disabilities is further discussed in the next section.

Transition Follow-Up System

Schools and adult support systems for youth with disabilities rarely have information on their postschool outcomes (Bruininks, Wolman, & Thurlow, 1990). Many researchers and professionals, however, contended that the decision making on educational programs and transition services for youth with disabilities and the improvement of such services should be based on this kind of information (Bruininks, Lewis, & Thurlow, 1988; Thurlow, Bruininks, & Lange, 1989). Furthermore, it is argued that a school-based follow-up system needs to be established to obtain, evaluate, and report such outcomes of youth with disabilities. To be successful, the follow-up system must incorporate systematic data collection procedures (Bruininks et al., 1990; Fulton-Burton, 1988).

Such follow-up systems of postschool outcomes of youth with disabilities have several significant goals (Bruininks, Lewis, & Thurlow, 1988; Schroedel, 1984; Thurlow et al., 1989): (a) to influence public policies for youth with disabilities and to inform youth about the educational programs and transition services available to them, (b) to identify issues and gaps in the support system, (c) to make decisions about reforms in school programs and transition services based on solid data and evaluation, and (d) to evaluate the cost effectiveness of programs and services. It is expected that schools will benefit from a TFS, such as ensuring school programs remain germane to the postschool needs of students with special needs, increasing the effectiveness of their performance, and better coordinating educational programs with adult services (Bruininks et al., 1990). In the next section, I examine a few aspects that need to be taken into consideration in the development and implementation of TFSs and then look into the current practice of TFSs in North America.

Development and Implementation of Transition Follow-up Systems

Researchers identified key aspects of developing and implementing TFSs (Bruininks et al., 1990; DeStefano & Wagner, 1992). The key aspects commonly identified as significant in administering TFSs include: (a) conducting needs assessment, (b) developing a conceptual framework, (c) designing and selecting a sample, (d) planning for analysis, (e) developing questionnaires, (f) collecting data, and (g) reporting the results.

Conducting Needs Assessment

Needs assessment is a process which aims to obtain the information needs of the various stakeholders in the transition process, and it depends on the capacity to collect

and report data and on the availability of information (DeStefano & Wagner, 1992).

Needs assessment can provide the basis for developing a conceptual model, determining

outcome variables, planning data analysis, and structuring timelines and reporting

formats. The most frequently used method for needs assessment is the survey (Bruininks

et al., 1990). DeStefano and Wagner (p.176) proposed a few questions that need to be

addressed by needs assessment:

1. What are the major issues or concerns to be addressed in the follow-up system?

2. What variables associated with school programs, youth, family, community, and

   outcomes are relevant to the issues or concerns?

3. What data sources are, or can be, available?

4. What resources or capacity exist to collect, analyze, and report the data?

5. How can the collected data be used?

6. What timelines will maximize the collection and utility of the data?

Developing a Conceptual Framework

A conceptual frame helps identify the key parameters of a follow-up system and

the relationships between them (DeStefano & Wagner, 1992). The development of a

conceptual frame provides guidelines for what, why, and how to measure the follow-up

system. The detailed guidelines that DeStefano and Wagner proposed for a conceptual

frame of a TFS are aforementioned in the introduction.

Designing and Selecting a Sample

In most cases, it is not necessary to collect information from every individual of

the group of interest. When collecting information from only a part of the interest group,

it is critical to develop a sampling plan for a follow-up system that ensures that the sample represents the characteristics of the entire group (Bruininks et al., 1990).

The foremost task in sample planning is to determine the characteristics, such as age, type of disability, and year of graduation of the target group of youth with disabilities (DeStefano & Wagner, 1992). Further, the sample may need to be classified by various characteristics depending on what information the follow-up system intends to collect. For example, if the follow-up system is to examine the outcome differences by gender, the sampling needs to be designed to ensure that sufficient cases for both genders are selected.

Three methods of sampling were identified by Worthen and Sanders (1987) as the most common approaches: (a) haphazard (sample drawn on the basis of accessibility), (b) judgment (sample drawn on the basis of expert judgment about those who will best reflect the characteristics of the entire group), and (c) probability (sample drawn on the basis of the probability with which they occur in the entire group).

DeStefano and Wagner (1992) suggested that the sample size should be determined based on the number of cases needed in order to measure outcomes with sufficient precision and to detect significant differences between subgroups of the sample. Insufficient sample size compromises the reliability and usefulness of the data. Potential factors that may cause insufficient sample include (DeStefano & Wagner): (a) the difficulty to locate or secure data from selected sample, (b) disaggregated sample into numerous subgroups during analysis, and (c) decrease of the sample over time in cases of longitudinal data-collecting.

Planning for Analysis

A plan about how data will be analyzed should be made at an early stage. Planning of data-analysis helps the researcher ensure against insufficient sample size, missing data, inadequate level of measurement of variables (e.g., age as interval or nominal), and therefore increases the likelihood of obtaining meaningful findings (DeStefano & Wagner, 1992). DeStefano and Wagner pointed out the following aspects that need to be taken into account in the planning of data-analysis: the sample, sample size, comparison groups, independent and dependent variables, the relationships between the variables, level of measurement of the variables, and the knowledge base of the audience of the transition process and services.

The researchers who conducted follow-up/along studies of adult outcomes of youth with disabilities identify certain elements as dependent variables (i.e., indicators of adult outcomes) and independent variables (i.e., factors that may have an effect on the dependent variables, adult outcomes). Adult outcomes as dependent variables may be examined in terms of variable areas of life, such as employment, financial status, postsecondary education, residential status, community involvement, and quality of life (Bruininks et al., 1990; Bruininks, Thurlow, Lewis, & Larson, 1988; DeStefano & Wagner, 1992). The conceptual framework of this study, described in the introduction, provided detailed discussions of adult outcomes as dependent variables. DeStefano and Wagner have identified the following independent variables: (a) demographic factors (e.g., type of disability, gender, ethnicity, age, urban/rural as residential area, and household income); (b) student outcomes (e.g., grade, attendance rate, suspension, achievement/competency test scores, diploma/certificate of completion or drop-out); (c)

school programs and experiences (e.g., educational placements); and (d) transition services and experiences provided (e.g., number of months of work experience).

As well as identifying variables, it is necessary to have a plan to compare how the independent variables affect the postschool outcomes. DeStefano and Wagner (1992) identified four common comparisons used in the follow-up studies of adult outcomes of youth with disabilities: (a) comparisons between youth with disabilities and those without disabilities; (b) comparisons among youth in different disability categories; (c) cross-unit comparisons (i.e. cross-school, cross-district, cross-program); and (d) comparisons of the same group over time.

Each of these comparisons has its own issues to consider (DeStefano & Wagner, 1992). The comparison of the outcomes of youth with disabilities with those of their non-disabled counterparts needs to be made in a way that ensures that effects of other variables such as gender, race, and household income are controlled. In comparing the outcomes among youth with different types of disabilities, it needs to be taken into account that youth who share the same kind of disability are very likely to exhibit very different characteristics. In order to execute valid analysis using cross-unit comparisons (i.e. cross-school, cross-district, cross-program), the differences between the units, such as resources provided, characteristics of local culture, and policies that may affect the outcomes of youth with disabilities should be taken into consideration. Finally, historical influences, such as changes of policies, graduation requirements, and economic conditions also need to be examined when comparing the longitudinal differences of the outcomes of the same groups.

Developing Questionnaires

Although researchers may choose various means to examine adult outcomes of youth with disabilities, the most commonly used approach for TFSs is the survey, whether by mail, by phone or face-to-face (Bruininks et al., 1990; DeStefano & Wagner, 1992). Hence, a section is devoted to examining guidelines for questionnaire development for TFSs for youth with disabilities. In addition, the guidelines are discussed particularly in consideration of the cases that youth with disabilities provide information about their experiences and outcomes on their own, although the data may also be collected by other people, such as parents, teachers, or service providers.

Bruininks et al. (1990) pointed out three things that need to be taken into account when developing a questionnaire for a TFS. Firstly, the format and questions should be clear and easy for the data-collector, the respondents, and data-analyst to follow. This can be accomplished by applying some of the following approaches (Borg & Gall, 1983; Fowler, 1984; Van Houten & Hatry, 1987): (a) keeping wording simple, (b) reducing sensitive questions, (c) minimizing questions that rely on memories, (d) providing a consistent frame of reference, (e) avoiding questions about which the respondents may not be knowledgeable, and (f) avoiding long questions. A failure to follow these guidelines may decrease the response rate or increase invalid or unreliable responses (Bruininks et al., 1990).

Secondly, a questionnaire should be pretested before it is actually used in a TFS. Dillman (1978) identified three groups of people that need to examine a questionnaire before its actual execution: experts or professionals, potential respondents, and expected users of the data.

Finally, a questionnaire should be developed in a way that increases the reliability and validity of the data. The reliability and validity of the data to be collected can be improved by the aforementioned approaches to developing a clear and straightforward questionnaire. Additionally, special attention needs to be paid to factors that may decrease the validity of the data when youth with disabilities (those with moderate or severe intellectual disabilities in particular) are to respond to the questionnaire. For example, although the response rates of people with intellectual disabilities to yes-no questions are often higher than those to multiple choice or short answer questions, it has been reported that they are more likely to respond affirmatively to yes-no questions regardless of the content (Sigelman et al., 1981). In addition, when examples are provided to help individuals with intellectual disabilities better understand the questions, these individuals show a tendency to give answers similar to those provided in the examples. As an alternative, Sigelman et al. suggested that higher reliability and validity can be achieved by either-or questions rather than by yes-no questions. Adequate training of the data-collector is also suggested to obtain accurate and valid information.

Collecting Data

Data-collection involves a few key elements: data-sources, data-collection methods, data-collectors, the timeline of data-collection, and response rates (Bruininks et al., 1990; DeStefano & Wagner, 1992). These elements are critical in designing and implementing a TFS. I discuss the issues and suggestions regarding each element in the next section.

Data sources.

DeStefano and Wagner (1992) identified three potentially major data sources for a TFS: youth with disabilities, parents or adults who are significant to the youth, and school personnel. Many studies have shown that students with mild disabilities can provide accurate and reliable information about their own experiences (Bruininks, Lewis, & Thurlow, 1988; Hasazi et al., 1985; Zigmond & Thornton, 1985). As the severity of the youth's disability increases, however, the reliability of his or her responses becomes questionable. Researchers note potential challenges in regards to interviewing individuals with disabilities and also to obtaining information from their acquaintances. Researchers who interview individuals with disabilities need to consider their respondents' cognitive and communicative capabilities to properly respond to their questions (Ferguson, 1992; Mertens, 1991).

DeStefano and Wagner (1992) suggested that parents may be the proper source to determine whether their offspring with disability can adequately respond to the prepared questionnaire. When the youth is not capable of responding to survey questions, it is generally acceptable to obtain information from their parents or other significant adults, such as guardians or caregivers, who are very knowledgeable about the recent experiences of the youth. Nonetheless, it is often difficult to ensure that the information that parents or significant adults provide is accurate or reliable (Mertens & Mclaughlin, 2005). If the contact of the parent or other significant adult responding to the survey is limited, the accuracy and reliability of their responses may be significantly compromised. In addition, it has been reported that parents or other significant adults are not reliable informants about such variables like the youth's satisfaction, emotions, or perceptions.

Finally, school personnel, such as former teachers or school administrators, are recommended as data-resources for information about school programs or school completion status as youth or parents have been reported to be unreliable for this kind of information.

Data-collection methods.

Three methods have been commonly used to collect data in follow-up/along studies of adult outcomes of youth with disabilities: written questionnaire, telephone interviews, and face-to-face interviews (Bruininks et al., 1990; DeStefano & Wagner, 1992; Van Houten & Hatry, 1987). The best method can be determined based on the topic, the objectives of the survey, the target group of interest, and the available resources (Dillman, 1978; Frey, 1983). Each method has its own advantages and disadvantages (Dillman; Frey). Among the three methods, the face-to-face interview has been reported to achieve high response rates (Bruininks, McGrew, Thurlow, & Lewis, 1988). In addition, the likelihood of biased data is lower in face-to-face and telephone interviews than in mail surveys. The face-to-face and telephone interviews have the advantage of providing immediate assistance to the respondent when necessary; this benefits many youth with disabilities who require such help to provide accurate information (Sinclair & Johnson, 1989). Unfortunately, these two methods are usually expensive and time-consuming. Also, for some respondents, such as youth with a speech disability or hearing impairments, the mailed survey may be the better option rather than the face-to-face or telephone interview.

Data collector.

Test et al. (2004) suggested that the purposes of collecting data about youth with disabilities determine who should collect the data. Additionally, they argue that if the purpose is to improve school programs and transition services provided while at school, teachers may be the best people to collect the data. Bruininks et al. (1990) also recommended school personnel as data-collector when the TFS is school-based. The most suitable candidate may be one of the former teachers of the former student with a disability or the principal of the high school that he or she attended. In some cases, a superintendent or other level of administrator may be better suited.

Timeline of data collection.

In the process of developing a TFS, the term between leaving school and the measurement of adult outcomes needs to be determined (DeStefano & Wagner, 1992). If the data of adult outcomes is collected too long after the youth leaves school, it may be difficult to determine the factors that affect the outcomes. As some youth with disabilities require a longer time to adjust to adult life than others, 6 months after leaving school may be too early to examine adult outcomes (DeStefano & Wagner).

Response rates.

A plan to increase the response rate needs to be made in the process of developing a TFS (Bruininks et al., 1990). The failure to obtain sufficient responses in survey may cause a significant bias in the results (Dillman, 1978; Fowler, 1984; Williams & MacDonald, 1986). The factors that may affect the response rate include the data-collection method, the questionnaire format, the potential respondents' interest in the topic, and the use of incentives. In collecting data from individuals with disabilities, the

nature and severity of their disabilities is a particularly important factor contributing to the response rate (DeStefano & Wagner, 1992). Additionally, the time gap between school leaving and data-collection of adult outcomes of youth with disabilities may affect the response rate. The larger the time gap is, the lower the response rate is likely to be. As time goes on, the potential subjects are more likely to be unreachable for the follow-up or to refuse to participate in it (Bruininks et al., 1990).

In survey research, three groups of subjects are to be identified to examine the response rates (Bruininks et al., 1990): the total number of subjects meeting the selection criteria, the total number of subjects found, and the total number of subjects who responded to the survey. Using these numbers the researcher can obtain the response rate of the total potential subjects and also of the subjects located.

Fowler (1984) suggested that 75% be a minimum standard for an acceptable response of a study that surveys individuals without disabilities. For the sample of people with disabilities, however, much lower response rates have been reported (Bruininks, Thurlow, Lewis, & Larson, 1988; Schroedel, 1984). According to Schroedel, the response rates of the follow-up studies for people with hearing impairments that he reviewed ranged between 27% and 70%. Similarly, Bruininks et al. proposed 50% as a reasonable response rate in a survey study with respondents with disabilities. They also noted that the response rates of subjects with mild disabilities tend to be lower than those of subjects with moderate or severe disabilities.

For mailed surveys, follow-up letters, postcard reminders, or telephone calls may help increase the response rate. Bruininks et al. (1990) also suggested that the contact

information of youth with disabilities be obtained at the time of their leaving school as well as their consent to participating in the follow-up process in the future.

Reporting the Results

The report of the results needs to describe the results of the survey and also the data-collection process, such as sampling, questionnaire design, and surveying procedures (Bruininks et al., 1990). DeStefano and Wagner (1992) suggested that, in the interest of effective communication of the results, the report should present research questions along with the findings and provide an interpretation of the meaning of the data as well as subsequent recommendations. Additionally, it was suggested that the report discuss the reliability and validity of the data and identify any potential bias and errors associated with the data, survey design, data-collection procedure, or other aspects of the follow-up process (Bruininks et al.; Fowler, 1984).

Transition Follow-Up Systems in the United States

In response to the increasing recognition of the significance of a TFS for youth with disabilities, many US states during the last two decades have initiated statewide models (DeStefano & Wagner, 1992). As mentioned above, I have been unsuccessful in identifying any existing or past accountability measures developed in Canada to systematically track the outcomes of youth with disabilities. Therefore, this section is devoted to examining the TFSs in the United States.

In 2003, the National Post-School Outcomes Center published the National Post-School Outcome State Profile Database, a report describing the results of the centre's nationwide investigation of the state practice of TFSs for youth with disabilities. According to the National Post-School Outcomes Center (2003), of the 50 US states, 25

reported that they had developed and implemented a statewide TFS for youth with

disabilities. The following provides the summary of the report, detailing how the 25

states are operating TFSs.

Administering Agency of the System

There needs to be an agency which is in charge of operating the TFS, including

collecting, analyzing, and reporting data. In many states, a university organization is the

most common type of agency that operates such a system. Of the 25 states, 9 (36%)

reported that their systems are administered by a university organization, 7 (28%) by the

state department of education or other related department, and 2 (8%) by a private

research organization. The remaining seven states chose 'other' for this question, but

specific details are not provided.

Sample Design and Selection

The one common criteria used by all 25 states to identify the target sample is to

collect information about high school leavers with an IEP. Fifteen states (60%) tracked

all school leavers with IEPs for data-collection of their adult outcomes, and 10 states

(40%) took a sample of school leavers with IEPs. In order to ensure that the sample

represents the total population of interest, many of the 10 states, such as Texas,

Kentucky, New York, Pennsylvania, Utah, and Illinois, compared the demographic

characteristics between the two groups. The vast majority of the 25 states collected

outcome data for graduates with regular diplomas (25 states), for graduates with modified

diplomas or other certificates (20), and for youth who left school by aging out (25) or

dropping-out (25).

Collected Data

The states were asked to report the information that they collected at the time of the youth's leaving school and after they have left school. The five categories of information that were obtained at the time of leaving school and the number of states that collected data applicable to each category is as follows: information for post-school contacts (24 states), student demographics (23), transition experiences in high school (14), postsecondary IEP goals (15), and others (11). The information that was collected about adult outcomes after the youth with disabilities leave school and the number of states that collected the information are: employment outcomes (25 states), postsecondary educational outcomes (25), housing or independent living outcomes (16), and others (14). No details are provided for the category of other.

Data-Collection

Most of the 25 states used multiple methods for data-collection (e.g., telephone surveys, interviews, mail surveys, web-based or internet based surveys, state databases, and/or other means). The most commonly used data-collection methods were telephone surveys (22 states, 88%) and face-to-face interviews (14 states, 56%). In terms of data sources, the vast majority of states collected their data about the adult outcomes of youth with disabilities from the individuals, their parents, or both: 22 (88%) out of the 25 states reporting that they collected the data from youth with disabilities and 20 (80%) from families. The use of other data sources was very limited (only by 3 states), and these were not specified in the National Post-School Outcome State Profile Database. According to this report, 14 states used teachers or other school personnel to collect data by face-to-

face interviews, while 8 states hired a research organization to conduct the interviews. It

was not clear whether the data collectors were hired for the telephone or mail surveys.

Timeline of Data-Collection

Most of the 25 states (17 states) appeared to collect adult outcomes only once for

each youth with disability once they leave school. Three states reported twice, two states

three times, and one state more than four times. Two states did not answer to this

question. The timeline of the follow-up by each state was not reported.

Response Rates

Ten of the 25 states answered the question concerning what efforts were made to

increase the response rate. The most common strategies included: (a) providing pre-

notification of or obtaining consent for the future contact for the follow-up at the time of

the youth's leaving school; (b) making contacts prior to the follow-up using emails,

telephone, or letters; (c) using postage-paid envelops for mail survey; (d) allowing

various means to participate, such as mail survey or telephone interview; and (e) updating

contact information using internet white pages or adult service agencies database. In New

Mexico, acknowledging the under-representation of Native Americans in the survey,

data-collectors from various tribes were recruited to contact native youth with disabilities.

Analysis, Report, and Use of Data

The data of adult outcomes of youth with disabilities were analyzed according to

various variables, such as gender (22 states reported that they analyzed adult outcomes by

this factor), ethnicity (21), disability type (21), school completion status (20), age (14),

and other (5). The states indicated that the data were reported at the state level (22 states),

at the district level (19), and at the school level (8). Some states reported the data at

multi-levels. The states used the collected data of adult outcomes of youth with disabilities for various purposes. The use of data, grouped into the 5 categories, and the number of states that indicated their use of data for each category are reported as follows: (a) improving programs and services (23 states), (b) identifying in-service training for teachers and other professionals (20), (c) prioritizing technical assistance (21), (d) reporting to state legislature (12), and (e) others (5).

In conclusion, during the last few decades, a considerable body of research has accumulated on the postschool outcomes of and effective approaches to the transition planning for youth with disabilities. Some of the best practices of effective transition planning and services for youth with disabilities are person-centred transition planning, functional and comprehensive approaches, inclusive placements and experiences, interagency collaboration, and the development of self-determination. One of the most critical approaches to effective transition services for youth with disabilities is individualized transition planning. An interdisciplinary team, which is composed of key stakeholders, such as parents, teachers, and adult service professionals, is also essential to develop and implement an ITP with and for the individual in need.

Despite the increasing attention to the development of transition services for youth with disabilities, a great deal of research shows that many youth with disabilities continue to experience difficulties in the transition process and also achieve significantly poorer adult outcomes than their counterparts in the areas of employment, social relationships, and community life. The poor outcomes of youth with disabilities have raised concerns about the accountability and effectiveness of the educational and transition services for this population. Researchers also note that there is a lack of

measures taken by schools and jurisdictions to ensure the accountability of the

educational and transition services provided for youth with disabilities. Additionally,

researchers contend that it is crucial to identify specific programs and services effective

for successful transition for youth with disabilities based on empirical data. In order to

address these concerns, many jurisdictions in the United States recently have developed

and implemented a TFS, which tracks the transition outcomes of youth with disabilities

and identifies specific services that affect the outcomes. Unfortunately, very little is

known about Canadian practices regarding accountability measures for youth with

disabilities and apparently no TFS has been implemented in any Canadian jurisdiction.

Therefore, I would like to develop a TFS model that reflects the Canadian context and to

provide an empirically founded set of guidelines for such systems. Given the range of

social cultures in Canada, and given that legal and political systems in different

jurisdictions are diverse, a TFS model adequate for one province may not be suitable for

others. Therefore, this study aims to develop a TFS model that is legitimate in the

Manitoban context. In the process of developing a TFS model, this study will investigate:

(a) the information to be obtained through a TFS, (b) appropriate approaches to

conducting a TFS, and (c) local barriers to and needs involved in implementing a TFS.

The following section describes the methods of this study in detail.

CHAPTER 3. METHODS

I used both quantitative and qualitative research methods in order to develop an effective transition follow-up system (TFS) model. In this chapter, I specify the methodological approaches taken at each of the three stages of the TFS development, viz.:

1. Stage 1: Needs assessment

2. Stage 2: Transition follow-up system model development

3. Stage 3: Final review meeting

In Stage 1, needs assessment, I explored the local data-collection practice of youth with disabilities and local needs of and barriers to a TFS in Manitoba. Based on the findings of the needs assessment and literature review, I then developed a TFS model (Stage 2). Finally, in order to examine the validity of the TFS model, I convened a final review meeting with the stakeholders who have participated in this study, receiving their feedback on the model (Stage 3). All the participants of the needs assessment were invited to the meeting. Prior to conducting this study, I received an approval from the Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board (ENREB) at University of Manitoba. Further details of each stage of this research are described below.

Stage 1: Needs Assessment

The needs assessment was intended to examine local needs so as to determine what is required to implement a TFS. The needs assessment consists of (a) a telephone survey on schools' and school divisions' data-collection practices, (b) a mixed method survey on the government's data-collection practices, and (c) focus groups and individual interviews with stakeholders. I conducted the telephone survey with high school teachers and Student Services administrators from school divisions to identify which data they

collect or maintain regarding individual youth with disabilities in the transition process.

By means of the survey with Manitoba government representatives, I examined the

current data-collection practice about individuals with disabilities of relevant departments

of the government, such as Manitoba Education and Manitoba Family Services and

Consumer Affairs (FSCA). Then, I undertook individual interviews and focus groups to

examine the stakeholders' perspectives on what would be needed for a TFS to work in the

province of Manitoba. I describe the methodological approaches used in the surveys,

focus groups, and interviews below.

Telephone Survey on Schools' and Divisions' Data-collection Practices

The purpose of the telephone survey was to investigate the current data collecting

practices of high schools and school divisions in Manitoba regarding students with

special needs in the transition process from secondary school to adulthood. Surveys have

been widely endorsed as a desirable research method to identify the trends and

characteristics of practices with a large population (Creswell, 2003, 2008; Creswell &

Kreuger, 2003). Telephone surveys are particularly advantageous in collecting data from

geographically dispersed participants (Creswell, 2008). Compared to mail surveys,

telephone surveys expedite responses and increase the response rate, enabling the

interviewer to establish a rapport with the interviewees and to explain the purpose of the

survey and answer any questions about the study (Creswell, 2008; Lodico, Spaulding, &

Voegtle, 2006; Mertens, 2005). In addition, a telephone survey allows the researcher the

opportunity to obtain additional information from respondents when necessary (Mertens,

2005). The information sought by this survey was relatively simple and well suited to a

telephone survey. The research questions of this survey were the following:

1. What information do high schools collect about youth with disabilities in

   Manitoba?

2. What information do the school divisions (i.e., Student Services) collect about

   youth with disabilities?

I describe the features of this survey including the survey questionnaire construction, the

subjects, and the data-collection procedure below.

Survey Questionnaires

I developed a questionnaire for both schools and Student Services departments in

school divisions. The questionnaire consisted of yes/no questions asking whether they

collect certain information about youth with disabilities. The conceptual framework of

this study provided the basic structure of the questionnaire (see Figure 1). I determined

the information components of the questionnaire based on (a) the conceptual framework

of this study and (b) common variables examined by empirical research that investigated

outcomes of persons with disabilities and the US states that implemented a TFS (Baer et

al., 2003; Brown, 2000; Colley & Jamison, 1998; DeStefano & Wagner, 1992; Harvey,

2002; Heal et al., 1999; McDermott et al., 1999; National Post-School Outcomes Center,

2003; Rabren et al., 2002; Spreat & Conroy, 2001; Wehmeyer & Palmer, 2003). The

information components for schools and Student Services include: (a) youth

characteristics (e.g., age, gender, type of disability, health concerns), (b) family

characteristics (e.g., primary caregiver, residential area), (c) contact information (e.g.,

phone number, address, email), (d) school programs/transition services provided (e.g.,

IEP/ITP, voc training, courses), and (e) student outcomes and assessments (e.g.,

attendance rate, GPA, reading level).

Researchers have developed numerous strategies for designing good survey instruments (Creswell, 2008; Johnson & Christensen, 2000; Mertens, 2005). Some of the key strategies include: (a) using simple and clear language; (b) ensuring that questions are within the range of the participants' knowledge; (c) avoiding overlapping responses; (d) being sensitive to gender, class, and cultural needs of participants; (e) avoiding a multiple question, i.e., one which actually contains more than one question; (f) reducing the number of questions applicable to only some of the participants; and (g) beginning with background questions which participants can easily start with. I tried to apply all these strategies to the development of the survey questionnaires of this study. Finally, I had the survey questionnaire for schools and school divisions verified by two high school special education teachers and two Student Services administrators. They examined the appropriateness and clarity of the questions. Based on their feedback, I refined or modified the survey questionnaires (See Appendices D & E). I recruited these experts by personal contact.

Subjects

The subjects of the survey included 49 high school special education/resource teachers and 16 Student Services administrators in Manitoba: one teacher from each school and Student Services administrator from each school division. Of the 49 teachers who participated, 14 (28.6%) were from urban areas (e.g., Brandon and Winnipeg) and 35 (71.4%) from rural areas (i.e., other than Brandon and Winnipeg), while five (31.2%) out of the 16 Student Services administrators who participated were from urban areas and 11 (68.8%) were from rural areas. I targeted these two groups of professionals as subjects of the telephone survey, because in Manitoba special education/resource teachers and

Student Services administrators are usually those who collect or maintain information about students with special needs in schools and school divisions.

I recruited the subjects only from 88 secondary schools in the 23 school divisions that approved my study. (There are 38 school divisions with 319 secondary schools in Manitoba.) Therefore, the response rates of schools and school divisions to this telephone survey are 55.7% (49 out of 88) and 69.6% (16 out of 23) respectively. The range of acceptable response rates for surveys that researchers suggest varies. Whereas Johnson and Christensen (2000) propose that response rates around 70 percent and higher are generally desirable, Creswell (2008) noted that many survey studies in leading educational journals report 50% response rates or higher. In an effort to increase the response rate, I followed up with the school principals and directors of Student Services by email and/or telephone.

In order to recruit representatives of high schools and Student Services, I sent cover letters by email to the superintendents of school divisions in order to obtain permission to conduct this survey in their divisions (see Appendix A); with two school divisions, I had to receive approval also from their own ethics committees. Among the 38 school divisions that I approached in Manitoba, 23 granted me permission to recruit participants for this research in their school divisions. Once I obtained their permission, I sent a cover letter (see Appendix B) to the high school principals, requesting that they distribute a recruitment letter and a sample survey questionnaire (see Appendix D) to a suitable person as representative of their schools and sent a recruitment letter and a sample survey questionnaire (see Appendix E) to the directors/coordinators of the Student Services department in each school division, seeking their participation. I

emailed the recruitment letters and the sample survey questionnaire directly to some

teachers and Student Services administrators that principals or directors of Student

Services departments suggested as suitable representatives. The criterion for suitable

respondents was that they be responsible for managing databases of students with an

Individual Education Plan (IEP) or Individual Transition Plan (ITP) in schools or in

Student Services departments of school divisions. The participation was on a voluntary

basis. Teachers and Student Services administrator who were interested in this survey

contacted me by email or phone to arrange a phone survey.

Data-collection Procedure

I carried out the telephone survey within a period of two months. I conducted one

phone interview with each respondent. High school special education/resource teachers

and Student Services administrators who received the recruitment letter and sample

questionnaire and were interested in the survey contacted me by email or phone. I then

arranged a phone interview with them. Prior to the interviews, I obtained completed

consent forms from the participants by fax: although the participants had the choice to

send their completed consent form by mail or fax, all of them opted for fax.

Prior to the phone interviews, I confirmed that the participants had the sample

questionnaire so that they could prepare themselves for the questions. Each phone

interview with teachers and Student Services administrators lasted 15-30 minutes. At the

start of each phone interview, I briefed the participant on my research, confirmed their

willingness to participate voluntarily, and then began questions one by one, writing down

all answers. Once a phone interview was completed, I sent the completed questionnaire

back to the respondent through email within a day, asking each participant to verify his or her answers. No compensation was provided for the respondents.

Data Analysis

The telephone survey generated quantitative data on the type of information high school teachers and Student Services administrators maintained about students with IEPs/ITPs. I examined the information components in terms of student and family background, school programs/transition services provided, student outcomes and assessments, and transition follow-up practice. I analyzed the information components that were commonly and less commonly maintained by schools and school divisions, considering the number of teachers and administrators that reported keeping each of the information components.

Mixed-method Survey on Government's Data-collection Practices

I conducted a mixed-method survey of government representatives and government documents, utilizing telephone surveys, in-person surveys, and document review to investigate the current data-collection and data-maintenance practices of the Manitoba government regarding youth with disabilities. The research questions of this survey were as follows:

1. Which departments of the government in Manitoba are the major agencies that collect and maintain information about youth with disabilities?

2. What information do the departments identified as the major data-collection agencies collect and maintain about youth with disabilities?

3. How do those departments collect and maintain information about youth with disabilities?

I describe some features of this survey including the subjects, the survey questionnaire, and the data-collection procedure below.

Subjects

The subjects of the survey were government representatives: one representative from Manitoba Education and four representatives from FSCA programs that provide services to people with disabilities, including Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), Supported Living (SL), Employment and Income Assistance (EIA), and Children's Special Services (CSS). In order to recruit these subjects, I asked the senior managers of the identified programs to authorize my study and to distribute a recruitment letter and a sample survey questionnaire to the most suitable representatives. The criterion for suitable respondents was that they be in charge of maintaining information about persons with disabilities in their programs (see Appendices C & F). Participation was on a voluntary basis. The representatives interested in this survey study contacted me by email or phone. I recruited one representative from each of the programs.

Survey Questionnaires

I utilized two survey questionnaires: one for Manitoba Education and Children's Special Services (CSS) of FSCA and one for the three adult programs (i.e., VR, SL, EIA) of FSCA. The questionnaire for the representatives of Manitoba Education and CSS consisted of the same questions that were used for schools and Student Services Departments (See Appendices D & E). The survey questionnaire for the representatives of the three adult programs of FSCA, however, contained questions about their data collection on youth with disabilities in the areas of (a) youth characteristics, (b) adult outcomes of former students (e.g., residential and job conditions), and (c) adult services

provided for youth with disabilities (e.g., vocational training, residential services). This questionnaire was developed using the same process of the survey questionnaires for teachers and Student Services administrators. Finally, I had the survey questionnaire for FSCA verified by one FSCA administrator. This person examined the appropriateness and clarity of the questions. I refined or modified the survey questionnaire based on their feedback (See Appendix F).

Data-collection Procedure

The government representatives who participated in this study could choose whether they wished to do a telephone survey or an in-person survey. Among the five government representatives, I did a telephone survey with three and an in-person survey with two. Before each survey, I obtained completed consent forms from the subjects by fax.

Prior to the interviews, I confirmed that the participants had the sample questionnaire so that they could prepare themselves for the questions. Each phone or in-person interview with the government representatives lasted 30-45 minutes. At the start of each interview, I briefed the participant on my research and confirmed their willingness to participate voluntarily. Whereas in the telephone survey I wrote the subjects' answers on the questionnaire forms on their behalf, for the in-person surveys, the subjects completed the questionnaire themselves. During and immediately after a survey, I jotted down minutes, summarizing the respondents' answers and my interpretation of them. After the surveys, some respondents provided supplementary documents (e.g., consumer information forms, guidelines used for information collection

for their consumers and program websites) that helped me understand their data-collection practices regarding persons with disabilities.

Once an interview was completed, I sent a summary of the interview to the respondent through email, asking each subject to verify his or her answers. No compensation was provided to the respondents.

Data Analysis

The data I obtained from the telephone and in-person interviews with the government representatives included (a) completed questionnaires, (b) supplementary documents provided by the interviewees, and (c) the minutes that I wrote during and after the surveys. From these data, I identified the information components that each government program maintained in terms of background information, school information, and postschool information in the format of yes or no responses and described how they collected and maintained data about their consumers.

Focus Groups and Individual Interviews with Stakeholders

The last part of needs assessment involved focus groups and individual interviews. The purpose of this stage of research was to examine in depth stakeholders' perspectives on key aspects of development and implementation of a TFS. A focus group is a group interview that relies on the interaction among the participants within the group (Krueger & Casey, 2000; Mertens, 1991). Focus groups and interviews are appropriate when a researcher seeks to explore in depth the perceptions of individuals or a group of people about their experiences or issues (Creswell, 2008; Lodico et al., 2006; Morgan, 1988; Palys, 2003). Morgan highlights that through focus groups the different perceptions of the participants can be highlighted or negotiated and focus groups allow the

participants to elaborate their positions, discuss related dynamics, and articulate the

rationale(s) underlying their perspective. Through focus groups and individual

interviews, I examined the following questions:

1. What areas of agreement and disagreement exist among the stakeholder groups
   regarding what information should be collected through a TFS?

2. What areas of agreement and disagreement exist among the stakeholder groups
   regarding how a TFS should be administered?

3. What suggestions and concerns in regards to developing and implementing a TFS
   exist in the province?

This section describes the design of the focus groups and interviews in terms of

participation and the data-collection process.

Participants

I recruited the participants across the province in an attempt to balance the

numbers of participants from urban (i.e., Brandon and Winnipeg) and rural areas (i.e.,

other towns). Table 1 presents the numbers of participants by stakeholder group and

region, whether urban or rural area.

Table 1

Participants by Stakeholder Group and Region

Participants by Stakeholder Group	Region		Total N=76
	Urban	Rural	
High school special education teachers	8	7	15
Student services administrators	5	5	10
Adult service professionals	10	6	16
Government representatives			
Manitoba Education	3	0	3
FSCA	4	1	5
Adults with disabilities	5	3	8
Parents of youth with disabilities	3	4	7
Principals	4	3	7
University faculties	3	0	3
Community organization personnel	2	0	2
Total	47	29	76

I conducted the focus groups and interviews with various groups of stakeholders who play key roles in the transition process for youth with disabilities. Table 2 shows the number of participants in each stakeholder group for focus groups and individuals interviews.

Table 2

Composition of Participants of Focus Groups and Individual Interviews

Participants by Roles	Number of focus groups (number of participants in each group)	Number of participants of individual interview	Total N=76
High school special education teachers	2 (2,3)	10	15
Student services administrators	1 (5)	5	10
Adult service professionals	2 (5,4)	7	16
Government representatives			
Manitoba Education	1 (3)	0	3
FSCA	0	5	5
Youth with disabilities	0	8	8
Parents of youth with disabilities	0	7	7
Principals	0	7	7
University faculties	0	3	3
Community organization personnel	0	2	2
Total	6 (22)	54	76

These stakeholders were grouped for focus groups in terms of their roles. The participants for focus groups included the following groups of stakeholders:

a) high school special education/resource teachers who have involved in the transition planning process for students with IEPs/ITPs,

b) Student Services administrators,

c) adult service (e.g., residential and vocational) professionals, and

d) government representatives in Manitoba Education

Although I initially planned to conduct individual interviews with Manitoba Education representatives due to the small numbers, I held a focus group with them due to the participants' preference.

Researchers suggest a considerable range in the number of participants suitable for focus groups – from 4 to 12: 4-6 (Creswell, 2008), 6-8 (Krueger & Casey, 2000), 6-10 (Morgan, 1988), 10-12 (Luntz, 1994; Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990). In a Manitoba study of adults with intellectual disabilities, Mactavish, Lutfiyya, and Mahon (2000) formed focus groups with 4 in each group. Krueger and Casey suggest that smaller groups (e.g., six participants) are preferable when the participants have a great deal of experience about the topic and they are expected to share in-depth insights. On the other hand, when the participants do not have a lot of knowledge about the topic or the group is meant to pilot test materials or ideas, larger groups (e.g., ten participants) may work well.

Given that most participants may not be familiar with a TFS and the questions are relatively simple, I initially aimed to have 6-9 participants for each focus group. However, because of limited numbers of individuals interested in participating in a focus group or other factors, such as conflicting schedule and distance, the number of participants in each focus group of this study is smaller than initially planned. Also, for each focus group a few participants missed the discussion due to unexpected events.

The participants for individual interviews are:

a) youth with disabilities who have left high school within the last 8 years,

b) parents of former students with special needs who have left high school within the last 8 years,

c) high school principals,

d) government representatives of Family Services and Consumer Affairs (hereafter FSCA),

e) college/university faculty in the associated disciplines (e.g., Special Education, Social Work, Disability Studies, etc.),

f) community organization personnel,

g) high school special education/resource teachers,

h) Student Services administrators, and

i) adult service professionals.

I had interviews with individuals with disabilities to better accommodate their needs, such as cognitive, communicative, and physical challenges. Because the numbers of stakeholders of representatives of FSCA, faculties, and community organization personnel (advocates) who are involved in the topic area (i.e., transition for youth with disabilities) are relatively small, I conducted individual interviews with a small number of these stakeholders. With the other stakeholder groups, I allowed participants to choose to participate in an individual interview or focus group for any reason, such as distance, conflicting schedule, and personal preference. As a result, I carried out only individual interviews with parents of youth with disabilities and high school principals, because all of those who were interested in participating in this study preferred individual interviews instead of focus groups.

The participants were recruited on a voluntary basis. In order to recruit participants for focus groups and interviews, I used a snowball (also called network) sampling. Snowball sampling is an approach whereby participants are recruited by certain individuals who are in a position to recommend the most suitable participants (Creswell, 2008; Lodico et al., 2006). The people who recruit potential participants may be participants themselves or individuals who have connections with eligible candidates as participants. Creswell notes that this form of sampling is advantageous when recruiting large numbers of participants for a study, when the researcher does not know the best people to approach, or when the researcher does not have direct access to potential participants. In the beginning of this study, I asked some referrers to distribute recruitment letters to suitable candidates. Individuals who had received the recruitment letter and who were interested in the study contacted me by email or telephone. The sources for referrers and the criteria for participants are described below for each focus group.

In order to recruit youth with disabilities and parents, I asked advocacy organizations and adult service agencies (e.g., residential and employment agencies, postsecondary education institutions) for people with disabilities to distribute recruitment letters to suitable candidates (see Appendices O & P). The criteria for individuals with disabilities were those who had left high school within the last 8 years and who had an IEP/ITP while at school. In addition, as for parents, I recruited those whose sons and daughters met these requirements.

I recruited high school special education/resource teachers and Student Services administrators from the participants of the telephone survey, sending recruitment letters

(see Appendices M & N) and asking whether they would be interested in participating either in a focus group or individual interview. Also, I recruited high school principals by sending recruitment letters by email (see Appendix L). In some school divisions, the Student Services department distributed the recruitment letters to suitable personnel on my behalf by their choice and those who were interested contacted me by email or phone.

In order to recruit adult service professionals, I contacted the directors of adult service agencies in Manitoba. I located the list of adult service agencies for individuals with disabilities from a website (http://cms00asa1.winnipeg.ca/crc/crc) which provides the information on community resources in Manitoba. I asked the agency directors to forward the recruitment letter (see Appendices J & T) to the most appropriate personnel. The criterion for suitable participants of adult service professionals was that they be responsible for the intake process of their program participants and be involved in the transition process of their program participants from school to adult service system.

I recruited participants for individual interviews in the groups of the provincial government representatives and college/university faculty members through personal contact. Through consultation with personnel of Manitoba Education and FSCA, I identified suitable candidates for the government representatives who had been involved in or in charge of the transition process of youth with disabilities (see Appendices G, H, & I). I obtained recommendations from personal contact for suitable candidates for the participants of college/faculty members who were knowledgeable of the topic of transition for youth with disabilities; however, despite their expertise in this topic, the committee members of my dissertation were not invited for the interviews. Once

identifying potential candidates, I sent them recruitment letters by email (see Appendices Q, R, & S). In order to recruit advocates for persons with disabilities, I contacted the directors of community organizations, asking them to forward the recruitment letter (see Appendices K & U) to the most appropriate personnel. I obtained the completed consent form from those who participated in a focus group or interview at the start of the focus group meeting or interview, after briefing them on my research in general and the focus group or individual interview that they would participate in.

For the participants of focus groups who came from outside Winnipeg, I compensated them for their travel costs with a $50 gift card as an honorarium. I also provided some refreshment for the focus group meetings. No other payment or compensation was provided for the participants.

Interview Questions and Summary Questionnaires

The key questions each focus group addressed included the following:

1. What purpose should a TFS need to be used for?

2. What information should be collected?

3. Who should administer a TFS?

4. From whom should the data be collected?

5. When to collect the data?

6. How to collect the data?

7. How to report the results?

The wording and components of the questions were adapted slightly depending on the role of the participants. One example would be the question 'what information should be collected?' When asked of high school teachers, this was worded 'in terms of student

outcomes and school programs/transition services, what information do you think needs

be collected?'; whereas when asked of adult service professionals, it was worded 'in

terms of student outcomes and school programs/transition services, what information do

you need to better help your client with disabilities adjust to adult life?'

When the discussion of a focus group meeting or individual interview was over, I

asked the participants to fill out a summary questionnaire describing their perceptions of

each of the interview questions (see Appendices V1-V10). The questionnaires consist of

a mixture of yes/no, multiple-choice, and short-answer questions. This format is based on

a broad literature review on the topics of transition from school to adulthood, adult

outcomes, and transition tracking systems for youth with disabilities. Each question

allowed participants to provide their own answers, in addition to the answer choices

provided. I used the questionnaire to obtain quantitative data which allowed me to

identify trends and discrepancies present in the participants' perspectives on the key

issues with descriptive statistic data (e.g., numbers, percentiles).

Data-collection Procedures

I describe the data-collection procedures for focus groups and individual

interviews separately below.

Focus group data-collection procedure.

It took three months, from March to May 2009, for me to recruit the participants

for focus groups and conduct meetings. I arranged the focus groups in a meeting room in

downtown Winnipeg, where participants from different areas of the city could easily

access and those out of Winnipeg could easily locate. I set the time for each focus group

meeting based on the availability of the participants.

Each focus group consisted of one facilitator, one recorder, and participants. The role of the focus-group facilitator is crucial. The facilitator should elicit active engagement from all participants in the discussion and administer the process so that all key topics are covered in a timely and efficient fashion (Mertens, 1991). As the researcher of this study, I took the role of facilitator of the focus groups. In addition, I hired a recorder(s) who wrote down key points of the discussion during the focus group sessions and who were responsible for tape-recording the discussion. The recorders did not have a history of contact with the participants prior to the meetings. I reviewed this study and the meeting agenda with the recorder(s) before each meeting.

Each focus group was convened for only one meeting. Focus group meetings ranged from 60 to 90 minutes. At the beginning of focus meetings, I described the background of a TFS and this research and then obtained consent forms for participation in this study. At the end of the group discussion, the participants completed the summary questionnaire (10 minutes). The consent form included a request to maintain the confidentiality of the identities of the participants. With the consent of the participants I tape-recorded the discussions during the meetings, and immediately following each meeting I recorded field notes on the participants' attitudes, emotions, and body language, as well as on the atmosphere of the meeting. I transcribed the recorded discussions as soon as possible after the focus-group meeting, no later than one week after each meeting.

Individual interview data-collection procedure.

I recruited the participants and carried out in-depth individual interviews with them for a three-month period from March to May 2009. I interviewed each participant

in-person only once. I contacted a few participants afterwards by email to obtain

supplementary information. I arranged the time and location for each interview at the

convenience of the participants, whether at their office, home, or elsewhere.

The interviews lasted from 30 minutes to one hour. At the beginning of an

interview, I briefed each participant on the background of a TFS and my research and

asked them to sign the consent form. Once the interview was ended, the participants

indicated their final opinion on the pertinent question in the questionnaire. I tape-

recorded each interview with the consent of the participants; One participant did not want

to be tape-recorded and instead, I wrote down his/her answers while conducting the

interview. At the end of the interviews, I asked the participants to complete the same

survey questionnaire that the focus groups were asked to fill out, summarizing their

perspectives on the key issues. I transcribed the recorded discussions as soon as possible

after the interview, no later than one week after the interview.

Data Analysis

I used the data collected to examine the perspectives of the participants on the key

issues of a TFS, in particular the question of what data should be collected by a TFS, how

to best collect such data, and any suggestions or concerns about developing and

implementing a TFS. The focus groups and interviews provided qualitative and

quantitative data for analysis. The qualitative data sources included the transcripts of the

focus groups and interviews and the field notes. I prepared transcripts by transcribing the

audio files of the focus groups and interviews into text data. In addition, I took field notes

about my observations, thoughts, and interpretation of the contents and context of the

focus groups and interviews, both during and immediately following the focus groups

and interviews and as I transcribed them. I stored the transcripts and field notes as computer files. I obtained quantitative data from the questionnaires completed by the participants of focus groups and interviews.

I used the qualitative data to discuss the participants' perspectives in depth and examine areas of agreement and disagreement. I analysed the results of each questionnaire's numerical data using descriptive statistics, such as frequency and percentile, which indicated the participants' preferred approaches to a TFS, and therefore clearly demonstrated the trends of the participants' perspectives. In the analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data, I looked into whether any prominent discrepancies existed among the participants' opinions regarding a TFS and whether such discrepancies revealed patterns or corresponded to the participants' roles.

Qualitative data analysis takes a significantly different approach from quantitative data analysis. Creswell (2008) proposes six steps of analyzing and interpreting qualitative data: (a) organizing the data, (b) exploring and coding the database, (c) forming themes, (d) reporting findings, (e) interpreting the findings, and (f) validating the accuracy of the findings. I analyzed the results from the focus groups and interviews in this study following Creswell's guideline.

After transcribing the data, I read through the transcripts several times and coded them. Creswell (2008, p. 251) explains coding as "the process of segmenting and labelling text to form descriptions and broad themes in the data." Coding data is the initial process of identifying themes which refer to the major ideas of the database. Coding involves identifying the sentences or paragraphs that contain or imply meaningful contents or issues and assigning a code word or phrase to them that accurately

summarizes the meaning. I completed the coding process by examining the data

repetitively. Once the coding was done, I listed all the codes, refined redundant or

repetitive codes, and grouped related codes into several categories which I used as

themes. Creswell suggests that typically five to seven major themes are adequate and one

major theme may have several minor themes.

In the analysis of qualitative data, it is critical to secure the accuracy (authenticity)

or credibility (trustworthiness) of the data (Creswell, 2008; Johnson & Christensen, 2000;

Krueger & Casey, 2000). Measures commonly used to address this include triangulation

and member checking (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Creswell, 2003). Triangulation refers to

a process of validating the data obtained in qualitative research from different individuals

(e.g., various groups of participants) or methods of data collection (e.g., observation,

interviews, document review). Member checking is a process of verifying the accuracy of

the data from the participants. In this study, having the three data sources (transcripts,

field notes, and questionnaire results) allowed me to address triangulation and member

check, which helped me ensure the trustworthiness of the data obtained. Also, I examined

areas of concurrence or discrepancy in participants' perspectives between their focus

group/interview transcripts and their questionnaire answers.

At the end of the needs assessment, I identified the data currently available about

youth with disabilities in transition and stakeholders' perspectives on key issues

regarding the development and implementation of a TFS. The data obtained from the

needs assessment helped me develop a TFS model that would reflect local needs and

contexts in Manitoba at the next stage.

Stage 2: Transition Follow-up System Model Development

I developed a TFS model based on the literature review and the conceptual

framework and needs assessment of this research. Bruininks et al. (1990) and DeStefano

and Wagner (1992) presented the key aspects of the follow-up for persons with

disabilities. They suggest the significant aspects to include are: (a) conducting needs

assessment, (b) developing a conceptual framework, (c) designing and selecting a sample,

(d) planning for analysis, (e) developing questionnaires, (f) collecting data, and (g)

reporting the results (see the section of Transition Follow-up System in the chapter of

Literature Review for detailed description). In addition, one of the key references that I

used in developing the TFS model was a report that summarizes the transition follow-up

practices of the 25 states in the U.S. for persons with disabilities (National Post-School

Outcomes Center, 2003). In addition, I referred to numerous empirical studies that

investigated outcomes of persons with disabilities and theoretical references regarding the

transition and adult outcomes of persons with disabilities (see Literature Review).

The conceptual framework of this research is adapted from DeStefano and

Wagner's (1992, p.179) 'conceptual framework of transition experiences and outcomes

of youth with disabilities' (see the section of Conceptual Framework in the chapter of

Introduction and Figure 1 for more detail). As described in the previous section, I

conducted the needs assessment of this research in order to examine the current data-

collection practices for persons with disabilities in Manitoba and stakeholders'

perspectives on how to develop and implement a TFS in terms of key operational aspects

of TFS.

Through the process that I described above, I determined the key operational

aspects for the TFS model that I propose: (a) scope, (b) purposes, (c) administrator, (d)

target youth, (e) information to collect, (f) data collectors, (g) data-collection methods,

(h) data sources, (i) timeline of data collection, (j) reporting, (k) confidentiality and

privacy, and (l) reliability and validity of data.

Stage 3: Final Review Meeting

The purpose of the final stage of this study, the final review meeting, was to

examine the social validity and feasibility of the TFS model developed from the

stakeholders' perspectives. Through the final review meeting, I examined the following

questions:

1. What are strengths of this TFS model?

2. What are concerns or barriers regarding implementing this TFS model?

3. What suggestions can participants offer regarding implementing this TFS model?

Participants

The participants of this final review meeting were those who participated in the

needs assessment of this research. I invited all the participants of the needs assessment (a

total of 114) to this meeting. I informed those participants that there would be a final

review meeting where I would present the TFS model and would contact them when it

was arranged. Once the TFS model was developed, I arranged a final review meeting. I

sent invitation letters (see Appendix W) to those stakeholders by email three weeks

before the meeting and asked them to confirm their participation in the meeting either by

email or telephone. I re-sent an email with the invitation letter to those who had not

responded to my earlier email. A total of 22 stakeholders indicated that they would attend

the meeting. However, only12 stakeholders actually attended this final review meeting: one parent, one advocate, two Student Services administrators, three adult services professionals, and five government representatives. All of these participants were from Winnipeg. No participants from the stakeholder groups of individuals with disabilities, Special Education/Resource teachers, principals, and university faculty members attended.

Data-collection Procedure

I conducted the final review meeting in the form of a group meeting. The meeting was held in March 2010 at the campus of University of Manitoba. As the researcher of this study, I took the role of a moderator in the final review meeting. The meeting proceeded through the following steps: (a) presenting the TFS model developed by this study while discussing some of the results of the needs assessment (50 minutes), (b) discussing in small groups the TFS model presented (20 minutes), and (d) sharing the results of the small-group discussions as a whole group (15 minutes). At the beginning of the meeting, I explained the purpose and the procedure of the meeting and then obtained consent forms for participation in this study. The consent form included a request to maintain the confidentiality of the identities of the participants. I used a PowerPoint Presentation to propose the TFS model. I then asked those in attendance to form two small groups of six people, irrespective of their roles, and to assign a recorder for each group. I asked each group to discuss the strengths of, concerns about, barriers to, and suggestions for the TFS model. Each group had a report form (see Appendix X) which the recorders filled out. After the small group discussions, the participants gathered as a whole group and shared the results of their discussions by reporting one by one to the

larger group. I answered some of the questions from the attendants and concluded the

meeting by summarizing their feedback on the model. At the end of the meeting, I

collected the reports from each small-group discussion. The whole meeting took

approximately 90 minutes. Although I prepared some refreshments for the meeting, no

other compensation for the participants was provided.

Data Analysis

The final review meeting provided qualitative data for analysis. The data sources

from this meeting were the reports from small groups and my field notes that I took

immediately following the meeting about my observations and thoughts: I did not tape-

record the discussions of the meeting. I stored the reports and field notes into computer

files. I used the data obtained to discuss the participants' perspectives of the TFS model

that I proposed. I summarized the results in terms of strengths, concerns and barriers, and

suggestions regarding implementing the TFS model.

CHAPTER 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter I describe and discuss the results of the three stages of this

research: needs assessment, viz.:

1. Stage 1: Needs assessment

2. Stage 2: Transition follow-up system model development

3. Stage 3: Final review meeting.

For the needs assessment, I conducted three sub-studies as follows:

(a) a telephone survey on schools' and school divisions' data-collection practices,

(b) a mixed method survey on government's current data-collection practices, and

(c) focus groups and individual interviews with stakeholders.

Figure 2

Organization of Chapter of Results and Discussion
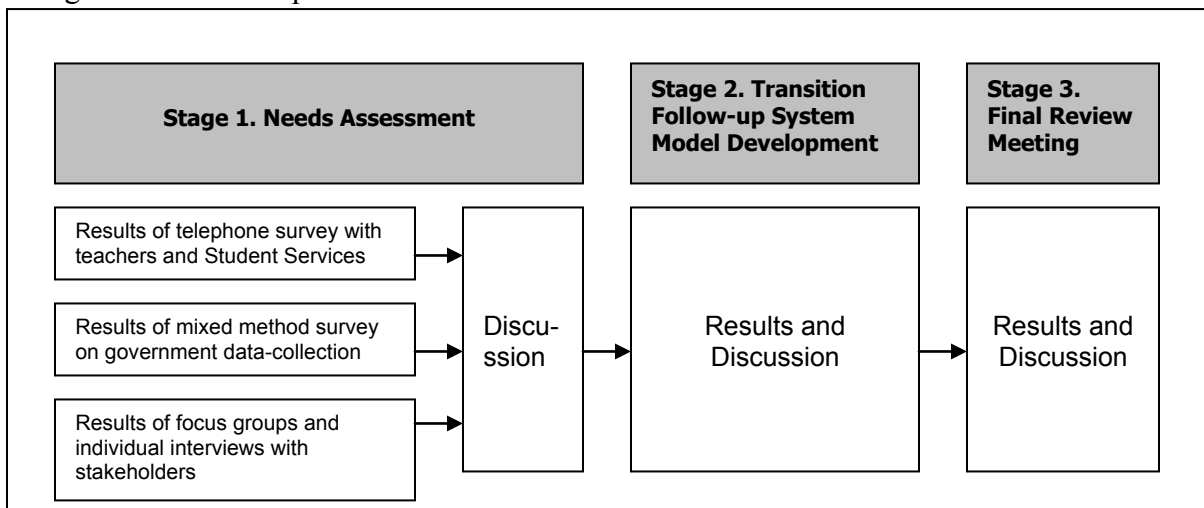
Although each of these sub-studies had its own goals and research questions, a

comparison of their results was very informative regarding the need for a transition

follow-up system in Manitoba. I therefore chose to first present the results of each of the

three sub-studies in the Needs Assessment section, and then to discuss the results of all these sub-studies together. I chose to combine the results and discussion of Stage 2, Transition Follow-up System Model Development, and Stage 3, Final Review Meeting because they were relatively brief. Figure 2 shows the organization of this chapter of Results and Discussion.

Stage 1: Needs Assessment

For the needs assessment, I obtained data from the three sub-studies: (a) telephone survey on schools' and school divisions' data-collection practices, (b) a mixed method survey on government's current data-collection practice, and (c) focus groups and individual interviews with stakeholders, and (d) questionnaires given out at the focus groups and individual interviews. In this section, I first describe the results from each of these sub-studies and then discuss the results from all those sources in terms of the key aspects of a TFS (e.g., purposes, information, administrator, etc.) and examine related literature.

Telephone Survey on Schools' and Divisions' Data-collection Practices

The telephone survey generated quantitative data on what information schools and school divisions in Manitoba maintained about students with special needs. I present the results using descriptive statistics, such as frequency and percentage. Table 3 presents the composition of the participants by region. Although the participation rate of teachers and Student Services administrators in rural areas was higher than that of those in urban areas, the participants were well distributed across the province.

Table 3

Participants by Regions

Participants	Urban	Rural	Total N=65 (%)
Teachers	17 (34.7)	32 (65.3)	49 (100.0)
Student Services administrators	5 (31.2)	11 (68.8)	16 (100.0)

Note: Urban areas include Winnipeg and Brandon and rural areas refer to regions other than those two cities in Manitoba.

Youth and family background information examined in this telephone survey included each individual student's characteristics, family characteristics, and contact information. Table 4 shows the information components in this category that the teachers and Student Services administrators reported maintaining. Within the category of the individual student's characteristics, postsecondary goals, level of self-determination and ethnicity were the information components that were most infrequently kept on record. Teachers and Student Services administrators collected some information, such as health/medical concerns, functional skills, intelligence quotient (IQ), and level of self-determination on an as-needed basis. Whereas most of the participants identified students of Aboriginal descent, detailed information on the ethnicity of other students was less frequently documented. Other information kept on individual students' characteristics included the types of funding granted, general strengths and needs, behavioral issues, history of changing schools, and learning profile.

Table 4

Information Maintained about Youth and Family Background

Information maintained	Teacher N=49 (%)	Student Services N=16 (%)
Individual's characteristics		
Age	49 (100.0)	16 (100.0)
Type of disability	49 (100.0)	16 (100.0)
Medical/diagnostic information	49 (100.0)	16 (100.0)
Functional skills	49 (100.0)	16 (100.0)
Gender	49 (100.0)	15 (93.8)
IQ	46 (93.9)	15 (93.8)
Postsecondary goals	38 (77.6)	9 (56.3)
Level of self-determination	29 (59.2)	5 (31.3)
Ethnicity	21 (42.9)	4 (25.0)
Family characteristics		
Primary caregiver	43 (87.8)	15 (93.8)
Household income	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
Contact information		
Address of parents/caregiver	49 (100.0)	15 (93.8)
Phone number of parents/caregiver	49 (100.0)	15 (93.8)
Address of student	43 (87.8)	14 (87.5)
Phone number of student	42 (85.7)	14 (87.5)
E-mail address of parents/caregiver	37 (75.5)	8 (50.0)
E-mail address of student	29 (59.2)	7 (43.8)

I looked at family characteristics in terms of two aspects, primary caregiver and household income. Whereas the vast majority of the participants maintained information about the primary caregiver (e.g., parents, legal guardian, child in care, CFS involvement, etc.) of individual students, none of them had household income documented. In this category, some participants also recorded siblings, substitute decision maker, and support network of their students with special needs.

The vast majority of the participants kept the contact information of students and their parents/caregivers by address and phone number. Although many schools and school divisions started obtaining e-mail addresses from students and parents/caregivers, it was not as common as mail address or phone number. In addition, the information about students' emergency contact, family doctor, social worker, and/or other professionals were also routinely maintained.

The survey examined what information high schools and Student Services departments maintained regarding school programs and transition services provided for individual students with special needs (Table 5). The vast majority of the participants reported that they recorded a lot of information about the programs and services provided for individual students in terms of IEP or ITP, academic courses, vocational courses and training, life skills programs, educational placement, work experiences, and other support services (e.g. therapies, educational assistant, and assistive equipment). However, the students' and parents' satisfaction with school programs and transition services provided for them was not as frequently recorded. Some teachers noted that they interpreted the signatures of the individual student and parents on an IEP or ITP as the sign of their

satisfaction with the programs and services provided. Other information that some participants kept in this category included individual behavioral plans.

Table 5

Information Maintained about School Programs/Transition Services Provided

Information maintained	Teacher N=49 (%)	Student Services N=16 (%)
Individual Education Plan or Individual Transition Plan developed	49 (100.0)	15 (93.8)
Academic courses taken	49 (100.0)	14 (87.5)
Support services provided (e.g. educational assistant, counseling, therapies, assistive equipment)	49 (100.0)	14 (87.5)
Educational placement (e.g. regular or specialized classroom)	48 (98.0)	15 (93.8)
Student specific life skills training and courses taken	48 (98.0)	13 (81.3)
Work experiences done (paid/unpaid)	46 (93.9)	14 (87.5)
Vocational training and courses taken (e.g. career exploration, resume writing, job shadowing)	45 (91.8)	14 (87.5)
Age of a student when his or her Individual Education Plan or Individual Transition Plan first addresses transition issues	43 (87.8)	14 (87.5)
Extracurricular activities participated in	39 (79.6)	7 (43.8)
Parent satisfaction with school programs/transition services	16 (32.7)	3 (18.8)
Student satisfaction with school programs/transition services	15 (30.6)	3 (18.8)

I examined the information that schools and Student Services departments maintained about individual students' outcomes (Table 6). Among the various information components in this category, the vast majority of schools and Student Services departments kept information on IEP/ITP goals and outcomes, attendance, grade level equivalences, and diploma or certificate on record. Although most of the participants reported that they collected provincial standardized test scores of individuals with special needs, they admitted that few students with special needs took provincial standardized tests. Other information in this category that many teachers and Student Services administrators kept documents on included the results of reading inventory, behavioral/psychological/clinical assessments, and individualized plans other than IEP or ITP (e.g., individual behaviour plan, health care plan, and Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope). High schools kept more detailed information of student outcomes and assessment than Student Services departments did, such as modified/adapted assessment results, provincial standards test scores, averages in specific courses, and school completion status.

Table 6

Information Maintained about Student Outcomes and Assessments

Information maintained	Teacher N=49 (%)	Student Services N=16 (%)
Individual Education Plan goals and outcomes achieved	49 (100.0)	15 (93.8)
Attendance	49 (100.0)	14 (87.5)
Grade level equivalencies in reading, writing, math	47 (95.9)	13 (81.3)
Diploma or certificate awarded (e.g. provincial diploma or Certificate of completion for Individualized Senior years program)	45 (91.8)	15 (93.8)
Modified/adapted assessment results	45 (91.8)	6 (37.5)
School completion status (e.g. graduation, drop-out, or age-out)	44 (89.8)	12 (75.0)
Averages in specific courses	44 (89.8)	10 (62.5)
Provincial Standards Test scores	43 (87.8)	9 (56.3)
Other	35 (71.4)	13 (81.3)

According to the telephone survey, the transition follow-up of graduates with special needs was not a common practice in high schools and school divisions in Manitoba. Only one teacher and one Student Services administrators from different school divisions reported that they tracked the adult outcomes of their former students with special needs on a regular basis; however, they did not record the results of their follow-up. This school established a collaborative relationship with an agency that

provided adult services for their graduates with disabilities through which they maintained their contact with their former students. One school division invited their former students with special needs to hear about their postschool experiences and retrospective perceptions on the programs and services provided for them while at school. In both cases, the former students' participation in the follow-up practice was on a voluntary basis. Many teachers in rural areas noted that they often had a chance to learn about how their graduates were doing in their community, but did not conduct any formal follow-up. To summarize, I found no transition follow-up database for youth with disabilities conducted on a regular basis by the school system in Manitoba.

The last question of the telephone survey asked participants to provide comments or suggestions with regard to a TFS or the transition from school to adulthood in general for youth with disabilities. In response to this question, many acknowledged the need for a TFS in Manitoba. One of the issues frequently raised was lack of adult services available for youth with disabilities. In addition, some participants noted that the transition from school to adulthood might be more challenging to youth with disabilities in rural areas due to lack of resources, such as adult services and transportation services, and employment and postsecondary education opportunities.

In summary, high schools and school divisions in Manitoba maintained extensive information about students with special needs. Many information components were commonly maintained by the majority of participants about students with special needs, though the degree of detail in the information they kept varied greatly. In general, schools had more detailed, extensive information about individual students with special needs than the Student Services departments did. Most participants indicated that they kept

information about their students with IEPs/ITPs as paper documents rather than in a computerized database. Furthermore, although teachers, especially those in small communities, had opportunities to learn about how their former students were doing after leaving school, this was mostly on an informal level. A regular transition follow-up of former students with special needs was non-existent in Manitoba schools and school divisions.

Mixed-method Survey on Government's Data-collection Practices

The government departments that I reviewed were Manitoba Education and FSCA. In this section, I describe how Manitoba Education and FSCA collect information and what information they keep.

Both Manitoba Education and FSCA have programs that collect and maintain data on persons with disabilities for their particular program purposes: one student-funding program in Manitoba Education and four programs in FSCA, such as Children's Special Services (CSS), Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), Supported Living (SL), and Employment and Income Assistance (EIA). The funding program in Manitoba Education collects and maintains information regarding students with special needs who qualify for Level II or Level III funding. The funding program keeps a minimal amount of data to justify and track the funding process for those students, at least in part because more comprehensive information about those students is available from their school and school division. Manitoba Education keeps a database, the Education Information System (EIS), that maintains basic information (e.g., age, attendance, grade, diploma, etc.) on all students (except First Nations students attending federal funded schools); however, that generic information is not linked to the funding information.

In FSCA, on the other hand, each program (e.g., CSS, VR, SL, EIA) maintains its own database of its own consumers. Hence, they collect relatively comprehensive data about their consumers for program purposes. Case managers of persons with disabilities, the counsellors in each program, collect information directly from the individuals, their caregivers, and support professionals (e.g., employment and residential support agencies and schools). Most of the information is gathered at intake and on closure, although some of the information is updated annually.

I examined the information which Manitoba Education and FSCA maintain on persons with disabilities in terms of three domains: youth/family/community characteristics, school information, and adult information. Table 7 summarizes the information that Manitoba Education and FSCA keep on the characteristics of individuals with disabilities and their families and communities. The representatives of CSS, SL, and VR reported that an individual's IQ was recorded in the database only when available. The FSCA programs also sometimes collect information of behavioural issues, legal status, cultural background, first language, and residential regions. Most of the government programs gather information of consumers' parents/guardians if the individual is in care or requires a legal guardian or a substitute decision maker. Only EIA tracked individuals' household income. Unlike the FSCA programs, Manitoba Education did not maintain contact information of individuals because, when needed, those data can be obtained from schools and school divisions.

Two FSCA programs, SL and EIA, reported that they collected a great deal of information about their consumers' school experiences (see Table 8, Table 9, and Table 10). CSS and VR obtain little information about individuals' school experiences and

Manitoba Education maintains only a few limited items, including attendance, academic achievement, certificate, school completion status, support needs, behaviour concerns, results of formal diagnosis and assessment, and care treatment plan.

Table 7

Background Information on Youth with Disabilities Maintained by Manitoba Education and FSCA

Individual's Information Maintained	ME	FSCA			
		CSS	SL	VR	EIA
Individual's characteristics					
Age (or birth date)	√	√	√	√	√
Type of disability	√	√	√	√	√
Health/medical information	√	√	√	√	√
Functional skills	√	√	√		√
Gender	√	√	√	√	√
IQ		√	√	√	
Postsecondary goals		√	√		√
Level of self-determination		√			√
Ethnicity[a]				√	√
Family characteristics					
Primary caregiver/legal guardian	√	√	√		√
Household income					√

Table 7

Background Information on Youth with Disabilities Maintained by Manitoba Education and FSCA (Continued)

Individual's Information Maintained	ME	FSCA			
		CSS	SL	VR	EIA
Contact information					
Address of parents/caregiver		√	√		√
Phone number of parents/caregiver		√	√		√
Address of individual		√	√	√	√
Phone number of individual		√	√	√	√
E-mail address of parents/caregiver			√		√
E-mail address of individual			√		√

Note. ME: Manitoba Education; FSCA: Manitoba Family Services and Consumer Affairs; CSS: Children's Special Services; SL: Supported Living; VR: Vocational Rehabilitation; EIA: Employment and Income Assistance

[a]Ethnicity: VR and EIA keep information of whether the individual is Aboriginal or from a visible minority

Table 8

Student Specific Information Maintained by Government

Information Maintained	ME	FSCA			
		CSS	SL	VR	EIA
IEP/ITP goals and outcomes			√		√
School completion status			√		√
Academic achievement	√		√		√
Attendance rate	√		√		√
Alternative assessment outcomes			√		√
Suspension history			√		√

Note. ME: Manitoba Education; FSCA: Manitoba Family Services and Consumer Affairs; CSS: Children's Special Services; SL: Supported Living; VR: Vocational Rehabilitation; EIA: Employment and Income Assistance

Table 9

Government Information Maintained on School Programs/Transition Services

Information Maintained	ME	FSCA			
		CSS	SL	VR	EIA
IEP or ITP developed			√		√
Academic courses taken			√		√
School programs and services provided (e.g. educational assistant, therapies, equipments)			√		√
Educational placement (e.g. regular or specialized classroom)			√		√
Student specific life skills training and courses taken			√		√

Table 9

Government Information Maintained on School Programs/Transition Services
(Continued)

Information Maintained	ME	FSCA			
		CSS	SL	VR	EIA
Work experiences done (paid/unpaid)			√		√
Vocational training and courses taken (e.g. career exploration, resume writing, job shadowing)			√		√
Age of a student when his or her IEP or ITP first addresses transition issues			√		√
Extracurricular activities participated in			√		√
Parent satisfaction with school programs/transition services					
Student satisfaction with school programs/transition services			√		√

Note. ME: Manitoba Education; FSCA: Manitoba Family Services and Consumer Affairs; CSS: Children's Special Services; SL: Supported Living; VR: Vocational Rehabilitation; EIA: Employment and Income Assistance

Table 10

Government Information Maintained on Student Outcomes and Assessments

Information Maintained	ME	FSCA			
		CSS	SL	VR	EIA
Individual Education Plan goals and outcomes			√		√
Attendance	√		√		√
Grade level equivalencies in reading, writing, math – spelling test			√		√
Diploma or certificate awarded (e.g. provincial diploma or Certificate of completion for Individualized Senior years program)	√		√		√
Modified/adapted assessment results			√		√
School completion status (e.g. graduation, drop-out, or age-out)	√		√		√
Averages in specific courses			√		√
Provincial standards test scores			√		√

Note. ME: Manitoba Education; FSCA: Manitoba Family Services and Consumer Affairs; CSS: Children's Special Services; SL: Supported Living; VR: Vocational Rehabilitation; EIA: Employment and Income Assistance

The main consumers of Manitoba Education and CSS are children and their families and they do not track information of the individuals' adult outcomes once they leave their programs. On the other hand, SL, VR, and EIA keep information of various facets of adult outcomes, such as employment, postsecondary education, residence, other aspects of life, and support needs (see Table 11, Table 12, Table 13, Table 14, Table 15).

Other than the items listed in Table 11, VR also documents barriers to employment that their individual consumers experience. In addition, whereas SL records only the services that they provide to their individual consumers, VR and EIA track all the services that their consumers receive, regardless of whether from their programs or other agencies. Whereas SL, VR, and EIA track many aspects of adult outcomes, they do not document individuals' perceptions on these outcomes, such as job satisfaction and satisfaction with services available or provided. Lastly, the representatives of SL and VR noted that their primary consumers are adults who have intellectual disabilities or functional limitations and the government delegates a lot of services for adults with physical disabilities to the Society for Manitobans with Disabilities (SMD), which is a non-profit, non-government organization in Manitoba.

Table 11

Government Information Maintained on Employment Outcomes

Information Maintained	FSCA		
	SL	VR	EIA
Employment status	√	√	√
Job satisfaction			
Type of jobs	√	√	√
Job stability	√	√	√
Work hours	√	√	√
Financial status	√	√	√
Job benefits			
Job acquisition method			

Note. FSCA: Manitoba Family Services and Consumer Affairs; CSS: Children's Special Services; SL: Supported Living; VR: Vocational Rehabilitation; EIA: Employment and Income Assistance

Table 12

Government Information Maintained on Postsecondary Education Outcomes

Information Maintained	FSCA		
	SL	VR	EIA
Type of educational program	√	√	√
Field of study	√	√	√
Full/part-time enrolment	√		√

Note. FSCA: Manitoba Family Services and Consumer Affairs; CSS: Children's Special Services; SL: Supported Living; VR: Vocational Rehabilitation; EIA: Employment and Income Assistance

Table 13

Government Information Maintained on Residential Outcomes

Information Maintained	FSCA		
	SL	VR	EIA
Living status	√	√	√
Marital status	√	√	√
Contribution to living expense			

Note. FSCA: Manitoba Family Services and Consumer Affairs; CSS: Children's Special Services; SL: Supported Living; VR: Vocational Rehabilitation; EIA: Employment and Income Assistance

Table 14

Government Information Maintained on Other Aspects of Life

Information Maintained	FSCA		
	SL	VR	EIA
Psychological wellbeing/autonomy	√	√	√
Community living	√	√	√
Social network	√		√
Physical wellbeing	√		√

Note. FSCA: Manitoba Family Services and Consumer Affairs; CSS: Children's Special Services; SL: Supported Living; VR: Vocational Rehabilitation; EIA: Employment and Income Assistance

Table 15

Government Information Maintained on Adult Program/Service Needs

Information Maintained	FSCA		
	SL	VR	EIA
Service needs	√		√
Services received	√	√	√
Service satisfaction			

Note. FSCA: Manitoba Family Services and Consumer Affairs; CSS: Children's Special Services; SL: Supported Living; VR: Vocational Rehabilitation; EIA: Employment and Income Assistance

The information collected by both Manitoba Education and FSCA is kept in paper documents and/or in computerized databases. The information recorded in paper format tends to be more detailed than in the database. In addition, the funding program of Manitoba Education and the four programs in FSCA have established their own formats

to maintain information about persons with disabilities. For example, information regarding the level of self-determination is recorded in various ways (e.g., whether the individual has or needs a substitute-decision maker; communicative ability to express preferences, interests, likes, dislikes, etc.; ability to set life goals on his or her own). Information regarding ethnicity is indicated in diverse ways, documenting whether the person with disability is Aboriginal or some other visible minority, or their first and second language and cultural background. Furthermore, the definitions of the terms that they apply in collecting and maintaining data about persons with disabilities tends to be inconsistent among the programs and counsellors, especially in areas such as types of disability, diagnosis, functional academic skills, life skills, and so on.

In summary, Manitoba Education and the four FSCA programs (CSS, SL, VR, and EIA) manage their own data-maintenance system of persons with disabilities in paper documents and/or in computerized databases utilizing their own formats and applying diverse definitions of common terms. These programs keep information about only those for whom they provide services. In particular, the students with special needs that Manitoba Education tracks are only those who are eligible for individualized, low incidence funding. In addition, the information that Manitoba Education and CSS collect about students with special needs is mostly focused on the characteristics of the individuals and their families. More comprehensive information is left to schools and school divisions to track. There is also a difference in the way that information is tracked for adults with mental disabilities as opposed to physical disabilities. In the case of the former, a government department (the three adult programs of FSCA) keeps a

considerable amount of information about adults with disabilities; however, in the latter case a non-government organization (SMD) maintains this information.

Focus Groups and Individual Interviews with Stakeholders

I obtained (a) qualitative data from the transcripts of the focus groups and individual interviews and field notes and (b) quantitative data from the summary questionnaires that the participants of the focus groups and individual interviews completed at the end of their interviews. This section first presents the analysis of the qualitative data from both focus groups and individual interviews and then that of the quantitative data from the summary questionnaires.

Qualitative Data from Transcripts and Field Notes

A total of 75 stakeholders participated in individual interviews or focus groups. The participants included individuals with disabilities (8 participants), parents of individuals with disabilities (hereafter referred to as 'the parents') (7), high school special education/resource teachers (15), Student Services administrators (10), principals (7), adult service professionals (16), representatives of Manitoba Education and Manitoba Family Services and Consumer Affairs (FSCA) (7), university faculty members in related disciplines (3) and advocates (2).

The age of the eight individuals with disabilities who participated in this study ranged from 20 to 29. Table 16 presents a brief profile of the individuals. All names that refer to the individuals are pseudonyms. Most of the individuals who participated could verbally communicate effectively with me without any assistance. One participant had some limitations in verbal communication such that during the interview his parent occasionally helped him understand my questions by rephrasing them. With this

particular individual, I asked the same questions separately in different words to verify

his responses.

Table 16

Profile of Participants with Disabilities

Name	Sex	Age	Primary Disability	Region	Verbal Communication	Others
Andy	M	24	Physical & intellectual	Urban	Understands simple language and speaks with one or two words at a time	▪ 3 years since leaving high school ▪ Living with parents ▪ Working in a sheltered workshop
Bob	M	23	Physical	Rural	No problem other than enunciation	▪ 6 years since leaving high school ▪ Living with parents ▪ Graduated from university and looking for a job
Carl	M	24	Physical & intellectual	Rural	Understands in simple language and speaks with simple sentences of a few words	▪ 4 years since leaving high school ▪ Living with parents ▪ Working in a sheltered workshop

Table 16

Profile of Participants with Disabilities (Continued)

Name	Sex	Age	Primary Disability	Region	Verbal Communication	Others
David	M	20	Physical	Rural	No problem	1 year since leaving high school - Living with parents - University student
Eric	M	23	Intellectual	Urban	Through simple sentences	2 years since leaving high school - Lives with parents - Working a part-time in community - Student of Campus Life Program at University of Manitoba
Frank	M	29	Intellectual	Urban	Communicates well in simple language	8 years since leaving high school - Lives in a group home - Works in a sheltered workshop

Table 16

Profile of Participants with Disabilities (Continued)

Name	Sex	Age	Primary Disability	Region	Verbal Communication	Others
Greg	M	26	Mental illness	Urban	No problem	▪ 8 years since leaving high school ▪ Lives with parents ▪ University student
Helen	F	26	Mental illness	Urban	No problem	▪ 8 years since leaving high school ▪ Lives alone ▪ University student

Note. The names listed are pseudonyms.

The seven parents of individuals with disabilities who participated in this study were all female. Table 17 shows their residential region and a brief description of their children.

The high school special education/resource teachers who participated included two males and 13 females. Eight teachers were from high schools in Winnipeg and seven from rural areas. Their career history as educators varied from three years to 35 years. All the teachers who participated were responsible for students with an IEP at their schools. While most of them taught or coordinated programs only for students with moderate or severe disabilities (e.g. students with Level II and III funding), some worked for students

with a wide range of degree of disability including those who did not receive Level II or III funding.

Table 17

Profile of Participants Who Had a Son or Daughter with Disability

	Sex	Region	Description of their offspring with disability
Iris	F	Urban	Mother of Andy
Jen	F	Rural	Mother of Bob
Kala	F	Rural	Mother of Carl
Lyn	F	Rural	Mother of David
Marie	F	Urban	Mother of Eric
Nancy	F	Rural	She has a daughter (Nancy, pseudonym) with intellectual disability. Nancy is the 26 years old daughter who left high school 5 years ago. Nancy runs her own business with some assistance from Nancy.
Olga	F	Urban	She has a daughter (Cindy, pseudonym) with intellectual disability. Cindy is the 29 years old daughter who left high school 6 years ago. Cindy has a part-time job in community.

Among the Student Services administrators who participated, five were from Winnipeg or Brandon and five were from rural areas in the province. Only one was male. All but two had been working as Student Services administrator for more than five years.

Four of the principals who participated were from high schools in Winnipeg and three were from rural areas: five males and two females. One principal was from a K-12 school (i.e. school for students from kindergarten to grade 12), one from a 7-12 school, and five from high schools. Three principals were from relatively small schools with 500 students or less and four were from big schools with more than 1000 students. Three of these schools were English-centred and four were English plus an immersion program in one other language (e.g., French).

The adult service professionals who participated in this study were from agencies that supported adults with disabilities in the aspects of employment, residence, and independent living: however, most of them were from employment agencies, including competitive employment, supported employment, and sheltered workshops. The primary disabilities of their clients included intellectual disabilities, physical disabilities, multi-disabilities, and mental illness. Ten of them were from agencies located in Winnipeg and six were from rural areas: two males and 14 females.

The government representatives who participated in this study were from related departments, three from Manitoba Education and five from Manitoba Family Services and Consumer Affairs (FSCA hereafter). The faculty members who participated in individual interviews were from related disciplines in universities in Manitoba. The advocates who participated were from community organizations for people with disabilities in Manitoba and had extensive experiences advocating for this group of people. Given the relatively smaller population of these three groups of stakeholders, I will not provide their specific profile here in order to avoid revealing their identities.

All the participants of the individual interviews and focus groups received the same set of basic open-ended questions on the key aspects of developing and implementing a TFS, such as purposes, information to collect, administrating agency, information source, timeline of information collection, information collection methods, reporting, and suggestions and concerns. For the individuals with disabilities and the parents, I also asked about their experiences with the transition process from school to adulthood. I present the results of the interviews and focus groups in terms of those key aspects below, identifying the themes that emerged and discussing areas of consensus and disparities among the stakeholders.

Purposes.

My first question to the participants was whether they thought a TFS would be necessary in Manitoba. Of 76 participants, 74 agreed that a TFS was necessary and would be very useful and the other two noted that it would depend on how a TFS was used. The follow-up question was 'Why do you think a TFS would be necessary?' or 'For what do you think a TFS should be used?' Table 18 shows the purposes that participants suggested organized by the themes identified and the numbers of individuals or focus groups that mentioned each theme.

Some of the themes identified in Table 18 were correlated with each other from the participants' perspectives. For example, some noted that a TFS would allow us to identify service gaps for individuals with disabilities, which would eventually help improve the service system for those individuals. Others also argued that a TFS would be useful to see the outcomes and needs of individuals with disabilities, which would help to determine service gaps. Therefore, I will address some of these themes together below.

Table 18

Purposes Suggested for TFS

Purposes of TFS	Total N=57 (51/6) (individuals[a]/ focus-groups[b])
to improve service system and programs	25 (20/5)
to examine individuals' outcomes and needs	23 (20/3)
to share information among stakeholders	16 (12/4)
to ensure people do not fall through cracks	15 (14/1)
to determine service gaps	11 (8/3)
to identify factors that affect individuals' outcomes	10 (7/3)
to identify postschool options and availabilities	10 (8/2)
to plan for future services and resource deployment	9 (5/4)
to promote the collaboration between schools and adult services	8 (6/2)
to ensure accountability	2 (1/1)

[a] The number of individual interviews where the relevant theme was addressed by the interviewee. [b] The number of focus groups where the relevant theme was addressed by at least one participant on at least one occasion (regardless of how much discussion on the said theme ensued).

Most participants, across all the stakeholder groups, stated that a TFS would improve the support system and programs for people with disabilities. Many participants noted that there is a lack of information with which to develop and improve the support system and programs for individuals with disabilities in Manitoba. One adult service professional argued:

You need to have a follow-up system to figure out whether what you are doing is

working, so you can make relevant changes and you can develop it, because you

can't just decide you are going to have a system and hope that's going to fit every

child. That's what we've been doing so far. It isn't working.

Most of the participants pointed out that such information did not exist in Manitoba, at

least not in a way that was useful for policy makers and service providers. Another adult

service professional reasoned:

I think in the region that I come from the transition process is not working well in

some areas. And it is difficult sometimes to pinpoint why, why outcomes for

certain people are better than others. A database might provide a little bit of sort

of hard evidence of what pieces need to be fixed.

The professionals who participated in this study, such as teachers, Student

Services administrators, principals, and adult service providers, emphasized that the TFS

should provide information useful for the improvement of educational and social service

programs. One participant's comment is representative of many educators who

participated in this study:

Any kind of information that I can have about my former students would help me

in my planning with my current students, students on the similar path. I might

think it would be good for an upcoming student and I might make it as a

recommendation in my planning process. And if I knew something wasn't

working very well, I'd probably use that information too.

Adult services professionals also agreed that the information identifying the factors that affect the adult outcomes (e.g. employment stability) of individuals with disabilities and best practices would be helpful for their programming.

A number of participants agreed that there were gaps in the support system for people with disabilities, especially with adult services. They argued that a TFS should help identify the service gaps, such as waiting lists for services, groups of individuals who need certain services, programs that produce poor outcomes, and so on. A lot of participants argued that the information obtained from a TFS would be particularly beneficial to the government for program planning, program development, budgetary planning, staffing, and allocating resources. As a government representative said, for example, "[A TFS could provide] information that would allow you to validate or identify trends that are coming, that has some predictable quality… You would expect to see 'this number of kids this year with the diagnosis of ADHD, give or take.'"

One of the purposes that a lot of participants suggested for a TFS was to track the outcomes and needs of individuals with disabilities. According to the educational professionals who participated in this study, however, in many schools the information kept in IEPs was not maintained in a database and few reports on the outcomes of students with special needs were available in school divisions or provincially. One professor listed the outcomes that a TFS would need to look at:

> What happens to students with disabilities as they leave high school? … How
> many are going into competitive employment? … How many are going into
> sheltered workshops? How many are staying home and doing nothing? Or how
> many are staying home and maybe doing something of their own?

One of the government representatives emphasized the need to see the outcomes of adults with disabilities who are out of the support system, stating:

> There are obviously kids outside of our programs as well. There might be differences in terms of outcomes depending on what services these young adults can access, as they transition into adulthood. So, that would be really interesting to look at what the outcomes were in terms of services being available for them or not.

Another government representative added, "It would be interesting to track to see how individuals think about the services in terms of the quality of services that they are receiving, if they are happy with the outcomes that they have. There's a lot of dissatisfaction."

A lot of participants, individuals with disabilities and parents in particular, argued that many people with disabilities fall through the cracks after leaving school and a TFS should be used to ensure their stability in life and smooth transition from school to adulthood. Jen, a parent who has a son with physical disability said,

> [Once] he graduated high school, pretty much you are off the map. There is no follow-up contact at all. The only time you get contact is when he comes up with a problem and we have to look for someone to help us with the problem. No one has ever called to ask him, 'What are you doing now?' So, I think it's a very good thing because it's very easy to get lost in the system.

One teacher suggested that the primary purpose of a TFS would be "to ensure that supports continue to be put in place to help them [persons with disabilities] succeed in life and to make sure that there is a nice, smooth continuation [from school to adult life]."

Participants also frequently suggested that a TFS be used to share information on individuals with disabilities among stakeholders. A lot of participants reported that they experienced difficulties in obtaining, maintaining, or sharing information on individuals with disabilities. Adult services professionals agreed that when they start working with an individual, they would need information of his or her skill levels, previous programs provided, successful and unsuccessful approaches taken, goals, aptitude, and needs. However, when individuals come to adult services, especially some time after leaving school, their information often gets lost in the process. One participant, many of whose clients had mental illnesses, reported that people whom she supported tended to be very transient and because of this only approximately 20% of her new clients came with school documents. Often individuals cannot provide certain information needed and do not have anyone to do so on their behalf. Even when individuals come with school documents, the degree of accuracy and comprehensiveness of the information varies. Sometimes the information does not include much history of the individual or contradicts what the individual or parents provide.

When a person with disability, whether a child or an adult, works with a number of professionals, such as a teacher, therapist, social worker, and an adult service provider, each of those professionals has a piece of information about the individual. Unfortunately, however, some of the participants felt that sharing such information did not occur in an effective, collaborative way. In addition, when an individual's support personnel change, some information occasionally gets lost in the process.

Some participants, especially teachers, Student Services administrators, and principals, indicated that a TFS should be used to identify postschool options and

availabilities for students with special needs. These education professionals noted that

many students with special needs, their parents, and even teachers were often not aware

of postschool options available. They suggested that a TFS would be very valuable if it

could generate data that would inform the stakeholders of how those with disabilities who

have left school already live their lives in terms of the employment placements,

residential options, educational opportunities, community involvement, and other

relevant services and programs provided for them.

Participants showed conflicting perspectives on the use of a TFS to ensure the

accountability of services and programs. Two participants suggested that a TFS would be

useful to increase the accountability of educational and social services for individuals

with disabilities. For example, one advocate contended:

> Right now we have no way of measuring, no method of evaluating the school
>
> system, the transition system. And with the new [transition] protocol in place, I
>
> think this is a good time to put something like that into place to monitor how we
>
> do it for X number of years.

On the other hand, several teachers and government representatives suggested that a TFS

not be used as means to monitor accountability. They argued that if a TFS had been

utilized as an evaluation tool, it would be rather counterproductive by making a lot of

stakeholders, especially service providers, feel insecure. Some essential contributors

might therefore withdraw from participating in the TFS. It was contended that a TFS

should ensure that the identity of individual agencies and programs be protected.

In summary, the participants agreed that a TFS should be a practical tool to

facilitate successful transition for individuals with disabilities. It was suggested that a

TFS be used as means to improve the support system and programs, to provide

stakeholders with information useful in assisting individuals with disabilities, and to

ensure that those individuals meet their needs.

Information to collect.

I asked the participants what information they thought a TFS should collect about

individuals with disabilities. Some of the participants pointed out that their answers

would depend on the primary purpose of a TFS. I requested that they suggest significant

information components for whatever purpose that they proposed to the previous

question. I presented three aspects of information that a TFS might address, including

individuals' background, school experiences, and postschool experiences. The

participants were allowed to discuss all or any of these aspects regardless of their roles in

the transition process.

Table 19 shows the information components that the participants identified as

important for a TFS to track. Some of the background information of individuals with

disabilities, such as gender and disability, was deemed valuable in identifying

demographic trends of the population. A Student Services administrator said, for

example, "We know there's an increase in kids with autism, but nobody's collecting that

data." Also, background information is often useful for planning programs for individuals

with disabilities, as noted by a lot of participants. An individual's life goals, dreams and

hopes in particular are the key factors that determine the direction of service programs for

him or her. Some educators and adult service professionals in this study pointed out that

intellectual capacity, disability, strengths and needs, skill levels, and functional/life skills

were critical aspects to consider when programming, and that these also tended to affect

individuals' outcomes. A lot of participants identified the level of functional skills as
significant. Functional skills include money management, self-management (e.g. hygiene
and grooming), utilizing public transportation, functional literacy, shopping, cooking, and
other life skills.

Table 19

Information Suggested to Collect

Information to collect	Total N=76 (54/6) (Individuals/Focus-groups)
Background information	
Life goals, dreams, hopes	13 (11/2)
Medical concerns and diagnosis	13 (11/2)
Functional/life skills and limitations	10 (9/1)
Family/support network	9 (8/1)
Skill level	7 (5/2)
Concerns, issues, strengths, weaknesses	6 (3/3)
Type of disabilities	6 (5/1)
Interests, likes, dislikes	5 (2/3)
Behavioral concerns	5 (5/0)

Table 19

Information Suggested to Collect (Continued)

Information to collect	Total N=76 (54/6) (Individuals/Focus-groups)
School information	
School services/programs provided	13 (11/2)
Academic achievement or activities	11 (9/2)
Support/service needs	10 (7/3)
Work experiences	9 (7/2)
History of goals and plans in school	8 (7/1)
Postschool information	
Services provided and needs	20 (16/4)
Employment outcomes	19 (15/4)
Living/residential outcomes	14 (10/4)
Educational outcomes	9 (8/1)
Financial outcomes/needs	6 (4/2)
Social outcomes	5 (3/2)
Satisfaction with services and programs provided	5 (3/2)

One of the government representatives emphasized tracking the medical history of individuals with disabilities and noted:

> When our children turn 18, suddenly the pediatrician isn't going to be involved in our child's life anymore. And that pediatrician has known the child forever, right? The specialists start to change because most of these kids have a whole range of specialists etc.

In addition, some suggested that the analysis of individuals' outcomes by some demographic characteristics, such as disability, gender, and skill level, might provide support professionals with useful information. Other desirable background information less frequently mentioned included the level of independence (e.g. need for substitute decision maker), social skills, functional literacy, and birthday.

The information on school experiences addresses students' experiences, outcomes, and services (i.e. educational, health, social services etc.) provided while at school. A lot of education professionals in this study, such as teachers, Student Services administrators, principals, and professors, noted that IEPs and ITPs contained key information about individual students with regards to their school experiences and services provided as well as background information. Many of the information components that other stakeholders suggested regarding individuals' school experiences were in fact the key elements of IEPs and ITPs. Participants suggested that the key information about school experiences were (a) services and programs provided, (b) academic achievement and activities, (c) support needs, (d) work experiences, and (e) the history of educational goals and plans. Information on services and programs provided relates to educational programs (e.g. regular, adapted, modified, or individualized

program), therapies (e.g. occupational therapy, language and speech therapy, physiotherapy, etc.), support agencies involved (e.g. social worker, adult service provider, doctor, etc.), and life skills training. "Academic achievement and activities" include the courses that the individual has taken, grades, teachers' evaluation, and level of reading, writing, and simple math. "Support needs" refers to various issues that need to be addressed to adequately support the individual, such as assistive communication devices, medical concerns, behavioural problems, adaptations required, educational assistant support, and transportation. It was also suggested that a TFS collect information on work experiences during school, including aspects such as what they did, how many work experiences they did, how long each work experience lasted, how successful they were, and other supplementary information. Adult services professionals noted that all of this information would be helpful in supporting individuals with disabilities.

Postschool information includes individuals' experiences and outcomes obtained and adult services provided after leaving high school. A few government representatives contended that a TFS should track individuals' postschool information in the four areas of life that the transition protocol of Manitoba suggests: life-long learning, employment, social inclusion, and independent community living. Indeed the key aspects that the participants identified covered all four of these areas (Table 19). The participants argued that postschool information is significant in any examination of the effects of the transition plan and services provided and in examining how individuals are doing in key aspects of life. In addition, some educators in this study suggested that information on adult outcomes would be helpful to develop programs for their current students with special needs.

The postschool information component that most participants emphasized was that of individuals' support needs and the services provided for them. Postschool services address various issues, such as employment, residence, community living, social activities, finance, transportation, and health. A government representative explains, "Because that [therapies] is something that when they are under 18, they get through school, but once they turn 21 and leave school, they are harder to come by afterwards." In addition, some parents argued that the initial assessment of individuals' needs for adult services often sets the level of support for the rest of their life. For example, a parent argued, "Initially they do this assessment and then it's kind of really hard to get back into it, because they base a lot of stuff on an initial assessment. You have to really adapt your life then."

The information on employment outcomes that the participants identified as significant included type of employment (e.g. competitive employment, supported employment, or volunteering), work hours, income, period of employment, industry, and reasons for job loss (e.g., fired or laid off). With regards to living and residential outcomes, it was suggested that a TFS track whether an individual lives with family, on his or her own, with roommate(s), in a group home or in an institution and whether he or she contributes to the living expense. The educational outcomes suggested referred to the engagement in postsecondary programs (e.g., college, university, technical training centre, vocational training, etc.). A professor in this study also added,

> If they are going on in education, what are their conditions there? I mean, are they
> competing for credits? And do they have enough money to pay for books? Are

there adaptations made? That kind of stuff. So, really it's a question of… just

finding out their circumstances.

The information that participants recommended be collected regarding financial outcomes

and needs pertained to individuals' monthly incomes, need for financial assistance, and

levels of self-reliance. Some participants also argued that a TFS should examine

individuals' social aspects, including social skills, social network, social activities,

community involvement and sense of love and belonging. In addition, a few educators

noted that individuals' retrospective evaluation of the school programs and services

provided for them would be extremely valuable, especially in measuring how helpful

these programs were for their adjustment to adult life.

I did not identify any notable discrepancies among stakeholder groups in their

perceptions of significant information components that a TFS should track. However,

their perspectives on how detailed the information should be were diverse. Some

participants argued that in order to be useful for program development, the information

gathered in a TFS should be comprehensive and detailed. On the other hand, other

participants pointed out that the data collected should be kept manageable in terms of

collection and reporting. Lastly, the information components that the participants

suggested included individuals' outcomes and support needs in various aspects of life,

viz. academics, health, employment, independent living, social relationships, and

psychological wellbeing.

Administrator and data collectors.

The questions regarding the administrator and data-collector for a TFS addressed

the following questions: (a) Who should administer a TFS in Manitoba? and (b) Who

should contact individuals with disabilities and/or others to obtain information? I

identified no notable discrepancies among stakeholder groups with regard to who should

administer a TFS. As seen in Table 20, most participants proposed government

involvement in the administration of such a system. However, their perceptions varied in

terms of which government departments should be responsible and whether non-

government agencies should be involved in administrating a TFS.

Table 20

Administrator of TFS Suggested

Administrator of TFS	Total N=76 (54/6) (Individuals/ Focus-groups)
Interdepartmental approach of the government	17 (13/4)
Independent (non-government) agency	10 (7/3)
FSCA	7 (6/1)
Government in general without indicating specific department	5 (5/0)
Coalition of government and non-government agencies	4 (3/1)

A number of participants argued that the government departments involved in

supporting people with disabilities, whether children or adults, need to work together in

administering a TFS in Manitoba. The government departments that the participants

commonly suggested for the TFS administrator were Manitoba Education, FSCA, and

Manitoba Health.

Some participants suggested that FSCA be the agency that administers a TFS. The main reason for this was that FSCA is the key department that serves adults and young children with disabilities in Manitoba (e.g., Vocational Rehabilitation, Supported Living Program, Children's Special Services). An adult service professional argued,

> Possibly that should be through Family Services because they are the ones that are involved with the individual, other than their parents, for the longest period, whether it's Children's Special Services or adult services. They are the ones there consistently. They can keep it ongoing, if it needs to be monitoring for a longer period after graduation.

The participants who suggested the government's involvement in administering a TFS provided various reasons. One of the most common reasons was funding. An adult services professional contended,

> Obviously this [TFS] is going to require some robust computer hardware and software and manpower and likely some sort of facility, those things. How effective could it be if there're constant funding struggles? With the government doing it, that may be less of a problem.

Some participants were also concerned about ensuring the confidentiality of information that a TFS would collect about numerous individuals with disabilities. A government representative, for example, argued, "If you're tracking people's personal information, the government system's firewall or whatnot would be a safe place to collect that information." In addition, a Student Services administrator echoed the feeling of several participants by stating "It should be centralized. I think they should take that mandate on…. and most of individuals [about whom a TFS would gather information] would be

on some kind of government support system." Some participants asserted that a TFS

should be utilized to make positive changes. In order for this to happen, some entity, like

the government, that has the decision-making power in policies and service programming

should be in charge of the TFS.

Although the majority of the participants suggested that the government

administer a TFS, some others argued that a TFS should be run by an independent, non-

government agency. A few of them proposed that an advocacy organization or a group of

researchers from various related disciplines be responsible, whereas some did not identify

specific candidates. The participants who recommended that a non-government agency

administer a TFS expressed concerns about government administration in this matter.

Some parents and advocates were particularly skeptical about the government's

involvement in administering a TFS. An advocate confided, "With the government, I

don't entirely trust them. And I think the information can be skewed." Some participants

also noted potential barriers that the government's involvement might cause. For

example, a teacher, whose viewpoint was shared by several other participants, said, "For

the government, it's just… it's always so *long* for anything to take place and so much red

tape and paper work. I just think it's too rigid… to be able to work together, it would be

harder."

A few participants proposed that a TFS be administered by the collaboration of all

key players in the transition process, including the government and non-government

agencies. One advocate reasoned, "because that's how the transition happens… and both

[the government and non-government stakeholders] have to be aware of how these

impacts happen." An individual with a disability added, "the more people you bring

together trying to develop the strategy, the better….Because everybody has different

perspectives, different views on things, and everybody can bring something different."

Most individuals with disabilities who participated in this study indicated that

they had no particular preference as to who contacted them in order to obtain information

for a TFS. Educational and other service professionals, however, suggested that the

agents who worked most closely with the individual, for example resource teachers,

Vocational Rehabilitation workers, and Supported Living Program workers, should be the

ones collecting the data. An employment support worker who recommended that

Vocational Rehabilitation agents should gather information argued,

> … they [individuals with disabilities in Vocational Rehabilitation] may be
>
> referred to us to find employment. We may find them employment. But then once
>
> the person is stable and working and everything is okay, then we are not involved
>
> anymore. They would be taken out of our service and kind of left on their own.
>
> But they still would have contact with their Vocational Rehabilitation counsellor.

Some participants also contended that whoever gathers information should be trained to

be knowledgeable and sensitive about the issues related to the education and life of

individuals with disabilities and to understand the support system in Manitoba.

While addressing this topic, some participants put forward some propositions with

regards to administering a TFS. One of them was that a TFS should be a central system

that ensures consistent data-collection across the province. A service worker attested,

> We [her agency] have a database here, Family Services and Consumer Affairs has
>
> a database, Employment and Income Assistance has a database. Everybody's got
>
> little bits and pieces of the information. If there was one solid picture for a plan

for participants going through our systems, then I think that would be most

helpful.

In addition, another adult services professional emphasized the consistent implementation

of a TFS, not just geographically, but also over time: "To me, consistency in collection is

going to make the end result and the usefulness of this whole tool either good or bad. The

bigger concern, as opposed to who is doing it, is that 'Can it be done consistently over

time?'" Participants also asserted that a TFS should be run by a neutral body, which does

not represent any specific agency's agenda. Also, it was maintained that no matter who

administers the TFS, they should ensure the information collected to be shared with

stakeholders and to be practically used.

In summary, the main issue that the participants addressed regarding the

administration of a TFS was the government's involvement. Most of the participants

suggested that the government should be involved in administering a TFS, reasoning that

the government is better equipped with funding, power to change policies and programs,

and the data-management system of people with disabilities. On the other hand, some

other participants recommended that a non-government agency administer a TFS due to

concerns about potential biases in data-management and problems with bureaucratic

procedure. Some participants proposed a collaborative approach of administering a TFS

between the government and non-government agencies involved in the transition process.

Some participants emphasized that the data-collecting agents, whoever they may be,

should be adequately trained.

Data sources.

The participants of the interviews and focus groups were given the choice to discuss potential sources for school information and postschool information, or both. Although a few educational professionals addressed postschool information sources, the majority expressed their opinion regarding data sources for school information. On the other hand, adult service professionals spoke at greater length about data sources for postschool information.

The vast majority of the participants argued that a TFS should collect information about individuals with disabilities from multiple sources, including individuals with disabilities, their parents/guardians, resource teachers, adult services professionals, government workers (e.g., Vocational Rehabilitation workers, Supported Living workers, and Children's Special Services workers), and others in their support network. In particular, they unequivocally emphasized that whenever possible, the individuals with disabilities themselves should the primary providers of information. A participant argued, "How they [individuals with disabilities] perceive the support that they did receive and how well they perceive they did in school is significant to their futures." The participants acknowledged that there would be situations in which individuals might be able to provide limited information due to their communication difficulties or other challenges (e.g., intellectual disability). In these cases input from their support network would be helpful.

Many participants argued that collecting information from multiple sources was needed regardless of the individual's capacity to provide information on his or her own. One advocate summarized this sentiment:

> There's always a network of support. I mean almost always, folks that live with disabilities, they really have the network of support. And I think all people [in the support network] should be able to report from their perspective, because different systems will see different things.

The people in the support network of a person with disability have their own piece of information about the individual's life and without their involvement there is the potential to miss some critical information.

The vast majority of educational professionals, including teachers, principals, and Student Services administrators, who participated in this study agreed that resource/special education teachers would be the best resource for providing school information. According to the participants, resource/special education teachers are responsible for IEPs/ITPs and funding applications for students with special needs in schools and maintaining key information about them. Some Student Services administrators suggested that the principals should be the source for students' school information, because they are legally responsible for the student's programming. However, resource teachers and other participants pointed out that in most schools principals would delegate this task to the resource teachers anyway. Student Services administrators also agreed that schools are better to provide student information than the Student Services departments in school divisions:

> They [schools] more specifically know the individual student. We [Student Services] are looking at hundreds of students and they [schools] are looking at just their school population. So, to know to what degree services have been put in place, like how much guidance and counsellor services they use or the amount of

OT [occupational therapy] or PT [physiotherapy] and all of the rest… the schools would have a better idea and we have a general idea. They have more specific information.

Some educational professionals expressed concerns about students or parents providing school-relevant information. A resource teacher noted, "They [students with special needs] are just not cognitively able to do an assessment of what their entire experience has been and to be able to comment. I mean they can certainly provide some opinions, and that's an important opinion, but as far as kind of an assessment of their whole school transition process, I think it's asking a lot." Also, "Parents are sometimes unhappy with the transition process for reasons other than what the actual process has been. You know, they have some bad experiences with the school system," claimed a teacher.

In summary, most of the participants supported the contention that information about individuals with disabilities should be collected from more than one source in order to obtain reliable data. Individuals themselves should be considered the key resource as much as possible and a TFS should involve other people in their support network, such as their parents/guardians, resource teachers, adult services providers, and case managers, in the data-collection process.

Timeline for data collection.

One of the questions I asked the participants was how often and when a TFS should collect the information of individuals with disabilities. All the participants were allowed to address either or both school information and postschool information as they

wished. In this section, I present the participants' perceptions on the timeline for the data-collection of school information, followed by that for postschool information.

Figure 3 shows the frequency of data-collection that the participants suggested for a TFS. The percentages are calculated based on the numbers of individuals and focus groups identified from the transcripts that supported each option. Most of the participants proposed to use multiple data-collection methods for individuals' school information and postschool information. One professor explained why longitudinal multiple data-collection was necessary,

> Things happen as economy changes, as people age, as their life circumstance
>
> changes, their parents with whom they were living pass away and they have to
>
> live independently, they complete their postsecondary schooling, going to the
>
> workplace, or they leave a job and go to another job or go to a period of
>
> unemployment.

Figure 3

Participants' Suggested Frequency of Data Collection
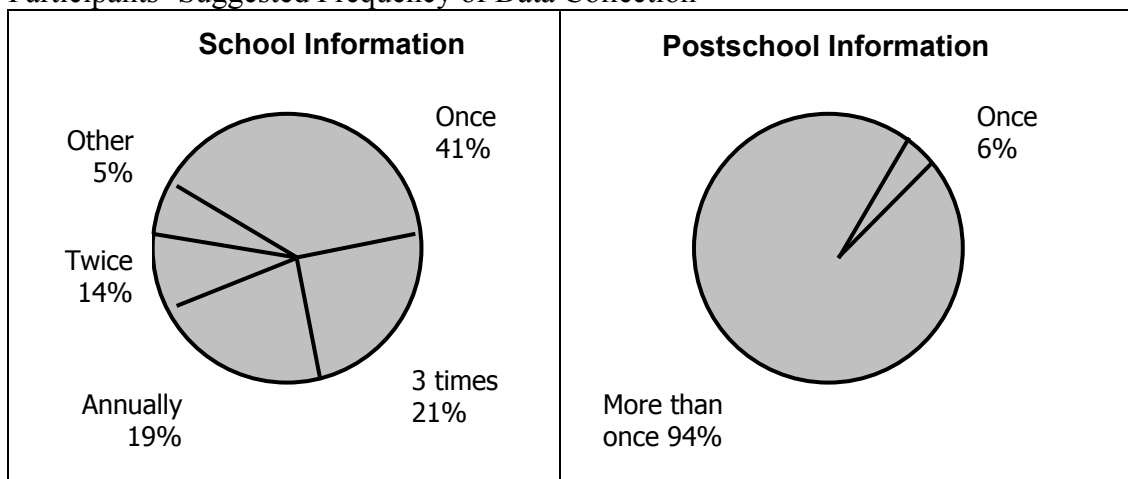
A lot of participants who supported multiple data-collection emphasized the significance of tracking individuals' transition process. One of the participants with disabilities argued,

> I think it [data-collection] should be more than once, because things change. There is never a quick solution. There's always 'this doesn't work for me. I'll try this.' So, it's a lot of trial and error and it takes time. So, with one time data-collection, you get a very selective keyhole view and you wouldn't be able to see anything else.

Some participants contended that longitudinal data-collection would help maintain individuals' key information in the transition process and also see how well the process is working.

With regards to school information, most of the participants supported multiple data-collection. Their recommendations varied from twice during schooling to annual tracking. The common timeline for three-time data-collection for school information was data collection at the beginning, middle and end of high school. Some proposed to begin data-collection at the age of 16 for individual students and others proposed starting at the age of 14. Those who recommended two data-collection times suggested that the information be gathered when the student comes into high school and when he or she leaves. Some participants advocated annual data-collection for students with special needs, given that IEPs and ITPs are usually updated yearly.

A lower number of participants recommended one-time data collection for school information as opposed to multiple data collection. This was especially true of teachers and principals, unlike other stakeholder groups. Most of those who advocated one-time

data-collection suggested that the end (i.e., May or June) of a student's final year of

school would be the best time to gather information, although two teachers expressed a

concern that it is a very busy time of the year for schools. A government representative

explained,

> The last year of high school is still a time for a student to be trying things. So, the
>
> student is going to be using that whole school career to try to settle down. So, if
>
> you do it a year before they graduate, you are going to get a very different picture
>
> than May or June of their graduating year, because educators are still giving them
>
> lots of opportunities to challenge themselves. So, probably towards the end of the
>
> school year would be the only time to get any accurate shot of what the student's
>
> real potential outcomes would be.

There was greater consensus among the participants in terms of their perceptions

on the timeline for data-collection of postschool information than of school information:

the vast majority of the participants suggested multiple data-collection for individuals'

postschool information. One third of the participants who addressed this issue supported

annual data-collection and the timelines that the others proposed widely varied, such as

every six months, every two years, every three years, or using a schedule of reducing the

frequency of data collection after leaving school. Many participants argued that a TFS

should track individuals frequently until their life becomes secure. Only two participants

– one teacher and one individual with a disability – advocated one-time data-collection

for postschool information. The individual with disabilities reasoned that he did not want

to provide his information over and over. There were no notable discrepancies identified

among the stakeholder groups in regard to the data-collection timeline for postschool information.

Participants provided various reasons for proposing annual data-collection for postschool information. A lot of participants acknowledged that many changes occur to an individual during the transition period. An adult service professional who supported people with mild disabilities or psychiatric issues attested,

> Often our clients, once they are in adulthood, they are very transitory. They are not in one place for long. They are not working in one place for long. It's a revolving door. Often many of our clients get evicted because of their behaviors, their addictions, inappropriate behaviors. They are living in poverty. There are lots of other issues with the clientele. So, I think in adulthood, follow up annually or every 6 months would probably be good.

Some adult service professionals contended that, since they updated their service plans for their individual clients annually, this would be an efficient way to annually gather information. A participant recommended, "I would build it into the existing processes that are built in, like annually. I hate to cause a lot more work, but if there's a way to build it into the existing structures, I think it would be good thing." Nonetheless, two other participants questioned whether tracking individuals' adult experiences would be realistic given the limited resources.

In summary, most of the participants suggested multiple data-collection for a TFS, noting the significance of tracking the history of changes in the individual's transition process. The results showed strong consensus for multiple data-collection for postschool information whereas their perceptions were more diverse for school

information. Supporting one-time data-collection for school information, some educators

were concerned about the increased workload that multiple data-collection might cause

them. The factors that the participants took into account in suggesting the timeline for the

data-collection included the demand for resources and its efficiency and effectiveness.

Data-collection methods.

There are various ways that a TFS can gather information about individuals with

disabilities, such as face-to-face interview, phone survey, mail survey, online database,

and so on. The participants answered the question 'How do you think a TFS should

gather information about individuals with disabilities?' They were allowed to suggest

either their own preference(s) or the best alternative(s) in general or both.

Most of the participants advocated that a TFS adopts multiple approaches for

data-collection. A participant with a disability well represented the view of some others

on this point,

> People would like to help but have different ways of doing it. So, I think that it
>
> doesn't have to be just one way and there should be different options, because
>
> then you would have more people responding according to how they choose to
>
> respond.

Many participants agreed with a government representative's point of view:

> To some degree that would be dictated by who you are approaching. So, if you
>
> approach the family, they might be okay with the phone interview, they might
>
> want an in-person interview if you're collecting information from individuals
>
> themselves. … So, I don't think one size fits all. You know, some folks may or
>
> may not have a phone. Some folks may or may not have a level of literacy that

may present some challenge with written material, some may be very uncomfortable with face to face, so I think it needs to be tailored to whomever you are collecting information from.

Although multiple forms of data-collection were supported by most of the participants, some individual approaches were suggested for particular groups of stakeholders. For example, most of the participants agreed that face-to-face interviews would be the most desirable means to gather information directly from individuals with disabilities, though personal preferences might still vary. A government representative explained:

> You have to look for visual cues to see if someone is following your language, because in interviewing with people with disabilities, you often have to reframe your questions and sometimes they're too complicate and technical. And sometimes they're very hard to answer. I don't think computers, telephone interviews and surveys are really effective for this group of people. I think you get much more information by having face-to-face interviews. And you may find that you have to collect the information by asking a question, having people tell you about their life stories. And then you will find out what you need to know within the stories that they tell you, things that they did, things that they want to do. It's a different style of interviewing, especially with people with intellectual disabilities.

Proving this point, the vast majority of the persons with disabilities who participated in this study indicated that they would prefer an in-person interview to provide their information. In addition, most of the parents in this study indicated that an in-person interview was their preference.

The vast majority of the educational professionals in this study, including teachers, principals, and Student Services administrators, proposed that IEPs/ITPs be the key tool for data-collection for students with special needs. Some teachers suggested that using IEPs/ITPs for data-collection would reduce any extra work that a TFS might cause to schools. This suggestion of utilizing the existing data-collection practice of schools was also echoed by some adult service professionals. As one of them said,

> We're already collecting data all the time about where they are at, what they are doing. So, could we then somehow funnel that information to another source where we are not doing the work twice? We already have that information. It's here. Just pump it up to the right source.

In addition to the proposal of utilizing IEPs/ITPs for data-collection, the educational professionals also showed a strong consent on their preference for an online database where school personnel could input information about students with special needs. One teacher indicated,

> I really like the idea of an online database. If it's easy to access and there's a certain field that I need to put in, I'd be very comfortable with that. You don't have to plan a meeting. You can input it when you see you have a time. I think that would be extremely useful.

Another teacher added,

> To try to coordinate someone for a telephone interview gets difficult. Having someone come out is sort of a pain, especially with those rural areas, because that person would be traveling and a lot of their time would be spent on the road.

Some educators also argued that an online database would be the most efficient and cost-effective measure for data-collection.

Proposing an online database as a data-collection method, a lot of the educators in this study imposed an unequivocal condition that the survey questionnaire should be user-friendly, consistent, and manageable. During the interviews and focus groups, some educators suggested that a TFS set up an online database into which schools can easily incorporate data from IEPs/ITPs and many others strongly supported the idea. A teacher stated, "It [developing an online database based on IEP/ITP forms] would kill two birds with one stone and would also be a more standardized format. Then, the expectation is certain information being collected. Yes, then we would do it." Although there was a suggestion that a TFS gather information about individual students with special needs by photocopying their IEPs/ITPs and putting them into the database, the vast majority of the educators in my study felt that inputting information from IEPs/ITPs into online database would be easier for them and also more efficient.

Other than in-person interviews and online database, no notable consensus was identified with regards to relevant data-collection methods. Nevertheless, the participants discussed advantages and concerns for some measures. Some participants suggested that due to cost and time efficiency some people would favour electronic surveys, especially young people who are familiar with the Internet. However, it was also noted that many people did not have access to the Internet or might not be Internet-savvy. Some participants pointed out that the responses to mail surveys tended to be low. However, a mail survey could be the best option for those who have difficulty with verbal communication.

Another data-collection method that participants considered was using a team meeting with the individual with disabilities and his or her support network, whether it would be an IEP/ITP meeting, a meeting for annual planning for adult services, or a meeting arranged for the purpose of gathering information for a TFS. A teacher suggested, "You get written records, but still have lots of questions. So, somebody could come to a meeting with the team, probably be most efficient." An adult service professional said "Sitting down with all parties involved, so you get an all round perspective on how the individual is doing." Some other participants, however, expressed concerns about gathering information from a team meeting. According to a government representative, "In some situations, parents aren't happy with the services that they are getting from school or from Family Services and are frustrated and may not speak out. Or they have very different perception of services than what we think." Some adult service professionals admitted that in some situations service providers might find it difficult to be honest about their perceptions of their clients and their circumstances in the presence of them or their family.

In summary, most of the participants suggested that a TFS use multiple data-collection methods, including in-person interviews, telephone surveys, mail surveys, an online database, and electric surveys. Many participants identified in-person interviews as being the most suitable for individuals with disabilities and parents and online database for schools to provide information. In addition, the professionals who support people with disabilities, such as teachers and adult services workers, advocated that a TFS incorporate the existing data-management practice of schools and adult programs into its data-collection procedure.

Reporting.

Once a TFS gathers information on individuals with disabilities, sharing the results with stakeholders is critical. I asked the participants two questions with regards to TFS reporting: who do you think would benefit from the results of a TFS? (i.e., to whom should the results of a TFS be distributed) and how often should such reports be generated? This section discusses the participants' answers to these questions.

The vast majority of the participants suggested that TFS results would be useful to their own stakeholder groups. Many participants contended that all the stakeholders involved in the transition process should have access to the information that a TFS generates. They argued that the TFS reports should be available to those in particular who would be involved in the data-collection and that it would motivate their participation.

The participants identified some stakeholder groups that might benefit from the information generated by a TFS and also suggested valuable information that TFS reports should address. Firstly, the professionals, such as educators and adult service workers, who support individuals with disabilities in the transition process, agreed that they would appreciate the information on the outcomes of their programs and those they provide services.

Some educators and adult services professionals noted that such a report would allow them to learn how others perform in supporting people with disabilities, to "see where you are in benchmark" as a participant said. In addition, the information generated from a TFS would help the professionals improve their programs. An adult services professional explained,

We [agencies] need to look at our own programs, whether things are having an

impact, which is a real struggle for an agency. We are providing service, is it

effective? If it isn't, why are we doing it? Let's stop. And hopefully this would

provide data for us in terms of whether or not what we are doing has some

positive impacts on outcomes.

A principal also acknowledged, "It's helpful to know how students got to a certain

point." Another principal added, "That would benefit the school system because the

school system can see a purpose of what they're doing with their students and can tell

students and others, this is what happens, this is what we have for you."

Many participants across the stakeholder groups suggested that the government

would benefit from the reports. An adult service professional noted, "the government

could benefit from having clear, current statistics on the population of people who they

spent a lot of money on, and what is it getting for that money?" A parent contended,

[The reports should be distributed to] people that make laws, people that make not

only laws, but also make decision on their behalf. People that decide that he [her

son with disability] is going to get $200 a month to live on. People don't realize

that the cost of living is much much much higher than that, because often they

will make policies and make decisions not even knowing what it's like to take

care of a handicapped son or daughter. So, it is very important for them to get this

information. These people leave their pen and paper behind.

Many participants indicated that individuals with disabilities and their families

should also have access to the reports. It was argued that the information that TFS reports

would contain could be used for self-advocacy of individuals with disabilities. A

participant with a disability noted,

> I think the disability community as whole could benefit from that [TFS reports].
>
> That gives the representatives of people with disabilities something to work with,
>
> to go with, say 'Hey, you know what? These are the areas that need improving on.
>
> Let's start working on that'. That gives me something to work with.

Some participants proposed that the reports of a TFS be available online so that

anyone who is interested can access. The reason most commonly offered for this was due

to its convenience and cost-efficiency. Also, a few participants argued that the more

people are aware of the reality the better. A parent contended,

> A lot of time people just don't have any concepts of how these people's lives
>
> work and needs that are there. Sometimes you just get a great advocate out of it,
>
> going 'why can't they do this?' Someone gets on the bandwagon, starts
>
> committee kind of thing. So, it's always better for more people to know.

In addition, it was also noted that such public reporting might inform a lot of

employers and business community that numerous individuals with disabilities are

successfully working in various industries, which could eventually facilitate the

employment of this population in the community.

The participants showed a strong consensus on the frequency of reporting TFS

results. The vast majority of the other stakeholder groups proposed annual reporting of

TFS results. Table 21 summarizes the participants' preference on the frequency of TFS

reporting.

Table 21

Frequency of TFS Reporting

Frequency of TFS Reporting	Total N=76 (54/6) (Individuals/Focus-groups)
Annually	26 (23/3)
Every 2 years	5 (4/1)
Every 5 years	5 (4/1)
Every 3-5 years	4 (3/1)
More than once a year	3 (2/1)
Every 2-3 years	2 (0/2)
Every 10 years	2 (1/1)
Only once	1 (1/0)

A lot of suggestions from the participants about the frequency of TFS reporting tended to be intuitive. Many participants' responses were like "I don't know… once a year?" and "Maybe once a year. I don't know if that's a lot." In addition, some participants suggested different timeframes for TFS reporting. For example, whereas some participants perceived that annual reporting would be reasonable and realistic, others thought that it would be unfeasible, suggesting reporting every five years instead. Therefore, I discuss the main factors below that the participants suggested considering when determining how often TFS reports should be generated.

One of the key aspects that the participants emphasized was that a TFS should publish reports frequently enough to provide up-to-date information on the transition

outcomes of individuals with disabilities. Advocating annual reporting, for example, an

adult service professional said, "Anything longer, you start losing touch with what's

happening." A teacher agreed, "I would be curious to have this data now. I think there's

always so much change happening." In addition, some participants noted that receiving

current data would encourage the stakeholders' participation in the data-collection

process. On the other hand, they also pointed out that the timeline for TFS reporting

should be long enough to see changes. If TFS reports are too frequently provided, there

may not be meaningful differences in trends identified between reports.

Another aspect that participants considered when discussing a timeline for TFS

reporting was its feasibility. A lot of participants suggested that annual reporting might be

practical. For example, an adult service professional said,

> Given the wheels of the government and agencies things are going pretty slowly.
>
> So once a year is probably going to be all you are going to be able to achieve
>
> anyway. So, probably more realistic to look at once a year.

Two government representatives also supported annual reporting, noting that most

planning and reporting of their programs was done yearly. Other participants, however,

proposed longer terms of reporting (e.g., reporting every 3-5 years), acknowledging that

collecting and analyzing data could require extensive time and resources.

Participants made some general suggestions with regard to reporting the results of

a TFS. A few government representatives agreed that such reports should be user-friendly

– written in plain language, self-explanatory, and presentable. A teacher stressed that in

order for the TFS report to be useful, it should make recommendations in it based on the

results. Lastly, a government representative noted that reporting of the TFS results by

school divisions might not be as useful to the government as reporting by regions would be, given that administrative divisions of regions in Manitoba differ from school divisions. Therefore, he proposed that the reporting of TFS results be tailored to its audiences, such as school divisions, the government, and individuals with disabilities.

In summary, most of the participants agreed that they would appreciate TFS reports and suggested that the reports should be available to the key stakeholders who are involved in the transition process. The timelines that the participants suggested for TFS reporting varied. In addition, it was recommended that TFS reports reflect the current transition practice and outcomes of individuals with disabilities, identify changes within those practices, and be user-friendly.

Suggestions and concerns.

At the end of the individual interviews and focus groups I asked the participants to share any suggestions or concerns they might have regarding developing and implement a TFS. Table 22 summarizes their suggestions and concerns by the themes frequently identified. I discuss their suggestions and concerns together by the themes below.

Table 22

Suggestions and Concerns by Themes

Themes of Suggestions and Concerns	Total N=76 (54/6) (Individuals/Focus-groups)
Privacy & confidentiality	15 (13/2)
Funding	9 (8/1)
Additional work	9 (8/1)
Mandatory participation	5 (3/2)
Voluntary participation	4 (3/1)
Accurate, reliable data	4 (2/2)

A lot of participants emphasized individuals' privacy protection and the confidentiality of their information in implementing a TFS. A Student Services administrator's comment well summarizes many others' concerns:

I think the information… the more the better. But also, it needs to… be on a need-to-know basis. So, it's a fine balance in terms of what you need to know, how much you need to know, and who needs to know it.

Noting the existing Privacy Acts (e.g., Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act [FIPPA], Personal Health Information Act [PHIA]), a number of participants suggested that it could be challenging to follow the Acts while collecting and sharing the information of individuals with disabilities. It was also stressed that special caution must be paid to ensuring that individuals make an informed decision when releasing their

personal information for a TFS. In addition, some participants proposed utilizing a coding

system for individuals' identification in order to keep their identity confidential.

One of the most frequently expressed concerns was about the funding required to

develop and implement a TFS. Many participants acknowledged that implementing such

a database would be costly. A teacher suggested,

I think it [TFS] needs a budget and strong commitment, but not just commitment,

but also I want to see money going towards that. It's a good move, good cause.

But it takes more than a good idea on the paper. It takes human resources and

financial resources to support that.

Due to the financial burden, a lot of participants contended that a TFS should be

administered by the government. However, even those who proposed independent

administration of a TFS from the government argued that the government still should

fund its execution. A principal was skeptical enough to say, "I'm wondering financially if

what you are talking about is even within the realm of possibility."

Another concern that a lot of participants raised was additional work that a TFS

might cause to the stakeholders, educators in particular, in the process of data-collection.

A principal argued, "Resource teachers in the public system right now are stretched. And

we have to be very careful now that we are not going to lay another layer on their

workload, because they're maxed out now." The burden from additional work was not

only raised by educators, but also by some adult service professionals. An adult service

worker asserted,

My only concern is the amount of work. If it's built in, then I think it's

achievable. If that's something brand new and just kind of thrown at people, it

doesn't make sense to what's already happening. Then we're not going to [have a]

role in it.

Some participants noted that the cooperation of the stakeholders would be one of

the essential factors that determine the success of a TFS. It was pointed out that in order

to be motivated to participate in a TFS, the stakeholders should be able to see the benefits

of the TFS to themselves and most of all to individuals with disabilities. A few

participants also questioned if such database would be beneficial to individuals with

disabilities. A principal suggested,

> Are they [individuals with disabilities] going to give that [their information] to
>
> you? Because I'd say, why would they? Why would they provide you with that
>
> information? Why should they? That's a bigger question. What does that
>
> [participating in the data-collection] have to do with their level of success now? I
>
> don't see that they'd see it [statistical analysis] as direct bang for their buck.

There were conflicting perspectives from the participants on whether the

participation in a TFS should be mandatory or voluntary. However, when addressing this

issue the participants who proposed mandatory TFS and those who supported voluntary

participation referred to different populations. For example, some participants argued that

the involvement of schools and other service agencies in a TFS should be mandatory. A

Student Services administrator contended,

> I'm guessing it should be a follow-up survey which they mandate [schools and
>
> service agencies] to do. It shouldn't be your choice, whether you want to
>
> complete it or not. It should be an expectation that schools would provide that and

mandate whatever agencies taking on data-collection. I think it should be a part of the program.

A teacher believed that if the involvement in a TFS was voluntary, the sample size of data might be limited. On the other hand, some participants emphasized that the participation of individuals with disabilities in a TFS should be voluntary. A participant with disability asserted, "The person should have the option to decide whether or not to do it, whether they should get tracked or not."

Some participants noted that careful attention should be paid to obtaining accurate, reliable data about individuals with disabilities. The authenticity of individual's information can be tainted by various factors. For example, "People may be answering differently when parents are in the room, when service providers are there, 'oh, everything is wonderful.' But it may not be always the case," said an adult service professional. In addition, depending on who provides the information, their interpretation or perspective of a situation may differ. An advocate explained,

> When folks cannot speak for themselves and put their own perspective out there and share that, then the information can be quite skewed. The teacher said 'this person doesn't have the capacity to work' because of how he or she viewed the situation. But the individuals themselves really see the situation differently. And within that system, would they be able to stand up to that and advocate for themselves? Would the parents be able to do that? It could happen in any system.

It was also stressed that consistent guidelines be used when collecting and analyzing information to reduce the misinterpretation of data collected.

There were some other suggestions that a few participants made. A government representative emphasized that the target population of a TFS should include individuals with disabilities out of the support system. She argued,

> I know that there's gaps in services for kids with behavioral needs, Autism,
> FASD, and that kind of stuff. So, there are right now no programs for those kids.
> If we are not carrying on that data, then there is potential to lose information on
> those individuals.

Another recommendation made was to carry out a pilot test of a TFS to see if such a database is viable and useful. Finally, two participants were concerned that the individuality of people with disabilities might be lost in the statistical analysis of a TFS. A participant with disability said,

> I think it's important that you don't get lost in numbers. People can be lumped
> into one group. People are so different. And if you put all results together, you
> might get something neutral. I think it's important not to lose the realness of it and
> that uniqueness and the individuality of it. You've got to remember that these
> people are people, not numbers.

In summary, the concerns that the participants voiced about developing and implementing a TFS were regarding securing the funding needed, additional work caused by the TFS to the stakeholders, and obtaining reliable information of individuals with disabilities. It was emphasized that a TFS protect the privacy and confidentiality of individuals with disabilities and promote benefits to the stakeholders. Whereas some participants argued that the involvement of the stakeholders in a TFS be mandatory,

others contended that the participation of individuals with disabilities and their families be voluntary.

Other Themes.

In addition to the components of TFS such as purposes, data sources, data collection methods and those aspects discussed above, I also identified some other themes from the focus groups and individual interviews that are relevant to the general process of transition of individuals with disabilities from school to adulthood (Table 23). These themes are not directly related to developing and implementing a TFS; however, the participants' expression of their experiences and perceptions in these areas clearly demonstrates why TFS is so vital in Manitoba. These perceptions speak to the inadequacy of the transition services currently offered to these youth with disabilities and their considerable challenges in adjusting to adult life. These perceptions therefore lend further support to participants' suggestions (discussed above) that the primary purposes of a TFS should be to improve service systems and programs, identify service gaps, examine individuals' outcomes and needs, and ensure people do not fall through cracks.

Table 23

Transition Experiences of Individuals with Disabilities and Parents in Manitoba

Themes	Total N=76 (54/6) (Individuals/Focus-groups)
Inadequate adult services	14 (10/4)
Transition practice in rural areas	14 (12/2)
Positive experiences with postsecondary education	6 (5/1)
Inadequate programs in high school	5 (4/1)
Employment difficulties	5 (5/0)

A lot of participants unequivocally noted a lack of adult services available for individuals with disabilities in Manitoba. One parent asserted, "As soon as you finish school, boom! Dropped everything and you have to fight to get everything. Adults are treated differently than children. Children get everything. Adults just seem to fall through the cracks." A teacher agreed with this perspective saying that, "It [transitioning from school to the adult service system] is like going from feast to famine." Lack of adult services not only impedes individuals' adjustment to adulthood, but also deteriorates their potentials. Another teacher maintained:

> I do see that a lot of kids, once they leave the school, sort of are adrift. We've got them ready. We've got all sorts of skills. And then they wait and wait to be placed or to find out a place. They don't start working right away. And they regress, especially literally, money skills, numeracy skills. If they are not using them regularly, they lose it. And there seems to be a bit of valley for some of our students, once they leave high school, where they sit and wait.

An educator illustrated her experience with one of her former students thusly:

> For students who need any kind of technology support, like you've found a good piece of equipment for their augmentative communication. I've been to visit some of the adult placements and it's locked and covered. And when I looked this particular student's speech device, nothing has changed since she's been out of high school. That had been a few years. But there was nobody there to put that in.

One teacher summarized the opinion of many educators in this study by stating, "It's frustrating when you work so hard to get a student in a situation where they can do some communicating and then it just kind of drops."

Some participants pointed out the lack of adult services available for persons with disabilities between the age of 18 and 21. It was claimed that many individuals with disabilities in the age range were forced to stay at school because adult programs that they qualify for were not available until age 21. An adult service professional attested,

> I mean, anecdotally we come across cases where… It's just a horror situation for people, because they really do want to graduate with their peers. And in our area, it actually happens that people just go home and sit at home until their adult funding comes through. So, I mean, that's just wrong.

Another issue raised regarding adult services was the lack of supports for individuals with physical disabilities. A lot of participants noted that the current support system determines the qualification for services by intellectual functioning level, which often leaves out many individuals with other types of disabilities, such as physical, sensory, and mental illness whose needs for services may still be extensive. A parent of an individual with physical disability attested,

> I mean, his social worker always told him [her son] 'you don't fit in our book', because everything is set up for the mentally challenged, which is wonderful and they need the service. But when you have only physical aspect, all of a sudden you don't fit into programming. And he missed a lot of opportunities because of that. So, it's an uphill battle.

The participants from rural areas in Manitoba discussed their observations and perceptions regarding the transition experiences of people with disabilities in their regions. The main issue that most of the participants in rural areas, especially educators

and adult service professionals, raised was a lack of resources. A principal in a rural area attested,

> We have a student that travels to Winnipeg from here to go to educational facilities to suit their disabilities or travel to another rural town because that's the centre for it. And we don't have those centres out here. [For] group homes, you may have to go to one of other small towns or Winnipeg. Students may not have the technology here, for example. We can only provide a dial-up on the Internet to support kids.

Another issue that the rural participants were concerned about was limited job opportunities for individuals with disabilities. In order to have work experiences, students with special needs in rural areas usually have to go to another bigger town or city. Due to the extensive time and resources required for transportation, this is not always a viable option for them. One teacher explained, "There's also the additional costs involved with transporting the students as well as, if it's from school, funding the EA or a work-shadower, a coach for longer time because travel's involved." Most of the participants with disabilities and the parents in this study regretted that there were few jobs available. It was reported that, despite the lack of services and employment opportunities available, many individuals with disabilities chose to stay in their regions simply in order to live close to their family or support network. A Student Services administrator added, "It's just a reality that we lack a lot of opportunity and hopefully this database will indicate that. And that should give the funders another picture of the struggles that rural Manitoba faces in providing services for these individuals." However, it appeared that the circumstances were not the same in all rural areas of Manitoba. Some adult service

professionals in one rural area boasted that the educational and social services available for people with disabilities in their region might be more comprehensive and better coordinated than those in the cities. They accorded their uniqueness to the long history of development of social services in the region.

There were some advantages that the participants noted for rural areas. Unlike the educators who participated in this study from urban areas, those from rural areas admitted that they usually were well aware of how their former students with special needs were doing after leaving school, which helped them better accommodate their programs to their current students who had similar characteristics. In addition, some participants in rural areas suggested that it could be easier in small towns to establish a supportive community for individuals with disabilities. A participant said,

I have a son with Down Syndrome and he graduated from the school at the age of 21. It has been a very smooth transition for him, partly because it is a small community, partly because the people who are looking after him now are neighbors, friends, and people who we've known in the community. Rural area seems to be… in our example, in our case, it's very caring.

Most of the participants with disabilities and those who had a son or daughter with disability reported that they felt the high school programs provided for the individuals were inadequate in preparing them for adult life. The reasons varied. A parent of a man who had intellectual and physical disabilities recalled, "When Tom [her son, pseudonym] left high school, he didn't go last year, because his resource teacher was using the TA [teacher assistant] to help all the other kids and he was sitting in the class doing nothing. That 6 or 7 months, it was hard. It was a hard period for him." Some

parents felt that high school programs were not functional or comprehensive. A mother of a man with intellectual disability argued,

> He [her son] has the potential of being fairly independent. But the way the system is set up, it's set to make him very dependent. With somebody like David [her son, pseudonym] coming into grade 10, what would we have to do to get this kid to living on his own? Yes, he has to learn reading and writing. But he needs to learn a lot more than that in order to be successful and to live on his own.

Another parent said,

> He wants to live on his own. He wants to be able to get married. He'd like to have the kind of life style he sees other people having. But he is ill prepared for those decisions or that ability to make that happen. For example, when Chris [her son, pseudonym] was in school, he would take cooking classes. They would learn how to cook particular thing, like pancakes or whatever, but they wouldn't learn about how to shop, how to budget… So, that's ill-preparing them for going in adulthood and more independent living.

In addition, a man with mental illness described his high school experiences,

> I was diagnosed with mental health issues early on by my family doctor. The school didn't quite agree with it. They just thought I was a troubled youth. To me the school should be, like a counsellor, should be working to help me and should be another support, like my doctor is one level of support and the counsellor should be another level, kind of should be working in conjunction.

> On the other hand, most of the participants with disabilities who were or had

attended the postsecondary education and those who had such a son or daughter were

satisfied with the programs and services that the institutions provided them. One of them was enrolled in Campus Life, a non-matriculated program, at University of Manitoba and the others in regular programs in University of Brandon, University of Manitoba, and University of Winnipeg either part-time or full-time. A parent of a man with physical disability who recently graduated from one of those said, "The college aspect was very good. They were very willing to accommodate and make physical alternations in the rooms, and scheduling that type of things. It was a very welcoming atmosphere. The college end of it, I must say, it went really well."

One of the issues commonly raised by the participants was the challenges that individuals with disabilities faced with regard to employment. Some participants with disabilities reported that they had unsuccessfully tried to obtain adequate employment in the community to sustain themselves by. In rural areas the job opportunities were often scarce, and in cities it was difficult to find any employment that could accommodate their needs. A participant with mental illness said, "I know I can't do things full-time. I wouldn't be able to do night shifts. I keep emphasizing adaptations because a lot of people have qualities and strengths to achieve their goals and dreams and just don't have the adaptations along their journey to get there." One parent contended that many people with disabilities were exposed to the risk of labour abuse:

> He [her son] needs to have an employment where he can get off of the
> government assistance and something meaningful that he goes to work everyday
> and he feels he is doing a good job. And for us at this point that's a huge issue and
> one that is not very well addressed. People like Chris with cognitive disability
> take them [work experiences] and have a work situation sometimes for a long

period time, sometimes for four years even, whether or not getting paid a salary.

But they are doing a service under the disguise of work experience.

In fact, among the participants with disabilities, only one person had a paid job in the community, which was part-time for a few hours per week.

In summary, the participants identified a lot of challenges that individuals with disabilities and their families in Manitoba experience in the transition process. The issues that the participants commonly noted were inadequate programs and services in high school and the adult support system, lack of resources in rural areas, and difficulties in obtaining employment in the community. On the other hand, the experiences of some participants with postsecondary education were positive.

Quantitative Data from Interview Questionnaires

Quantitative data were derived from the summary questionnaires that I asked the participants of the interviews and focus groups to complete at the end of their interviews. All the participants of the individual interviews and focus groups (total 68 people) completed a questionnaire at the end of their interview, summarizing their perceptions of key aspects of the development and implementation of a TFS in Manitoba, such as its purpose, information components, best administrators, data-sources, timeline of data-collection, data-collection methods, and reporting. The results of the questionnaires will be described in the section below.

Purposes of TFS.

The planned purpose of any TFS is arguably the most significant aspect of its development and implementation because this should determine its methodology as well. The proposed purpose for a TFS that the largest number of participants selected was

improving current transition support systems and services (e.g. educational and social

services) for youth with disabilities (94.%) (see Table 24).

Table 24

Purposes Suggested for TFS

Purposes	PA n=7	AD n=2	T n=15	SS n=10	PR n=7	ME n=3	FS n=5	AS n=16	F n=3	Total N=68 (%)
Improve services	7	2	13	9	7	3	5	15	3	64 (94.1)
Identify critical factors	7	2	14	9	7	2	5	14	2	62 (91.2)
Examine individuals' outcomes	7	1	12	9	6	1	5	13	2	56 (82.4)
Ensure accountability	7	1	9	7	2	1	4	12	1	44 (64.7)

Note. PA: Parents, AD: Advocates, T: Teachers, SS: Student Services administrators, PR: Principals, ME: Manitoba Education, FS: Manitoba Family Services and Consumer Affairs, AS: Adult services professionals, F: Faculty

Although relatively fewer participants (64.7%) supported using a TFS to improve the

accountability of educational and social services, all of the parents who participated in

this study indicated that ensuring the accountability of services would be a significant

purpose. The questionnaire for participants with disabilities asked them to indicate

whether or not they thought a TFS was necessary and if so, to indicate the reason.

Although all the four individuals with disabilities agreed that a TFS was necessary in

Manitoba, none of them provided their reasons in the questionnaire.

Information to collect by TFS.

The questionnaire allowed the participants to indicate every item among the

options presented that they thought was important. In all three categories, the participants

showed strong consent across various stakeholder groups in their significant information

components identified for a TFS to collect.

The three background information components that the vast majority of the

participants agreed upon were postschool goals, functional skills level (e.g. life skills,

self-care, motor skills), and disability type (93.4%, 93.4%, and 90.2% respectively)

(Table 25). Many representatives from Family Services and Consumer Affairs and the

faculties in this study suggested that TFS collect information about ethnicity and

household income; however, relatively fewer participants in other stakeholder groups

perceived these as necessary data.

Table 25

Background Information to Collect

Information to collect	AD n=2	T n=15	SS n=10	PR n=7	ME n=3	FS n=5	AS n=16	F n=3	Total N=61 (%)
Postschool goals	2	15	8	7	2	5	15	3	57 (93.4)
Functional skill level	2	15	8	6	3	5	15	3	57 (93.4)
Disability type	2	14	9	5	3	5	14	3	55 (90.2)
Gender	2	12	8	5	1	5	13	3	49 (80.3)
Health/medical concerns	2	9	8	5	3	5	15	2	49 (80.3)
Contact information	1	11	7	6	2	5	11	3	46 (75.4)
Primary caregiver	2	9	6	6	2	5	11	2	43 (70.5)
Ethnicity	1	7	4	4	0	4	7	3	30 (49.2)
Household income	1	7	3	4	0	4	7	3	29 (47.5)

Note. AD: Advocates, T: Teachers, SS: Student Services administrators, PR: Principals, ME: Manitoba Education, FS: Manitoba Family Services and Consumer Affairs, AS: Adult services professionals, F: Faculty

All the information components in the category of school programs/transition services presented in the questionnaire were recognized as significant by more than 85% of the participants (Table 26). The information in this category that the largest percentage of participants recommended a TFS collect was a copy of the IEP/ITP developed for individuals with special needs (96.7%).

Table 26

Information of School Programs/Transition Services to Collect

Information	AD n=2	T n=15	SS n=10	PR n=7	ME n=3	FS n=5	AS n=16	F n=3	Total N=61 (%)
IEP/ITP developed	2	14	10	7	2	5	16	3	59 (96.7)
Functional skills programs	2	15	8	6	2	5	16	3	57 (93.4)
Educational placement	2	15	9	6	2	4	15	3	56 (91.8)
Vocational programs	2	15	8	7	1	4	15	3	55 (90.2)
Academic programs	2	13	7	7	1	4	15	3	52 (85.3)
Vocational assessment	2	13	7	7	1	5	14	3	52 (85.3)
Extracurricular activities	2	13	8	5	3	4	14	3	52 (85.3)

Note. AD: Advocates, T: Teachers, SS: Student Services administrators, PR: Principals, ME: Manitoba Education, FS: Manitoba Family Services and Consumer Affairs, AS: Adult services professionals, F: Faculty

Compared to the other categories, the information components of student outcomes were chosen by slightly fewer participants than average (Table 27). In addition, suspension history was not recognized as significant as other types of information by many participants.

Table 27

Information on Student Outcomes to Collect

Information	AD n=2	T n=15	SS n=10	PR n=7	ME n=3	FS n=5	AS n=16	F n=3	Total N=61 (%)
IEP/ITP goals and outcomes	2	13	8	7	1	5	15	3	54 (88.5)
School completion status	2	15	7	7	2	5	13	3	54 (88.5)
Academic achievement	2	14	7	6	2	4	13	3	51 (83.6)
Attendance rate	2	13	6	5	1	4	13	3	47 (77.1)
Alternative assessment outcomes	2	13	5	4	1	5	14	2	46 (75.4)
Suspension history	1	8	3	2	0	2	8	2	26 (42.6)

Note. AD: Advocates, T: Teachers, SS: Student Services administrators, PR: Principals, ME: Manitoba Education, FS: Manitoba Family Services and Consumer Affairs, AS: Adult services professionals, F: Faculty

I examined the postschool information that a TFS needs to track in terms of employment outcomes, postsecondary education outcomes, residential outcomes, outcomes in other aspects of life, and adult program/service needs. Firstly, Table 28 shows the results on the information components related to employment outcomes. In this category, more than 90% of participants indicated employment status (e.g. (un)employment, volunteer), job satisfaction, type of jobs, and job stability as significant information for TFS to collect. Job acquisition method (e.g. by himself/herself, by parents/relatives, by an adult service agency) was identified by fewer participants.

Table 28

Information of Employment Outcomes to Collect

Information	ID n=4	PA n=7	AD n=2	ME n=3	FS n=5	AS n=16	F n=3	Total N=40 (%)
Employment status	4	7	2	2	5	16	3	39 (97.5)
Job satisfaction	4	7	2	2	5	16	3	39 (97.5)
Type of jobs	4	7	2	2	5	15	3	38 (95.0)
Job stability	3	7	2	2	5	14	3	36 (90.0)
Work hours	3	6	2	2	5	14	3	35 (87.5)
Financial status	4	6	2	1	5	12	3	33 (82.5)
Job benefits	4	7	2	2	5	11	2	33 (82.5)
Job acquisition method	2	4	2	2	5	14	2	31 (77.5)

Note. ID: Individuals with disabilities, PA: Parents, AD: Advocates, ME: Manitoba Education, FS: Manitoba Family Services and Consumer Affairs, AS: Adult services professionals, F: Faculty

Table 29, Table 30, Table 31, and Table 32 shows the information components that the participants identified as important for TFS to collect on postsecondary education outcomes, residential outcomes, outcomes in other aspects of life, and adult program/service needs respectively. Among these categories, the outcomes in other aspects of life and adult program/service needs (e.g. vocational, residential, leisure) were identified by the vast majority of the participants as significant information to track: all the information components in this category were chosen by more than 90% of participants. In particular, 100% of the participants agreed that TFS should collect information about psychological wellbeing/autonomy.

Table 29

Information of Postsecondary Education Outcomes to Collect

Information	ID n=4	PA n=7	AD n=2	ME n=3	FS n=5	AS n=16	F n=3	Total N=40 (%)
Type of educational program	4	7	2	2	4	15	3	37 (92.5)
Field of study	4	6	2	2	4	12	3	33 (82.5)
Full/part-time enrolment	2	6	2	2	4	13	3	32 (80.0)

Note. ID: Individuals with disabilities, PA: Parents, AD: Advocates, ME: Manitoba Education, FS: Manitoba Family Services and Consumer Affairs, AS: Adult services professionals, F: Faculty

Table 30

Information of Residential Outcomes to Collect

Information	ID n=4	PA n=7	AD n=2	ME n=3	FS n=5	AS n=16	F n=3	Total N=40 (%)
Living status	4	6	2	2	5	16	3	38 (95.0)
Marital status	3	4	2	1	5	15	3	33 (82.5)
Contribution to living expense	4	5	2	2	4	12	3	32 (80.0)

Note. ID: Individuals with disabilities, PA: Parents, AD: Advocates, ME: Manitoba Education, FS: Manitoba Family Services and Consumer Affairs, AS: Adult services professionals, F: Faculty

Table 31

Information of Outcomes in Other Aspects of Life to Collect

Information	ID n=4	PA n=7	AD n=2	ME n=3	FS n=5	AS n=16	F n=3	Total N=40 (%)
Psychological wellbeing/autonomy	4	7	2	3	5	16	3	40 (100.0)
Community living	4	7	2	3	5	15	3	39 (97.5)
Social network	3	6	2	3	5	15	3	37 (92.5)
Physical wellbeing	4	5	2	3	5	15	2	36 (90.0)

Note. ID: Individuals with disabilities, PA: Parents, AD: Advocates, ME: Manitoba Education, FS: Manitoba Family Services and Consumer Affairs, AS: Adult services professionals, F: Faculty

Table 32

Information of Adult Program/Service Needs to Collect

Information	ID n=4	PA n=7	AD n=2	ME n=3	FS n=5	AS n=16	F n=3	Total N=40 (%)
Service needs	4	7	2	2	5	15	3	38 (95.0)
Services received	4	5	2	2	5	15	3	36 (90.0)
Service satisfaction	4	6	2	2	5	14	3	36 (90.0)

Note. ID: Individuals with disabilities, PA: Parents, AD: Advocates, ME: Manitoba Education, FS: Manitoba Family Services and Consumer Affairs, AS: Adult services professionals, F: Faculty

Data collectors.

The questionnaires asked the participants who they thought should collect information about individuals with disabilities for TFS (Table 33). The results show diverse perceptions among the participants on who should be responsible for data-collection, though the government involvement in data-collection was slightly more supported than independent agencies. Nonetheless, the vast majority of the parents chose

an independent agency as data-collector, whereas the other stakeholders did not show

strong preferences for a specific option. Table 34 summarizes the results in terms of the

affiliations of agents (i.e. government or non-government) who the participants suggested

for data-collection.

Table 33

Data Collectors Suggested for TFS

Data Collectors	PA n=7	AD n=2	T n=15	SS n=10	PR n=7	ME n=3	FS n=5	AS n=16	F n=3	Total N=68 (%)
FSCA	2	2	8	4	5	1	2	10	2	36 (52.9)
Schools or divisions	3	2	10	3	2	2	3	8	2	35 (51.5)
Independent agency	6	2	6	4	3	0	1	9	1	32 (47.1)
Manitoba Education	3	2	4	3	4	0	3	6	2	27 (39.7)

Note. PA: Parents, AD: Advocates, T: Teachers, SS: Student Services administrators, PR: Principals, ME:
Manitoba Education, FS: Manitoba Family Services and Consumer Affairs, AS: Adult services
professionals, F: Faculty

Table 34

Data Collectors Suggested for TFS by Government Affiliation

Data-collectors	PA n=7	AD n=2	T n=15	SS n=10	PR n=7	ME n=3	FS N=5	AS n=16	F n=3	Total N=68 (%)
Government only	1	0	5	3	3	2	3	6	1	24 (35.3)
Government & independent agency	2	2	3	2	3	0	0	5	1	18 (26.5)
Independent agency only	4	0	3	2	0	0	1	3	1	14 (20.6)

Note. PA: Parents, AD: Advocates, T: Teachers, SS: Student Services administrators, PR: Principals, ME:
Manitoba Education, FS: Manitoba Family Services and Consumer Affairs, AS: Adult services
professionals, F: Faculty

Data sources.

The questionnaire asked the participants whether individual themselves, their primary care giver (e.g. parents, guardians, or professional care giver), or both should provide postschool information about individuals with disabilities. The vast majority of participants (68 out of 70, 97.1%) agreed that the individual and his or her caregiver should provide the information together. In addition, some of the participants (14 people) noted that the individual's support network, such as adult service provider, employer, and case manager, should also be a part of data-collection when needed.

Timeline of data collection.

I examined the timeline for the TFS data-collection in terms of school information and postschool information. Only the professionals in the education field, such as teachers, Student Services administrators, principals, and representatives of Manitoba Education, were asked to address the timeline for data-collection of school information. The participants were allowed to choose one of the following options: 1) 3-6 months prior to leaving school, 2) within 3 months of leaving school, 3) immediately after leaving school, and 4) other. The vast majority of the participants (28 out of the 30, 93.3%) suggested that the information be gathered before the student leaves school. However, their opinions varied on specific timeline of the data-collection: 8 people (26.7%) chose for 3-6 months prior to school-leaving, 8 (26.7%) for within 3 months of school-leaving, and 4 (13.3%) for 1 year before school-leaving. In addition, eight people chose the 'other' option, stating that information on school experiences should be collected more than once while the student is at school.

With regards to postschool information, the participants were asked to choose every timeframe presented that they thought suitable for data collection. 80% of the participants who answered (32 out of 40) indicated that information should be collected more than once (see Table 35). In addition, 75% of the participants noted that one year after leaving school was a particularly important time to assess the postschool outcomes of individuals with disabilities.

Table 35

Frequency of Data Collection Suggested for Postschool Information

Frequency	ID n=4	PA n=7	AD n=2	ME n=3	FS n=5	AS n=16	F n=3	Total N=40 (%)
Twice	1	5	0	1	4	3	1	15 (37.5)
Annually	1	0	1	0	1	7	1	11 (27.5)
Once	1	1	0	2	0	3	1	8 (20.0)
3-4 times	1	1	1	0	0	3	0	6 (15.0)

Note. ID: Individuals with disabilities, PA: Parents, AD: Advocates, ME: Manitoba Education, FS: Manitoba Family Services and Consumer Affairs, AS: Adult services professionals, F: Faculty

Data-collection methods.

I asked participants to indicate methods that were most suitable for collecting information about individuals with disabilities for a TFS. Different groups of the participants addressed data-collection methods for school information and postschool information. Table 36 and Table 37 show the results. The data-collection method of school information that most participants indicated as suitable was on-line database/survey. On the other hand, to obtain postschool information (e.g. adult

outcomes, adult services provided, and service needs) an in-person interview was the

most preferred data-collection method.

Table 36

Data-collection Methods Suggested for School Experiences Information

Methods	T n=15	SS n=10	PR n=7	ME n=3	F n=3	Total N=38 (%)
On-line database/survey	11	9	4	2	2	28 (73.7)
In-person interview	7	1	6	1	2	17 (44.7)
Mailed survey	3	1	0	3	2	9 (23.7)
Phone-interview	1	0	0	1	2	4 (10.5)

Note. T: Teachers, SS: Student Services administrators, PR: Principals, ME: Manitoba Education, F: Faculty

Table 37

Data-collection Methods Suggested for Postschool Experiences Information

Methods	ID n=4	PA n=7	AD n=2	ME n=3	FS n=5	AS n=16	F n=3	Total N=40 (%)
In-person interview	4	5	2	1	5	14	2	33 (82.5)
On-line database/survey	1	4	2	2	2	7	2	20 (50.0)
Mailed survey	1	2	1	3	3	5	2	17 (42.5)
Phone-interview	0	1	1	2	3	6	2	15 (37.5)

Note. ID: Individuals with disabilities, PA: Parents, AD: Advocates, ME: Manitoba Education, FS: Manitoba Family Services and Consumer Affairs, AS: Adult services professionals, F: Faculty

Reporting TFS.

I asked participants two questions with regards to reporting transition follow-up results: (a) At which level (at the school level, at the school division level, at the city/region level, and/or at the province level) should the results of TFS be analyzed and (b) how often would they like to have TFS reports. Most of the participants agreed that reporting the results by the province and by school divisions would be useful (Table 38). Interestingly, whereas analyzing the data by regions was supported by most of the FSCA representatives (i.e. 4 out of 5), relatively fewer participants from the other stakeholder groups suggested that this level of analysis was necessary.

Table 38

Data-analysis Level Suggested

Analysis at the level of	PA n=7	AD n=2	T n=15	SS n=10	PR n=7	ME n=3	FS n=5	AS n=16	F n=3	Total N=68 (%)
Province	7	2	11	8	6	1	5	12	3	55 (80.9)
School division	7	1	11	8	6	1	4	10	2	50 (73.5)
School	3	2	8	5	5	0	3	9	1	36 (52.9)
Region	4	2	6	5	1	0	4	7	1	30 (44.1)

Note. ID: Individuals with disabilities, PA: Parents, AD: Advocates, ME: Manitoba Education, FS: Manitoba Family Services and Consumer Affairs, AS: Adult services professionals, F: Faculty

Table 39 shows the participants' perceptions of how often TFS results should be reported. Most of the parents, advocates, and adult services professionals preferred to have reports as often as annually. However, the other stakeholders (e.g. teachers, Student

Services administrators, principals, government representatives, and faculty members)

suggested less frequent reporting, biannually or less frequently.

Table 39

Frequency of TFS Reporting Suggested

	PA n=7	AD n=2	T n=15	SS n=10	PR n=7	ME n=2	FS n=4	AS n=16	F n=3	Total N=66 (%)
Annually	5	2	3	4	2	0	1	13	0	30 (45.5)
Biannually	1	0	7	0	3	1	1	2	1	16 (24.2)
Every 3 yrs	0	0	1	5	0	1	2	1	0	10 (15.2)
Every 4-5 yrs	1	0	4	1	2	0	0	0	2	10 (15.2)

Note. PA: Parents, AD: Advocates, T: Teachers, SS: Student Services administrators, PR: Principals, ME: Manitoba Education, FS: Manitoba Family Services and Consumer Affairs, AS: Adult services professionals, F: Faculty

Suggestions and concerns.

The last question in the questionnaires was an open question, which asked the

participants to provide suggestions or concerns with regards to developing and

implementing a TFS in Manitoba. Table 40 summarizes the results. The most common

suggestions were to use TFS as a tool with which improve the transition support system

and services, to ensure TFS user-friendly and efficient, and to administer TFS through

collaboration of various agencies involved in the transition process for youth with

disabilities, such as Manitoba Education, FSCA, and SMD. There were also conflicting

suggestions made with regards to the administering agency of a TFS: one participant

proposed that it be an independent agency, another contended that an agency with

decision/policy making power such as the government should be responsible for TFS.

Some participants noted that obtaining all the stakeholders' collaboration and support might be challenging. The factors that they suggested might affect the stakeholders' participation were additional workload, using TFS as a means to monitor program performance, and lack of funding and resources. Some also pointed out that due to the Privacy Acts (e.g. PHIA, FIPPA), collecting and sharing information on individuals with special needs might be challenging.

In summary, the results demonstrated strong consensus among stakeholders on most of the key aspects of a TFS examined. Strong agreement (80% of respondents or more concurring) was found with regard to TFS purposes, information to collect, data-source, data-collection methods, and the level of data-analysis. In particular, more than 90% of the participants indicated that the information components in the category of some aspects of life (e.g., psychological wellbeing/autonomy, community living, social network, physical wellbeing) and adult programs and services (e.g. service needs, services received, service satisfaction) were important. Relatively lower levels of agreement were found in terms of who the data-collectors should be, the timeline of data-collection, and the timeline for reporting.

Table 40

Suggestions and Concerns

Suggestions and Concerns	Frequency N=76
Suggestions:	
To use TFS to improve transition support system and services	4
To ensure that TFS be user-friendly and efficient	4
To collaboratively manage the information with related agencies (e.g. FSCA, SMD, Manitoba Education)	3
To execute regular, ongoing data-collection and report	2
To assist individuals with disabilities in providing information (e.g. involving support network)	2
To encourage participation of all stakeholders in TFS	2
To including a wide range of disabilities (e.g. mental health, behavioral disability, physical disability)	2
Concerns:	
Challenge of promoting all the stakeholders' collaboration and support	2
Additional workload caused to whom need to provide information (e.g. teachers, support workers, etc)	2
Use of TFS for accountability purposes that may discourage participation of stakeholders	2
Ensuring compliance of Privacy acts (e.g. PHIA-FIPPA)	2
Securing funding and resource	2

Needs Assessment Discussion

In the needs assessment I carried out three sub-studies: a telephone survey on schools' and school divisions' data-collection practices, a mixed method survey on the government's data-collection practices, and focus groups and individual interviews with stakeholders. In this section, I discuss the results of all the three sub-studies together with related literature in terms of data-collection practices regarding persons with disabilities in Manitoba and the key administrative aspects of a TFS, such as purposes, administrator, target youth, information to collect, data collectors, data-collection methods, data sources, timeline of data collection, reporting, confidentiality and privacy, and reliability and validity of data. I also examine the applicability of each of the above in the Manitoban context below. This discussion provides the basis for the TFS model for Manitoba that I propose in the next chapter.

Data-collection Practices Regarding Persons with Disabilities in Manitoba

The needs assessment confirms that no transition follow-up system exists to track individuals with disabilities from school to adulthood in Manitoba. Schools, school divisions, and some government departments, such as Manitoba Education and FSCA, maintain data on persons with disabilities to whom they provide services. The populations of their consumers are different depending on the eligibility criteria (i.e., age, intellectual functioning, medical needs, etc.) for each program. In addition, these agencies do not share their information with each other. Hence, current data collection for persons with disabilities is fragmented at the provincial level and there is no existing means to see the "big picture" as to how youth with disabilities are doing and how well the Manitoba support system is performing for them.

The Manitoba Centre for Health Policy (hereafter MCHP) has assembled data since 1991 from various health services agencies, such as physicians, hospitals, home cares, nursing homes and prescriptions (Manitoba Centre for Health Policy, 2010) and school divisions and child and family service agencies. MCHP is a research organization that analyses the data obtained and provides information to improve the health care system, identifying factors that affect health, such as health care, health programs and policies, income, education, employment and social circumstances. Although the focus of MCHP is on health related issues for the whole Manitoba population, not just transition issues for persons with disabilities, it is a good example of how such a database can be beneficial to the relevant support system and the local practitioners.

Browning et al. (1995) argued that much effort has been made to ensure that transition services are provided for youth with disabilities, but little has been done to see how successful those services are. This applies to Manitoba as well. I found no initiative from either the government or from an agency, to track the transition outcomes of persons with disabilities in Manitoba, except one school and one school division; one school learns the outcomes of its former students with special needs through a coalition with an adult service agency that supports them and one school division invites some of their former students with special needs to speak about their adult life.

Many researchers and professionals have emphasized the use of a TFS as a systematic tool to maintain data collection on the outcomes of persons with disabilities and to obtain useful information for improving programs and services (Blackorby & Edgar, 1992; DeStefano & Wagner, 1992; Elliott et al., 1996; Halpern, 1992; Kochhar-Bryant, 2003a; Thurlow et al., 1998). The needs assessment shows that the need for a

TFS in Manitoba is strongly supported by all the groups of stakeholders, including

persons with disabilities, the families, government representatives, and service providers.

Purposes of TFS

The purpose of a TFS is one of the most critical aspects of developing and

implementing a TFS. The purpose of a TFS determines many other factors, such as what

information to collect, who administrators a TFS, and how to collect data. Therefore, it is

crucial to establish the primary purposes of a TFS prior to examining other aspects of the

TFS. The US states that have implemented TFSs and some researchers suggest potential

purposes for a TFS as follows: (a) to improve transition support programs and services,

(b) to help the development of policies for persons with disabilities, (c) to identify

effective strategies, (d) to identify gaps in services, and (e) to ensure the accountability of

services (Bruininks et al., 1990; Elliott et al., 1996; Erickson et al., 1996; National Post-

School Outcomes Center, 2003; Oakes et al., 2004). The purposes of a TFS that the

participants of the interviews and focus groups suggested included all of these.

The participants of the interviews and focus groups showed a strong consensus in

their suggestions for TFS purposes across the stakeholder groups. The purpose of a TFS

that most of the participants emphasized was to improve the services and support system

for persons with disabilities. It has been two decades since the Transition Planning

Process was introduced 1989, mandating individual transition planning for students with

special needs in Manitoba (Manitoba Education and Training, 1989a). However, a lot of

participants still suggest that the support system for persons with disabilities in Manitoba

is far from being well established to promote successful transition of the individuals to

adult life. Improving the services and support system was also the one that most of the

states (23 out of 25 states) that implemented a TFS in the USA reported as the primary purpose of their database.

Many of the participants of the interviews and focus groups proposed another purpose, which is not strongly identified in other literature: to assist persons with disabilities and their support network to maintain information about themselves. Participants noted that persons with disabilities and their families and support personnel have pieces of information about the individual; however, it is often difficult to share those pieces of information among the support network. In addition, it is interesting to note that, although under the Archives and Recordkeeping Act in Manitoba schools are required to maintain most of the accumulated documents about students throughout their schooling and at least 10 years afterwards, most participants perceived that information about individuals with disabilities was often lost in the transition process from grade to grade, from school to school, and from the school system to adult services (Manitoba Education, 2010). It is not clear whether this is because stakeholders are unaware that the school information about students with special needs is available from the student's school or whether it is not easy for them to obtain the information.

A lot of scholars pointed out that the follow-up/along of individuals with disabilities is critical to ensure the accountability of services (Elliott et al., 1996; Erickson et al., 1996; Owings et al., 1990; Thurlow et al., 2003). However, the participants in this study showed mixed views about using a TFS for the purpose of monitoring the accountability of services. In the interviews and focus groups, only two out of 75 participants suggested that the purpose of a TFS be to examine the accountability. However, in the questionnaires 44 participants (64.7%) indicated that a TFS should be

used to ensure the accountability of services. Some scholars also have noted that using a

TFS as an accountability measure may cause some political challenges (Oakes et al.,

2004). Some participants strongly opposed using a TFS as a measure to evaluate the

performance of services and programs, suggesting that it would make stakeholders feel

threatened and "monitored" and, as a result, it would discourage their participation in a

TFS. Interestingly, the participants who raised concerns about using a TFS for the

accountability of services in the interviews and focus groups were educators.

Additionally, in the questionnaire fewer education professionals who participated, such as

teachers, Student Services administrators, principals, government representatives from

Manitoba Education, and faculty members, supported utilizing a TFS to ensure

accountability of services compared to participants in the other stakeholder groups

(52.6% of the educational professionals vs. 80% of the other participants). It appears that

education professionals tend to be more sensitive about using a TFS as an accountability

measure.

The question therefore arises as to how to use a TFS as an accountability measure

in order to improve the support system without intimidating the stakeholders. I think this

concern can be addressed to some extent by protecting the identities of schools and

agencies in the data collected. In addition, the data collected can be analyzed in large

units, such as by geographical region or at the provincial level, rather than small units,

such as by school or by school division. The performance of schools and service agencies

and the outcomes of individuals with disabilities can also be examined by the

characteristics of programs and services, such as supported employment services,

sheltered workshop, and the amount of supports provided, instead of by individual

agencies.

In summary, the primary purposes of a TFS suggested by the participants and

literature are to improve services and support system, to help persons with disabilities and

their support network maintain consistent information, and to ensure the accountability of

services. In addition, when using a TFS as an accountability measure, it is suggested that

a TFS examines the performance of services and programs in a large unit rather than that

of individual schools and service agencies.

Administrator of TFS

The administrator of a TFS in this study refers to a body that coordinates the

whole TFS, collecting, analyzing, and reporting the data gathered about persons with

disabilities. There is relatively little literature on the administrator of TFSs. According to

the National Post-School Outcomes Center (2003) 25 states implemented a TFS in 2003.

However, other than the report of the National Post-School Outcomes Center, no research

has been conducted on their practice. As a result, there are limited guidelines available

from literature regarding the administrator of a TFS.

The most distinct issue that I identified in the needs assessment regarding the

administrator of a TFS was the involvement of the government. Most participants of the

interviews and focus groups recommended that a government body run a TFS because of

the advantageous position of the government in securing financial resources, controlling

confidentiality of a large amount of information, connecting a wide range of stakeholders

(e.g., persons with disabilities, families, school, service providers, government programs,

etc.), and having actual power to make changes in policies and the support system. In

addition, the survey with the government departments and the telephone survey with schools and Student Services Departments showed that schools and some government programs already maintain comprehensive information of persons with disabilities in the support systems. The most efficient and cost effective way of collecting information seems to be utilizing the existing data-collection practices. Without the government's involvement, it may not be feasible to incorporate the existing data-collection practices into a TFS. Furthermore, many participants recommended that an interdepartmental government body administer a TFS, involving related departments, such as Manitoba Education, FSCA, and Manitoba Health. The participants identified those departments as the main government bodies that are involved in supporting persons with disabilities in the transition process from school to adult life in Manitoba. These departments are also those that the Manitoba transition protocol, the Transition Planning Process, specifies as relevant to assisting persons with disabilities with their transition (Manitoba Education and Training, 1989b).

The National Post-School Outcomes Center (2003) reported that the administering agencies of the 25 states that implemented a TFS varied: 9 (36%) states ran their TFSs by a university organization, 7 (28%) by the state government, and 2 (8%) by a private research organization. In the interviews, focus groups, and the questionnaire, more participants supported government involvement in administering a TFS than those who did not.

Some participants of the interviews and focus groups expressed concerns about the government's administering a TFS, suggesting that the government's own interest might taint the reliability of the data collected. In addition, a few participants noted that

the government's involvement in a TFS could cause some red tape in implementing the

TFS and make it more bureaucratic. I believe that the involvement of the government

would facilitate the data-collection process, once a TFS is established, because, without

its support, engaging schools and government programs in the data-collection process

may be more challenging.

My recommendation is that the TFS administrator in Manitoba be an

interdepartmental government body, including Manitoba Education, FSCA, Manitoba

Health, and other relevant department(s). As recommended by the participants of this

research, I propose that a TFS maintain individual's specific information and allow

persons with disabilities, their families, and the schools and adult service

programs/agencies who provide services to them to have access to the information. This

differs from the approach of MCHP, which addresses the data obtained only as collective

information from which statistical summary information can be produced. Nonetheless,

given the proposed objectives of a TFS, case specific information would be more

effective in improving services and programs than collective data. In order for this to

happen, a TFS should establish an interactive data management system with public

agencies (e.g., schools, VR, SL, etc.). For this reason, a government body, which has

certain authority over public agencies, would be a better entity than non-government one

to administer a TFS.

I recommend that the administering government body coordinate most of the

process of a TFS, including collecting and maintaining data and funding. In addition, the

government entity can develop dual databases: one that maintains individual information

and to which the respective individuals with disabilities and their schools and adult

service programs have access, and another that is designed to manage collective data and be used for statistical analysis and reporting. The government entity may delegate the management of the second database to an independent researcher(s) who is not tied to any specific interest groups in order to reduce any potential biases that may affect the process of data analysis and reporting.

Target Youth for TFS

Although target youth was not one of the key aspects for a TFS that I suggested for the participants, some related issues were raised during the interviews and focus groups. Most of the participants of interviews and focus groups seemed to assume that a TFS would track information of all individuals with disabilities, as opposed to taking a sample. Several participants emphasized that a TFS be universal across the province, whereas two participants suggested sampling for a TFS. According to National Post-School Outcomes Center (2003), 15 out of 25 states (60%) that implemented a TFS collected information of all school leavers with IEPs and the rest took a sample of school leavers with IEPs. Sampling is a cost- and time-efficient approach that allows researchers to identify trends of a large number of people with a small number of representatives (Bruininks et al., 1990). If a TFS is to examine collective information of a large number of individuals with disabilities, its goals may be met by taking a sample of the population. However, a lot of participants in this study stressed the use of a TFS as a tool to maintain the history of individuals' information. In addition, educators and adult service professionals contended that tracking information on their current and former students and consumers would be more useful for them to plan for future services for the individuals and to improve their programs than collective information about other people

with disabilities. If a TFS takes a sample of the population, it would fail to provide

individuals with disabilities and their support network with case-specific information in

most cases.

Some participants suggested that the involvement of stakeholders, such as persons

with disabilities, schools, and adult service professionals, should be mandatory.

Otherwise it would not be easy to secure their cooperation. In addition, it was noted that

if participation was voluntary, the sample size might be limited. However, some

participants argued that persons with disabilities should have the right not to provide their

information. In the USA, 15 of 25 states that implement a TFS collect all school leavers

with IEPs. Although it appears as though individuals' participation in a TFS is mandatory

in those states, the report of National Post-School Outcomes Center (2003) did not clearly

indicate this. The needs assessment shows that in Manitoba, schools and FSCA adult

programs maintain comprehensive information of all their students with IEPs/ITPs and

consumers. Therefore, if a TFS establishes a centralized follow-up system that

incorporates the data-maintenance practices of the schools and the FSCA programs, the

TFS could include most of individuals with disabilities eligible, even if not mandating

their participation in the TFS. However, a problem exists with including those who are

out of the adult support system in a TFS. A lot of persons with disabilities, such as those

with Autism Spectrum Disorder, mild intellectual disabilities, or physical disabilities, are

not qualified for adult service programs in Manitoba, although they may have had

IEPs/ITPs at school. It may be difficult to recruit a large number of those persons with

disabilities who are out of the adult support system for a TFS, unless their participation is

mandatory. If a TFS does not obtain enough representation of those out of the adult

support system, it may result in a failure to examine the real picture of the current status

of persons with disabilities and the support system. Therefore, one of the main challenges

in regard to target youth for a TFS would be facilitating the involvement of persons with

disabilities who are not in the adult support system in the TFS. I do not see any grounds

that justify mandating the participation of people out of the support system in the TFS.

Therefore, a TFS needs to develop strategies to encourage the voluntary participation of

those with disabilities who are out of the adult support system in the TFS. If persons with

disabilities do not see the benefits of participating in a TFS to them, their participation is

likely to be limited.

Whereas I first set the target youth as those who have had IEPs/ITPs at high

school, it appears that there are adults who have not had an IEP/ITP but receive disability

related services from VR, SL, or SMD. This group of individuals with disabilities might

be those whose needs were not recognized as significant from the school system, but

actually experience difficulties in the transition process. If a TFS is to identify service

gaps and to improve the support system for youth with disabilities, this group of persons

with disabilities should be taken into consideration.

Information to Collect

Here I discuss (a) the information that the agencies which support youth with

disabilities in the transition from school to adulthood in Manitoba, maintain about the

individuals (i.e., schools, Student Services departments in school divisions, Manitoba

Education, FSCA), (b) the information that the stakeholders perceive as significant for a

TFS to collect about persons with disabilities, and (c) related literature. I review the

information on persons with disabilities in the three categories of background

information, school information, and postschool information.

Background information.

Some elements of background information were highly valued by the participants

in interviews and focus groups. The background information that the highest number of

the participants of interviews and focus groups identified as significant was individuals'

postsecondary goals. Researchers also have emphasized that postsecondary goals

determine the expectations of the individuals about key adult outcomes, such as

employment, social network, and social roles/responsibilities (Geenen et al., 2003;

Kochhar, 1996; Madaus et al., 2006; Schwartz et al., 2006). However, relatively fewer

schools reported that they documented postsecondary goals of students with special

needs. Another information component highly appreciated by the participants of the

interviews and focus groups was information on individuals' functional skills (e.g., social

skills, communication skills, life skills). Also, the vast majority of the schools and some

FSCA programs examined in this study reported that they maintain this information. A

lot of researchers suggest that the level of functional skills is one of the key factors that

affect the outcomes of individuals with disabilities and itself can be an outcome (Brolin,

1995; Greene, 2003a; Madaus et al., 2006; Schwartz et al., 2006). In addition, a number

of participants of the interviews and focus groups identified self-determination as critical

to look at. In addition, a lot of researchers stressed self-determination as a critical factor

that helps the individual's decision making regarding his or her life and contributes to

positive postschool outcomes (Getzel & Thoma, 2008; Litner et al., 2005; Martin et al.,

2002; Thoma & Getzel, 2005; Webster, 2004; Wehmeyer & Palmer, 2003; Wehmeyer &

Schalock, 2001). However, many schools and government programs in this study

reported that they did not obtain information about the level of self-determination. For

those who recorded the level of self-determination, the most common indicator used was

the individual's need for a substitute decision maker.

There are information components that schools and government programs

involved in this study collected infrequently about individuals with disabilities, such as

household income, specific ethnicity, email address, and postschool contact information.

Some researchers who studied transition outcomes of persons with disabilities identified

household income as an important factor (DeStefano & Wagner, 1992). In addition, some

States in the USA collected information about the household income of students with

special needs for their TFSs (National Post-School Outcomes Center, 2003). However, no

schools and school divisions documented household income of students with special

needs in Manitoba. Among the government programs examined in this study, only EIA

tracked the household income of their consumers. Furthermore, not many participants felt

that household income would be necessary for a TFS to collect information about.

Many researchers have stressed that ethnicity is one of the characteristics that

affect adult outcomes of persons with disabilities and therefore needs to be examined

(Geenen et al., 2003; Gil-Kashiwabara et al., 2007; Trainor, 2007). A number of the

states in the USA that implemented a TFS collected information of individuals' ethnicity

(National Post-School Outcomes Center, 2003). However, it is not a common information

element that schools and government programs in this study maintain. Those that

documented ethnicity of their consumers reported that they examined whether persons

with disabilities were of a visible minority or Aboriginal decent, but did not record specific ethnicities.

Individuals' residential area is also one of the significant factors that affect their life during the transition. The reality that persons with disabilities in rural areas in Manitoba face in the transition process supports the findings of other research showing that persons with disabilities in urban areas achieve better employment outcomes than those in rural areas (Benz et al., 1998; Benz et al., 1997; Blackorby & Wagner, 1996; Dunn & Shumaker, 1997; Harvey, 2002; McDermott et al., 1999; Rabren et al., 2002; Sands & Kozleski, 1994; Wehmeyer & Palmer, 2003). Many participants in rural areas attested that there were limited employment opportunities. Furthermore, participants also noted that lack of educational and social resources and services available was one of the major challenges for individuals with disabilities in rural areas.

With regards to contact information, whereas almost all schools and government programs examined in this study kept the addresses and phone numbers of their consumers, few of them tried to obtain email addresses of individuals with disabilities. As the Internet is becoming one of the most common means of communication, it is highly advisable to obtain individuals' email address, if available. In addition, it appeared that Manitoban schools did not obtain students' postschool contact information at the time of their leaving school. This is understandable given that once students leave school, they are out of the jurisdiction of the school system in Manitoba. On the other hand, in those US states that implement a TFS, most schools obtained postschool contact information of individual students with special needs at the time of leaving school. I assume that this is to track them in order to investigate their postschool outcomes. If

Manitoba is to implement a TFS, it needs to obtain the postschool contact information of those who agree to participate in a TFS prior to their leaving school.

Some other information components in this category appear to be essential for a TFS: age, type of disability, medical/diagnostic information, gender, IQ, interests, and likes/dislikes. These are the key information elements that vast majority of schools and government programs examined in this study maintain, and that the participants of interviews and focus groups and related literature identified as important.

School information.

In the needs assessment, it appears that schools and two government programs, SL and EIA maintain the most school information on individuals with disabilities in Manitoba. The information that schools obtain tends to be more comprehensive and detailed, compared to what the government programs collect. Most schools, SL, and EIA reported that they maintain this information mostly in students' IEPs/ITPs.

Participants of the interviews and focus groups suggested that it would be critical for a TFS to collect information about school programs and other services provided for students. A great deal of research has shown a strong link between school programs provided and adult outcomes of individuals with disabilities (Baer et al., 2003; Benz et al., 2000; Frank & Sitlington, 2000; Harvey, 2002; Izzo et al., 2000; Repetto et al., 2002). It is essential that a TFS examine this information in order to identify effective strategies and factors leading to successful outcomes.

Madaus et al. (2006) suggested that school information should include information on students' support needs, such as demand for accommodations/ modification, assistive equipments, and one-on-one personal assistance. In the telephone

survey and the questionnaire, I did not directly ask about data collection of schools and

school divisions on students' service and support needs. However, a lot of participants

emphasized in the interviews and focus groups that a TFS should track the information on

the service and support needs of students with special needs. In addition, many teachers

reported that they kept information on this for individual students with special needs.

Only a few schools indicated that they record students' and families' satisfaction

with the school programs and other services provided. Along with those schools, SL and

EIA reported that they kept records on their consumers' satisfaction with the programs

that they had at school. This echoes Test et al.'s (2004) findings that only 36.3% of 280

teachers in their study reported that they collected data about students' satisfaction with

programs provided. However, a lot of researchers argue that, when examining school

programs and services provided, the consumers' perceptions of those services need to be

investigated (McDonnell et al., 1995; Siegel & Allinder, 2005; Test et al.). Most of the

participants with disabilities and parents in this study were not satisfied with the high

school programs and services provided for them or their offspring for diverse reasons,

such as a lack of paraprofessional support, inadequate programming to meet their

academic or other needs, and lack of preparation for postsecondary education. Most of

those participants argued that they unsuccessfully raised their voice to change the

programming provided. On the other hand, a lot of teachers in this study contended that,

when developing an IEP, the endorsement of the individual student and their parents is an

essential part of its programming. This disparity in perceptions of programming between

educators and students and their parents demonstrates the need for a TFS to examine

students' and families' satisfaction with the school programs and other services provided.

Most of the schools examined in this study reported that they maintain detailed information about students' outcomes. Student outcomes can be assessed in various ways, such as curriculum-based assessment techniques, standardized tests, and other alternate assessments (Sitlington et al., 2007). Compared to the participants of other stakeholder groups, more teachers and adult service professionals suggested in the questionnaires that a TFS should collect information on student outcomes from alternative assessments (61.3%, 87.1% respectively). The outcomes of alternative assessments tend to be expressed in various formats, such as technical assessment tools, checklists, and observations. In addition, the results of such assessments tend to be presented in technical or descriptive terms. Unlike the teachers and adult service providers who work directly with persons with disabilities, other stakeholders may not appreciate this kind of technical and detailed information of individuals' outcomes as much. Relatively few participants of interviews and focus groups felt that students' suspension history need to be tracked by a TFS.

Postschool information.

Tracking adult outcomes of persons with disabilities provides information on their current status and the capacity to examine the efficacy of the transition services provided to them and, hence, to identify successful approaches (Johnson et al., 1993). It appears that the school system in Manitoba and CSS do not maintain any postschool information of their former students with special needs. The three FSCA programs (i.e., VR, SL, EIA) that support adults with disabilities have information of postschool outcomes of their consumers. The FSCA programs obtained information on all of the outcome domains

(e.g., employment, postsecondary education, residence, etc.) that I examined in the needs assessment.

Among the five postschool outcome domains examined, the ones that the most participants of the interviews and focus groups identified as significant for a TFS to track was adult services and support needs. In addition, the most notable concern identified by the participants about the transition was inadequate adult services for persons with disabilities. Given that a lot of participants of the interviews and focus groups noted the lack of information on services available in their local areas, limited adult services available especially for those with non-intellectual disabilities (e.g. physical, emotional, behavioral disabilities) and for those with intellectual disabilities aged between 18-21, and many persons with disabilities falling through the cracks in the support system, it is understandable that participants highly appreciate information on service and support needs. Researchers note that services and support needs is a variable that is often overlooked (Benz et al., 2000; Flannery et al., 2008; Frank & Sitlington, 2000; Izzo et al., 2000; Lichtenstein & Michaelides, 1993; Sands et al., 1992; Spreat & Conroy, 2001). SL, VR, and EIA reported that whereas they maintain information of the programs and services that their consumers received, none of them kept records on the individuals' satisfaction with the programs and services provided.

Employment outcomes was another domain on which the participants of the interviews and focus groups placed great importance. Employment is also the domain that many studies that investigated adult outcomes of persons with disabilities most frequently examined (Baer et al., 2003; Benz et al., 1997; Blackorby & Wagner, 1996; Coutinho et al., 2006; Geenen et al., 2003; Harvey, 2002; Luecking & Fabian, 2000;

Rabren et al., 2002; Sands & Kozleski, 1994). Lack of job opportunities, the need for

adaptations in employment, extended work experiences without payment and without

guaranteeing a job offer, and limited employment services were the issues that

participants identified regarding employment. The variables in this category that most of

the participants of the interviews and focus groups indicated as significant were

employment status, job satisfaction, and type of job. The survey of government

departments showed that SL, VR, and EIA did not document job satisfaction, whereas

they did track their consumers' employment status and type of job. The fact that the

government programs did not record their consumers' satisfaction with the programs and

services provided, nor their job satisfaction, is consistent with the findings of several

researchers who suggest that subjective aspects of outcomes are often overlooked

(McVilly & Rawlinson, 1998; Turnbull et al., 2003).

Subjective aspects of postschool outcomes, such as psychological wellbeing and

autonomy, are essential in determining an individual's quality of life (McVilly &

Rawlinson, 1998; Turnbull et al., 2003). All three of the FSCA programs (viz. SL, VR,

EIA) that support adults with disabilities reported that they documented their consumers'

psychological wellbeing and autonomy. In addition, it appeared that participants of the

interviews and focus groups also highly appreciated this aspect of adult outcomes: 100%

of them indicated in the summary questionnaire that a TFS should track this information

as postschool outcome.

According to the needs assessment, the participants suggest that a TFS should

track comprehensive information about persons with disabilities. In fact, schools and

some government departments, such as VR, SL, EIA, currently maintain much of the

information that the participants want TFS to collect. The information components that a

TFS obtains about persons with disabilities should include those that schools and the

government programs maintain and stakeholders appreciate.

Data Collectors of TFS

The data collectors of most follow-up/along studies of adult outcomes of persons

with disabilities are independent researchers or trained agents (Benz et al., 1997;

Blackorby & Wagner, 1996; Coutinho et al., 2006; Geenen et al., 2003; Harvey, 2002;

Luecking & Fabian, 2000; Rabren et al., 2002; Sands & Kozleski, 1994). Some

researchers recruited teachers as data-collectors to obtain information from their former

students with disabilities and their families (Baer et al., 2003; Dunn & Shumaker, 1997).

It is suggested that teachers can be suitable agents for data-collection if the purpose of

data-collection is to improve school programs and services (Baer et al., Bruininks et al.,

1990, Test et al., 2004). Persons with disabilities and their families tend to provide their

information more willingly to the teachers with whom they are acquainted. In fact, many

educators and adult service professionals who participated in the interviews and focus

groups suggested that people who work closely with persons with disabilities might be

suitable agents for data-collection. Because teachers are those who manage most school

information of individual students with special needs, they can be a valuable resource in

the data-collection process of a TFS in Manitoba. However, it does not seem plausible to

utilize them in collecting data of adult outcomes of persons with disabilities, given that

teachers already have a very heavy workload in Manitoba. In addition, once students

leave school, they are out of the jurisdiction of the school system in the province. Those

with disabilities and the parents who participated in this study indicated that they did not

have any preference regarding data collectors. Some participants suggested, however, that the data-collecting agents should be knowledgeable and sensitive about issues that persons with disabilities experience. Researchers argue that in order to obtain reliable data, it is essential to train data-collectors/interviewers so that they can effectively communicate with persons with disabilities and obtain authentic data.

Given that schools, VR, SL, EIA, and SMD collect a great deal of information about persons with disabilities in Manitoba, a TFS in Manitoba should utilize the existing data-collection practices. The most efficient and practical system would be for a Manitoba TFS to maintain special education/resource teachers and the counsellors of VR, SL, EIA, and SMD as data collectors for students with special needs and for adults who receive services from these programs respectively. On the other hand, information about adults out of the support system is not routinely collected or maintained by an agency. Therefore, the TFS needs to recruit and train agents as data collectors to obtain information about adults who have had IEPs/ITPs at school but are not in the disabilities support system in Manitoba.

Data-collection Methods for TFS

Various approaches can be considered for TFS data-collection methods. The data-collection means commonly used by follow-up/along studies for persons with disabilities include mail survey, telephone survey, and in-person interview (Bruininks et al., 1990; DeStefano & Wagner, 1992; Van Houten & Hatry, 1987). In addition, electronic surveys and online databases may be adopted for use in a TFS, given the development and availability of technology in recent years. Several factors, such as data-sources, available resources, and the nature and content of the information to be obtained, may be

considered in order to determine optimal data-collection methods (Dillman, 1978; Frey, 1983).

The vast majority of participants of the interviews and focus groups argued that a TFS should take multiple approaches to obtain information of persons with disabilities, which allows data sources to choose their preferred means. Sinclair and Johnson (1989) noted that in-person and telephone interviews are advantageous for obtaining information directly from persons with disabilities because the data collector can provide immediate assistance to them, when necessary, by clarifying questions and confirming their responses. In addition, Bruininks, Thurlow, Lewis, and Larson (1988) suggested that the likelihood of misinterpreting data is lower in in-person interviews and telephone surveys than in mail surveys. For the same reasons, many participants supported the use of in-person and telephone interviews as means for data collection. However, participants pointed out that non-verbal methods, such as mail or electronic surveys, could be advantageous to those with speech disability or hearing impairments, but not to those with a low level of literacy. Whereas some participants proposed that a TFS gather information at the individual's support team meeting, others were concerned that persons with disabilities or their families could be uncomfortable to be frank when their service providers are present or vice versa. In the USA most of the 25 states that implemented a TFS gathered postschool information from persons with disabilities and/or their families, using multiple data-collection methods. Among the means that they used, telephone surveys (22 out of 25 States, 88%) and in-person interviews (14 states, 56%) were the most commonly utilized data-collection methods. In addition, most of the studies that

investigated adult outcomes of persons with disabilities utilized telephone surveys (Baer et al., 2003; Benz et al., 1998; Rabren et al., 2002; Wehmeyer & Palmer, 2003).

Most educators and adult service professionals of the interviews and focus groups strongly suggested that if it is to provide information about persons with disabilities to whom they provide services, a TFS should utilize their existing data-collection practices. The telephone survey with schools and Student Services departments in school divisions and the survey with the government departments showed that schools and the FSCA adult programs maintain extensive information of persons with disabilities. In schools, the case managers of a student with special needs, usually special education/resource teachers, maintain information on the pupils, which they collect from the students, families, and the support team for them through various means, such as in-person meetings, telephone interviews, formal and informal assessments, and IEP/ITP meetings. Most of the school information gathered is contained in IEPs/ITPs, which are annually updated in general, and in other school documents. In the adult support system in Manitoba, the case managers of persons with disabilities in the FSCA adult programs (e.g., SL, VR, EIA) and SMD obtained information from their consumers, families, and the service providers (e.g., employment and residential support services) for the individuals. The educators and adult service professionals contended that incorporating their data-maintenance practices into a TFS would reduce additional work and that it might make the TFS more efficient. In addition, most educators and adult service professionals who participated in the interviews and focus groups preferred the electronic survey or an online database.

Data Sources for TFS

A lot of people often become involved in the transition process of persons with disabilities, including the individual with disabilities, families, school personnel, and other service professionals (Certo et al., 2003; Greene & Kochhar-Bryant, 2003; Noyes & Caren, 2004; Pearman & Elliott, 2004). Naturally, all of those who are involved in the individual's transition process get to share some pieces of information of the individual that are related to his or her background information, school information, or postschool information. Therefore, the question is: from whom should a TFS obtain the data in order to obtain reliable, comprehensive information of persons with disabilities?

A lot of participants of the interviews and focus groups emphasized that, whenever possible, the primary data source about a person with disabilities should be the individual himself/herself. Research has shown that people with mild disabilities can provide reliable information about themselves and their own experiences (Bruininks, Thurlow, Lewis, & Larson, 1988; Hasazi et al., 1985; Zigmond & Thornton, 1985). However, some researchers also note that, when a person has severe intellectual or communicative disability, the reliability of the information that he or she provides can be compromised (Bruininks et al.; Ferguson, 1992; Hasazi et al.; Mertens, 1991). This raises concerns about persons with disabilities being the primary data source for a TFS in Manitoba, since many students who have IEPs/ITPs in Manitoba tend to have extensive support needs, which are often relevant to intellectual and communicative challenges (Manitoba Education, Citizenship, and Youth, 2006).

Some researchers suggest that when an individual has limited capacity to provide reliable information about his or herself, the families may be the suitable alternative or

supplementary data source. Parents/guardians in particular are often the people who

maintain the support for individuals with disabilities and therefore are likely to be

knowledgeable of the past and recent experiences of them (Brolin & Loyd, 2004;

DeStefano & Wagner, 1992; McNair & Rusch, 1991). However, it also needs to be noted

that the degree of the involvement of families in the life of the person with disability may

affect the reliability of the information that they provide about the individual (Mertens &

Mclaughlin, 2005). Additionally, Mertens and Mclaughlin reported that parents or other

primary caregivers are not accurate information sources of the subjective outcomes of the

individuals with disabilities, such as satisfaction, emotions, or perceptions. Most of the

studies that investigated transition outcomes of persons with disabilities obtain their data

directly from the individuals and/or their families (Brown, 2000; Izzo et al., 2000;

Harvey, 2002; Spreat & Conroy, 2001; Walker, 1999; Wehmeyer & Palmer, 2003). In

addition, the vast majority of the states in the USA that implemented a TFS collected

postschool information of people with disabilities from the persons and/or their families

(National Post-School Outcomes Center, 2003).

While noting the significance of using the persons with disabilities and their

families as the key data sources for a TFS, the vast majority of participants of the

interviews and focus groups contended that a TFS should adopt a multi-data-source

approach. The participants argued that, if a TFS gathered information only from persons

with disabilities and families, some critical information which other people in the support

network (e.g., teachers, therapists, adult service providers, etc.) may have can be missed.

For example, some teachers suggested that resource/special education teachers might be

the best data source for school information of students with special needs, because they

are those who are legally responsible for the educational programming for the pupils, while students with special needs and families might not be as knowledgeable of the details of the programs and services provided. In addition, research has reported that persons with disabilities and families are not reliable sources for information about school programs and services (DeStefano & Wagner, 1992). Many participants of the interviews and focus groups recommended that a TFS collect different aspects of the information about individuals with disabilities from different data sources: for example, information on school programs and services from teachers, information on adult services from adult service providers, satisfaction with the services provided and service needs from individuals with disabilities and families.

In summary, a TFS should allow multiple data sources for the information about persons with disabilities, depending on the types of information being collected and the abilities of individuals with disabilities and their support network to provide accurate information.

Timeline of Data Collection for TFS

There is very little literature that addresses the timeline of collecting school information about persons with disabilities for a TFS. Most of the studies that examined adult outcomes of persons with disabilities gathered school information with postschool information after the individuals left school (Brown, 2000; Benz et al., 1997; Frank & Sitlington, 2000; Halpern, 1993; Izzo et al., 2000; Kochhar-Bryant, 2003a; Spreat & Conroy, 2001). The National Post-School Outcomes Center (2003) did not report when and how often those states that implemented a TFS collected school information of persons with disabilities. Researchers caution that if the length between school leaving

and data collection on school information increases, the accuracy of the data collected

tends to decrease because those who provide information rely more on their memory or

old documents available (Halpern, 1990; Johnson et al., 1993).

Most participants of the interviews and focus groups, except teachers and

principals, proposed that a TFS gather school information about individual students with

special needs more than once. Most of the teachers and principals who participated

supported the idea of one time data collection of school information, expressing concerns

about the additional work to school personnel that the data-collection might cause. Some

of them changed their opinion, however, after discussing data-collection methods later in

the interviews and focus groups. They indicated that if teachers were to incorporate the

information in students' IEPs/ITPs into a TFS, as opposed to gathering new information

for the TFS, multiple data collection for school information might not be too great a

burden to teachers. However, if a TFS is to utilize IEPs/ITPs as primary data collection

tool, annual data collection might be suitable because IEPs/ITPs are usually updated

yearly.

Most participants of the interviews and focus groups, who supported multiple data

collection of school information, suggested that a TFS collect school information about

students with special needs "in the beginning of high school". In Manitoba, schools are

encouraged to begin individualized transition planning of students with special needs at

age 16, whereas the Bridging to Adulthood, the latest transition support document,

suggests that individualized transition planning is initiated earlier at age 14 (Healthy

Child Manitoba, 2008; Manitoba Education and Training, 1998b). Supposing that

individual transition planning for students with special needs begins at age 14, the first

data collection at age 16 may be reasonable, documenting students' outcomes and school

programs and services provided since age 14.

With regard to postschool information, most of the states (17 out of 25, or 68%)

that implemented a TFS in the USA reported that they collected information on adult

outcomes of persons with disabilities only once, the timeline of the follow-up by each

state not being indicated (National Post-School Outcomes Center, 2003). However, many

researchers recommend that adult outcomes be tracked more than once, noting that

follow-along procedures help better examine the relationships between services provided

and outcomes (Darrow & Clark, 1992; Greene & Kochhar-Bryant, 2003; Halpern, 1990;

Johnson et al., 1993). In addition, the vast majority of participants of the interviews and

focus groups across stakeholder groups supported multiple data collection for postschool

information. Nonetheless, their preference for frequency of data collection varied, such as

every 6 months, annually, twice, and three times. Some participants argued that multiple

data collection would help track many changes that persons with disabilities experience

after leaving school and prevent them from falling through cracks of the support system

by identifying their support needs and issues more frequently. Noting that many adult

programs update their service plans for their customers yearly, some participants argued

that annual data collection for postschool outcomes might be adequate. In addition,

participants indicated in the questionnaire that one year after leaving school was a critical

point of time for a TFS to track postschool outcomes of individuals with disabilities.

Additionally, Bruininks et al. (1990) warned that as time goes on after leaving school,

individuals are less likely to be willing to participate in the follow-up/along and more

likely to be out of contact.

It is pertinent to ask how long a TFS should track information of an individual with a disability. It would be ideal if a life-long database could be set up for persons with disabilities. However, since many life changes occur to persons with disabilities during the transition period from school to adult life and their adjustment to adulthood in this time critically affects the rest of their life, I have decided to develop a TFS model which focuses on the transition period. The difficulty with this approach is that apparently there is no literature that suggests a range of time it may take persons with disabilities to "settle down" to adult life after leaving school. Instead, I investigated the timeline that the follow-up/along studies of persons with disabilities took for data collection on postschool information by reviewing 18 studies which indicated the timeline of their data collection (see Appendix Y for the list of the follow-up/along studies). The data-collection timeline of the follow-up/along studies vary from 3 months after school leaving to 10 years after school leaving. The studies' average term between school leaving and data-collection of postschool outcomes was 3.3 years. However, in my experience as an employment support worker for persons with disabilities in Manitoba and the experiences of the persons with disabilities who participated in this study, it takes a few years for individuals with disabilities to adjust to adult life. Therefore, I suggest that a TFS in Manitoba track persons with disabilities for four years after they leave school. Once a TFS is implemented, the results may identify the trend of postschool outcomes of persons with disabilities as to how soon they adjust to adult life and then the timeline for data-collection may be modified accordingly.

TFS Reporting

The timelines for TFS reporting that the participants proposed in the interviews and focus groups were consistent with those that they indicated in the questionnaire. The frequency most commonly proposed for TFS reporting was annual reporting (roughly half of the participants), followed by bi-annual reporting. As some participant acknowledged, however, it would take extensive amounts of time to collect and analyze great volumes of data about persons with disabilities. In addition, it was argued that the time between TFS reports be long enough to see meaningful changes in the results. It would take some time for schools and other support agencies to make necessary changes to their programs. Hence, annual reporting may be impractical and overwhelming given limited resources. Therefore, I propose that TFS reports be provided every three years. In the questionnaire, 56 of 66 participants (84.8%) indicated in the questionnaire that they suggest frequent TFS reporting as often as every three years or more often.

In the questionnaire, participants suggested that TFS reports present the results by province (55 participants out of 68, 80.9%), and by school divisions (50, 73.5%). Similarly, most of the states that implemented a TFS in the USA indicated that their reports were provided at the state level (22 out of 25 States, 88%) and at the district level (19, 76%) (National Post-School Outcomes Center, 2003).

DeStefano and Wagner (1992) suggested some comparisons that can be made in reporting follow-up studies of adult outcomes of persons with disabilities: (a) comparisons among youth in different disability categories; (b) comparisons of the same group over time; and (c) cross-unit comparisons (i.e. cross-school, cross-district, cross-program). Given that some participants of this study expressed concerns about utilizing a

TFS as a tool to evaluate programs, it is likely that publishing the performance comparisons of school divisions, schools and adult service agencies could cause some conflicts among stakeholders, making some partners feel threatened. In addition, some participants suggested that TFS reports be tailored to their audiences based on their needs for certain information. Therefore, I suggest that TFS reports present the results in a more neutral way, such as by province and by geographical region, and instead the TFS administrator should confidentially provide school divisions, schools, and individual agencies with reports on their own performance so that they can refer to the data in improving their programs.

As found by DeStefano and Wagner (1992), some participants of this study suggested that TFS reports provide recommendations along with the results. DeStefano and Wagner also recommend that TFS reports indicate factors that may affect the results, such as changes of policies, demographics, and economic conditions.

Confidentiality and Privacy

A TFS should develop measures that protect the confidentiality and privacy of individuals with disabilities. Participants emphasized that a TFS should gather enough data about persons with disabilities to allow the analysis to generate meaningful information; however, the data should be collected on a need-to-know basis. In addition, the administrator of a TFS should ensure the security of the data collected in the process of data collection and management.

Following the Privacy Acts, it is critical to obtain informed consent from the persons with disabilities or, if applicable, from their legal guardians or substitute decision makers. According to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act

(FIPPA), however, public bodies (e.g. schools and government adult service programs) have the right to access certain information about the individuals for whom they provide services for the purpose of service improvement even without permission from the individuals (Manitoba Government, 2010). A TFS needs to distinguish personal information that the schools and other public agencies can utilize under the information release agreement from the data that they must obtain consent from legitimate entities in order to use (Manitoba Government, 2010; Manitoba Health, 2010). Adults with disabilities or legal guardians of children with disabilities have the right to give their consent.

Reliability and Validity of Data

The reliability and validity of data need to be addressed when collecting individuals' information for a TFS. Participants suggested that it could be challenging to obtain reliable and valid data for a TFS. They noted several threats to the reliability of the information collected. If persons with disabilities are asked to provide information when others, such as parents and support workers, are present, their responses may differ from their real perceptions. In addition, depending on who provides the data, the picture presented may be altered, because different people might perceive a situation differently. Also, it is critical to choose a data-collection method that meets the communication needs of the person who is providing the information. For example, if a person who has difficulty with verbal communication is to provide information by telephone, the reliability and validity of the information obtained can be significantly compromised. Benz et al. (2000) emphasized the significance of providing clear guidelines to data-collectors and training them to increase the reliability of the data. In addition, the

reliability and validity of the data to be collected can be improved by utilizing a

questionnaire written in plain language and user-friendly format, minimizing sensitive

questions, and avoiding questions that rely on memory or about which the respondents

may not be knowledgeable (Bruininks et al., 1990; Borg & Gall, 1983; Fowler, 1984;

Van Houten & Hatry, 1987).

Failing to obtain sufficient responses in a survey may cause a significant bias in

the results (Dillman, 1978; Fowler, 1984; Williams & MacDonald, 1986). The factors

that may affect the response rate are respondents' interest in the topic, the data-collection

method, the questionnaire format, the nature and severity of respondents' disabilities, and

the use of incentives (Bruininks et al., 1990; DeStefano & Wagner, 1992). Some of the

states that implemented TFSs in the USA utilized strategies to increase the response rate

as follows: (a) obtaining consent for the future contact for the follow-up from the

individuals with disabilities prior to school leaving; (b) making pre-contacts prior to the

follow-up; (c) allowing various means to provide information; (d) updating contact

information using internet white pages or adult service agencies database; and (e)

recruiting Aboriginal data collectors to encourage the participation of Aboriginal youth

with disabilities (National Post-School Outcomes Center, 2003). All these strategies need

to be considered in developing a TFS in Manitoba.

Stage 2: Transition Follow-up System Model Development

Based on the results of the needs assessment discussed in the previous section, I

developed a TFS model. This chapter presents the TFS model (see Results and

Discussion sections of the needs assessment for the rationale behind determining the

specifics of the model). Figure 4 depicts the overall process of the TFS administration,

including the process of data collection and maintenance, as well as that of data analysis

and reporting. The TFS establishes a dual database system: one that maintains individual

specific information and to which individuals with disabilities and their schools and adult

service programs have access to their respective information, and another that manages

collective data to be used for statistical analysis and reporting. The data about individuals

with disabilities are gathered and maintained in the TFS database (individual specific

information, Figure 4). The information gathered in this way is sent to another TFS

database (collective information, Figure 4) that collectively analyses the data and reports

the results to the public, individuals with disabilities, the school system and the adult

support system. I describe the TFS model (hereafter the TFS) below in detail in terms of

its scope, purposes, administrator, target youth, information to collect, data collectors,

data-collection methods, data sources, timeline of data collection, reporting,

confidentiality and privacy, and reliability and validity of data.

Scope

The TFS is a province-wide database that collects and maintains information

about youth with disabilities in the transition from school to adult life. In Canada, the

provinces and the territories maintain jurisdiction. All the schools and social services in

Manitoba, which include transition services for persons with disabilities, are under the

jurisdiction of the province. Therefore, this TFS tracks the transition services of youth

with disabilities in Manitoba.

Purposes

The primary purposes of the TFS are as follows:

(a) to help the province of Manitoba have accurate, useful information about the outcomes and experiences of youth with disabilities in transition,

(b) to ensure the accountability of services, and

(c) to improve services and the support system for youth with disabilities.

Administrator

The administrator of the TFS is to be an interdepartmental unit of the Manitoba government that involves various departments related to the transition process and support services of persons with disabilities, such as Manitoba Education, FSCA, and Manitoba Health. While the TFS administrator is the party who primarily responsible for implementing the TFS, the Advisory Board provides the administrator with consultation and oversight to ensure due process. The advisory board consists of representatives of various stakeholders, such as persons with disabilities, families, schools, adult service professionals, and the government. The administrator delegates the management of the second database, data analysis and reporting to an independent researcher(s) in order to reduce any potential biases that may be caused.

Figure 4. Overview of TFS Administration

TFS Administrator (Interdepartmental Government)	Advisory Board	Independent Researchers

Data Collection and Maintenance   **Data Analysis and Reporting**

Target Youth   **Data Sources**

A
Students

Students with special needs & families

Case managers (school teachers)

Input

Output

TFS Database

Individual Specific Information

B
Adults in Support System

Individuals with disabilities

Counsellors of gov. programs

C
Adults out of Support System

Individuals with disabilities

TFS Database

Collective Information

Public

Individuals with disabilities

Schools and school divisions

Gov. adult programs and adult service agencies

Target Youth

The target youth for TFS includes (see Figure 5):

(a) Students with an IEP/ITP who are 16 years old or older,

(b) Adults with disabilities in the support system: (i) adults who have had an IEP/ITP and have left high school within the past 4 years and who receive services from Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), Supported Living (SL), Employment and Income Assistance (EIA), or Society for Manitobans with Disabilities (SMD) or from the agencies that these programs delegate services to (hereafter adults with disabilities in the support system)[4] and (ii) adults who have not had an IEP/ITP and have left high school within the past 4 years who receive services from VR, SL, or SMD, or from the agencies that these programs delegate services to and

(c) Adults with disabilities out of the support system: Adults who have had an IEP/ITP and have left high school within the past 4 years who do not receive any services from VR, SL, EIA, or SMD, or from the agencies that these programs delegate services to.

The TFS gathers information for all students with an IEP or ITP and all adults with disabilities in the support system; however the participation of adults with disabilities out of the support system is on a voluntary basis. The TFS may not include the First Nations students attending schools that are federally funded, because they fall outside the jurisdiction of the Manitoba government. In order to include those students in the TFS, the government needs to establish a coalition with the First Nations in Manitoba.

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[4] VR is a government program for adults with various disabilities and SL is for adults with intellectual disabilities. SMD is a non-government program to which the Manitoba government delegates services for persons with physical disabilities.

The TFS recruits adults with disabilities out of the support system prior to their school leaving, obtaining their postschool contact information if they agree to participate. These individuals are usually identifiable before they leave school, because the referral process for VR, SL, and SMD is undertaken while they are at school.

Information to Collect

The information components that the TFS examines about the target youth are categorized by background information, school information, and postschool information (see Tables 41, 42, & 43). TFS collects background information and school information for students with special needs and background information and postschool information for adults with disabilities in the support system and out of the support system both (see Figure 5).

The TFS needs to clarify the definitions of all terms (e.g., type of disabilities, medical diagnosis, social skills, etc.) used when discussing the information components and to establish a standard information template for the data collection and management. Input from stakeholders in the process is crucial, especially those such as teachers and adult program counsellors, who are currently involved in the data management for persons with disabilities. The TFS needs to form an advisory to committee to carry out this task. Existing definitions and information indicators utilized in theoretical and empirical research can provide guidelines in this regard.

Figure 5. TFS Data-collection Process

Data Sources	Information	Data Collectors	
A **Students**	Support network (teachers, social workers, therapists)	• Background information • School information	Case managers (school teachers) → Annually
	Students with special needs & families	• Students' and parents' satisfaction with school programs/services	TFS agents → Once
B **Adults in Support System**	Support network (counselors, social workers, caregivers)	• Background information • Postschool information	Counselors of Gov programs (VR, SL, EIA) & MSD → Annually
	Individuals with disabilities	• Individuals' (if not possible, caregiver's or advocate's) satisfaction with postschool programs/services	TFS agents → Once
C **Adults out of Support System**	Individuals with disabilities	• Background information • Postschool information • Individuals' satisfaction with postschool programs/services	TFS agents → Twice

All flowing into: **TFS**

Table 41

Background Information Components to Collect for TFS

Category	Information Components to Collect
Background Information	Individual's characteristics
	Name
	Age
	Type of disability
	Health/medical information
	Gender
	IQ (if available)
	Ethnicity
	Postsecondary goals
	Interests, likes/dislikes
	Social skills
	Communication skills
	Functional academic skills
	Life skills
	Level of self-determination
	Residential arrangement
	Contact information
	Contact information of individual
	Contact information of parents/caregivers/legal guardians

Table 42

School Information Components to Collect for TFS

Category	Information Components to Collect
School Information	Programs provided and Support Needs
	Academic courses taken
	Clinical services provided
	Assistive, technological equipments provided
	Educational placement
	Student specific life skills training and courses taken
	Work experiences done
	Vocational training and courses taken
	Age of a student when his or her IEP or ITP first addresses transition issues
	Extracurricular activities participated in
	Service and support needs
	Student Outcomes and Assessments
	Individual Education Plan goals and outcomes
	Attendance
	Grade level equivalencies in reading, writing, math
	Diploma or certificate awarded
	Modified/adapted assessment results
	School completion status
	Averages in specific courses
	Provincial standards test scores

Table 42

School Information Components to Collect for TFS (Continued)

Category	Information Components to Collect
School Information	Satisfaction with school programs/services provided
	Student satisfaction
	Parent satisfaction

Table 43

Postschool Information Components to Collect for TFS

Category	Information Components to Collect
Postschool Information	Employment Outcomes
	Employment status
	Job satisfaction
	Type of jobs
	Job stability
	Work hours
	Financial status
	Job benefits
	Job acquisition method
	Postsecondary Education Outcomes
	Type of educational program
	Field of study
	Full/part-time enrolment

Table 43

Postschool Information Components to Collect for TFS (Continued)

Category	Information Components to Collect
Postschool Information	Residential Outcomes
	Living status
	Marital status
	Contribution to living expense
	Other Aspects of Life
	Psychological wellbeing/autonomy
	Community living
	Social network
	Physical wellbeing
	Adult Program/Service Needs
	Service/support needs
	Services received
	Satisfaction with postschool programs/services provided
	Individual's satisfaction

Data Collectors

The TFS administrator recruits different data collectors for the three groups of target youth (see Table 44, Figure 5). The vast majority of the target youth are already in the Manitoba support system (i.e., enrolled in a school or receiving services from one of the adult service programs, such as VR, SL, EIA, and MSD). In addition, schools and

adult service programs maintain most of the information components presented above for

the TFS to collect about persons with disabilities. Therefore, the TFS utilizes the existing

data-management practices of schools and the adult service programs. Schools gather

background information and school information about their students with special needs.

Adult service programs gather background information and postschool information about

their consumers with disabilities. Special education/resource teachers and counsellors of

the adult service programs, who maintain data about their students or consumers with

disabilities, may be suitable agents for data-collection in schools and adult service

programs respectively. On the other hand, the TFS needs to train and use its own agents

to collect information about adults with disabilities out of the support system. The TFS

administrator may recruit agents of a visible minority and or Aboriginal descent for the

regions where the population of visible minorities or Aboriginals is large. In addition, the

TFS utilizes its own agents to collect information on the satisfaction of persons with

disabilities and the parents with school programs/services or adult programs/services

provided, in order for them to freely express their perceptions.

Table 44

Data Collectors for Target Youth

Target Youth	Data Collectors	
	Organization	Staff
Students with special needs	Schools	Special education/resource teachers and TFS agents
Adults in the support system	VR, SL, EIA, SMD	Counsellors and TFS agents
Adults not in the support system		TFS agents

Data-collection Methods

The TFS adopts various data-collection methods, such as in-person interviews, telephone/electronic/mail surveys, and team meetings (Table 45). Observation and formal and informal assessments which occur during school are also included.

Table 45

Data-collection Methods for Target Youth

Target Youth	Data Collector		Data-collection Methods
Students with special needs	School staff	*some of:*	in-person interviews, telephone surveys, electronic correspondence, team meetings, observation, formal + informal assessments, document review, database
	TFS agents	*choice of:*	in-person interviews, telephone surveys, electronic correspondence, mail surveys
Adults in the support system	Counsellors	*some of:*	in-person interviews, telephone surveys, electronic correspondence, team meetings, document review, database
	TFS agents	*choice of:*	in-person interviews, telephone surveys, electronic correspondence, mail surveys
Adults not in support system	TFS agents	*choice of:*	in-person interviews, telephone surveys, electronic correspondence, mail surveys

Note. Choice of: refers to participant's choice. Some schools and government agencies may use all of these methods

When collecting information on students with special needs and adults in the support system, the TFS asks data collectors (i.e., schools and the adult service programs) to determine the most suitable data-collection methods for individual cases. When collecting information on adults with disabilities out of the support system, on the other hand, TFS should allow individuals with disabilities to choose their preferred method to provide information. The TFS utilizes an online database where data collectors input information about persons with disabilities.

I recommend that schools and the adult service programs modify the formats of IEPs/ITPs so that the information forms are in a format that is compatible with the information template of the TFS, and so that all the information components required for the TFS are part of the information that they routinely collect. Although schools and the adult service programs already maintain comprehensive information about persons with disabilities, a lot of the information is kept as anecdotal data and the formats that they use for information management differ considerably from school to school and program to program across the province. For this reason, extensive modification may be necessary to make the formats of IEPs/ITPs and client information forms applicable to a TFS. However, once this initial transformation is completed, and teachers and the counsellors of adult service programs/agencies become familiar with the standard template, the benefits that they can obtain from the information generated from the TFS would outweigh the initial cost.

I also recommend that the data collectors (teachers, counsellors of the adult service programs, and the trained TFS agents) input data directly into the TFS database, preferably via a secure online data-entry portal.

Data Sources

The primary data sources for TFS are the case managers of students with IEPs/ITPs (usually Special Education/Resource teachers), counsellors of adult service programs for adults with disabilities in the support system, and adults with disabilities out of the support system. The case managers of students with IEPs/ITPs and the counsellors of adults with disabilities in the support system are those who maintain comprehensive information about the individuals and to whom the individuals give permission to release their information when needed for the purpose of service improvement by FIPPA. These agents obtain their information from the persons with disabilities and their support network, such as families, educators, and other support personnel. On the other hand, adults with disabilities out of the support system who are not eligible for the service programs tend to lead their life more independently and are more capable to provide reliable, comprehensive information about themselves, compared to students with special needs and adults with disabilities in the support system. Therefore, for this group of target youth, individuals with disabilities themselves are the primary data source for the TFS. The TFS collects information about adults with disabilities out of the support system only from the individuals, unless they suggest otherwise.

Timeline of Data Collection

The TFS requires different timelines for data collection depending on the target youth and the information to be collected (see Table 46. and Figure 5). Because most schools and the adult service programs update information on their students with special needs and consumers with disabilities annually, TFS also collects information on students with special needs and adults with disabilities in the support system on an annual basis.

Table 46

Data-collection Timelines for each individual with disability

Target Youth	Data Collector	Information	Timeline for one individual
Students with special needs	School	▪ Background information ▪ School information	Annually: from age 16 to school leaving
	TFS agent	▪ Student's and parents' satisfaction with school programs/services	Once: when leaving school
Adults in support system	Adult program	▪ Background information ▪ Postschool information	Annually: for 4 years from school leaving
	TFS agent	▪ Individual's satisfaction with postschool programs/services	Once: 4 years after school leaving
Adults out of support system	TFS agent	▪ Background information ▪ Postschool information ▪ Individual's satisfaction with programs/services	Twice: 1 year and 4 years after school leaving

On the other hand, TFS agents often need to meet individual students and persons with disabilities in-person in order to collect the consumers' satisfaction with programs/ services provided, which requires a great deal of time and resources. Therefore, TFS

gathers information on consumers' satisfaction with programs/services provided only once for each individual due to the extensive resources required for this aspect of data collection. However, it should be noted that the TFS collects information on individuals' service/support needs annually as part of school and postschool information. In addition, the TFS collects information about adults with disabilities out of the support system twice for each individual. Given that adults with disabilities out of the support system do not receive any supports from the adult service programs and that there is no current infrastructure to collect information about them, annual data collection might be overwhelming for them.

Reporting

The TFS issues reports every 3 years. The TFS reports its results by three ways:

(a) online reports that are available to the public

(b) executive summary reports that are distributed to the individuals with disabilities whose information is reflected in the report

(c) confidential reports that are distributed to school divisions, schools, and adult service programs and agencies

The online reports and executive summary reports present TFS results, analyzed by the province and by geographical regions (e.g., Winnipeg, Westman, Interlake, Northern, etc.). On the other hand, confidential reports provide individual school divisions, schools, and adult services and agencies with the results of their own students or consumers with disabilities so that they can examine the outcomes of their own practices and improve their programs accordingly. In addition, online reports need to be available in different

formats, such as CDs, audio files and documents in Braille. Table 47 presents the

information that each type of report may include.

Table 47

Information of TFS Reports

Reports	Report recipients	Information to Report
Online Report	Public	▪ Demographic trends of persons with disabilities ▪ Student outcomes and adult outcomes ▪ Successful approaches and programs ▪ Positive/negative factors to adult outcomes ▪ Postsecondary options and local resources available ▪ Gaps in services ▪ Issues related to the transition ▪ Recommendations
Executive Summary Report	Individuals with disabilities	▪ Executive summary of the online report listed above
Confidential Report	Individual schools, school divisions, adult service programs/agencies	▪ Demographic trends of persons with disabilities ▪ Student outcomes and adult outcomes

Confidentiality and Privacy

A TFS needs to develop regulations on the access to individuals' data and to utilize security safeguards, such as a coding system (e.g., MET numbers, VR numbers, agency/region codes, etc.), firewalls, passwords, and so on. Under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA) and the Personal Health Information Act (PHIA), in order to obtain information that requires permission from the individual or their parents/legal guardians (if they are younger than the age of majority), the TFS needs to ensure that it obtains informed consent from legitimate entities (Manitoba Government, 2010; Manitoba Health, 2010). In addition, under FIPPA and PHIA, individuals with disabilities, the parents/legal guardians of those who are younger than the age of majority, and schools and government adult service programs must be able to access information that pertains directly to them in the TFS database. On the other hand, the information that a TFS maintains about adults with disabilities out of the support system should be accessible only to those individuals, since it is deemed that they do not have any affiliation with public bodies.

Reliability and Validity of Data

The measures that the TFS uses to increase the reliability and validity of data include the following:

1. Delegating analyzing and reporting the results of TFS to independent researchers. In order to reduce any bias that may occur in the process of analyzing and reporting the data collected, the TFS entrusts the task to an independent researcher(s) who does not have a tie to any specific entity.

2. Utilizing schools and the adult service programs as data collectors. In reality, teachers and the counsellors of the adult service programs are familiar with the individuals to whom they provide services and have connections with the support network of those individuals. This places schools and the adult service programs in a good position as data collectors to verify the authenticity and validity of the data collected. The involvement of schools and the adult service programs in the programs/services provided for individuals with disabilities may affect their objectivity in perceiving or interpreting the individuals' situations. However, the TFS can reduce this potential bias by obtaining fact-based information from schools and the adult service programs. Instead, TFS agents who do not have any relationship with the individuals or their support network collect subjective information, such as the satisfaction with the programs/services provided, directly from individuals with disabilities.

3. Training agents for data collection. TFS agents are to communicate with persons with disabilities directly or indirectly. The TFS trains the agents so that they can effectively communicate with persons who have communicative and intellectual challenges and can be knowledgeable and sensitive to the issues that persons with disabilities experience.

4. Providing teachers and the counsellors of the adult service programs with guidelines regarding data collection. In order to increase the consistency of data collection, with the cooperation of an advisory committee consisting of the representatives from key stakeholder groups, the TFS determines clear definitions

of the key terms used in the questionnaire/survey, the indicators of information

components, and the level of individuals' abilities or support needs.

5. Utilizing questionnaires written in plain language and user-friendly format. The

    questions in questionnaires or interviews need to be simple and clear.

Stage 3: Final Review Meeting

I invited all the participants of my research to attend a final review meeting in

order to receive their feedback on the Transition Follow System (TFS) model that I

developed (described in the previous section, Stage 2). Twelve participants attended this

meeting: one parent, one advocate, two Student Services administrators, three adult

services professionals, and five government representatives. At this meeting, after

presenting the TFS model to the attendees, I asked them to form two small groups of six,

to review the model in terms of strengths, concerns and barriers, and suggestions, and to

summarize their discussions on the discussion forms provided (see Appendix X). I

obtained qualitative data from (a) the summary reports that the small groups provided

about their discussions and (b) my field notes that I recorded during and immediately

after the meeting with my interpretations and impressions of their perceptions, attitudes,

responses, and the general atmosphere at the meeting. The stakeholders who attended this

meeting actively engaged in the discussions, reviewing the TFS model proposed. In this

section, I discuss their perspectives on the TFS proposed in terms of strengths, concerns

and barriers, and suggestions below.

Strengths of TFS Model

The strengths that the stakeholders noted about the model were consistent with the

aspects that most of the participants of the needs assessments suggested for a TFS in

Manitoba. Among the strengths noted, four were identified as advantageous aspects by both of the small groups. Some stakeholders at the meeting agreed that an interdepartmental approach to administering a TFS was legitimate, given that the transition planning process for youth with disabilities involves various government departments, such as Manitoba Education, FSCA, Manitoba Health, and Justice. In addition, the stakeholders at the meeting suggested that the Early Development Instrument (EDI) run by Healthy Child Manitoba might be an example of how an interdepartmental data-collection model might work. Healthy Child Manitoba's EDI is "an annual questionnaire measuring Kindergarten children's 'readiness for school' across several areas of child development" (Healthy Child Manitoba, 2010).

In particular, the stakeholders emphasized the need to establish a consistent, standard information template that schools and other support programs that support persons with disabilities can share. They also suggested that the TFS administrator and its advisory committee might refer to the Participation and Activity Limitation Survey (PALS) as an exemplar when developing such a template. The PALS is a survey that Statistics Canada conducts every five years on Canadians (adults and children) with a disability or health condition that limits their daily activities (Statistics Canada, 2010). In addition, acknowledging that a lot of individuals with disabilities fall through the cracks after leaving high school, the stakeholders appreciated that a TFS should track adults with disabilities who are out of the support system. When sharing the results of their discussions as a whole group, no conflicting points of view appeared among the stakeholders about the strengths of the model suggested.

Concerns and Barriers of TFS Model

The stakeholders who attended the final review meeting discussed some concerns and potential barriers regarding implementing the TFS model proposed. There were two aspects that both of the discussion groups identified as concerns: obtaining consent from adults with disabilities to provide their information and potential intervention from the government in the data management. Firstly, I agree that it may be challenging to facilitate the participation of adults with disabilities who are not in the support system in the TFS. I recommend that the TFS recruit this group of target youth when they are students with IEPs/ITPs and before they leave high school by asking them for their permission for future contact for data collection. Because the referrals for adult services are made for the eligible students in the last year of school, those who do not qualify for adult programs and services are identifiable before they leave school. If they do not provide future contact, it would be almost impossible to track them once they leave school. Although this target group is relatively small, it is critical for the TFS to secure enough representation of this population, because they are the ones who are likely falling through the cracks of the Manitoba support system in the transition process. Unlike students with special needs and adults with disabilities in the support system, adults with disabilities out of the support system do not or cannot take advantage of existing service programs. Some of these adults may be motivated to participate, if they see the TFS as a tool for improving the support system for persons with disabilities and especially for identifying the service needs of adults with disabilities who are not currently in the support system. Without obvious incentives or benefits to them, however, many of these adults may not be willing to provide their information to the TFS.

The stakeholders also noted that some adults in the support system might refuse to participate in the TFS. As mentioned in the previous section, however, even without the individuals' permission, government adult programs can still use some of their information for their programming purposes under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA) as long as they do not reveal individuals' identities in any form of reports (Manitoba Government, 2010). For those who do not agree to participate in the TFS, the TFS needs to limit its attention to only the information that is available under FIPPA.

The potential for manipulation from the government in carrying out the TFS was also one of the issues that some participants raised in the needs assessment. Although I proposed in the TFS model that the administrating interdepartmental body of the TFS delegate the task of data analysis and reporting to independent researchers for fair data management, the stakeholders still felt that governmental interference might occur. In order to further secure checks and balances, I recommend that the TFS have an Advisory Board, which consists of representatives not only from the government, but also from other various stakeholder groups, such as self-advocacy organization of persons with disabilities, schools, and non-government service agencies, in the same manner as Manitoba Centre for Health Policy (MCHP) does.

One of the concerns raised by one group was the over-collection of information about individuals with disabilities. It was suggested that the information components that I recommended in the model for a TFS to collect could be too extensive, especially for those persons with disabilities whose support needs are not substantial. If a TFS is to be used only for services programming for individuals, the details and degree of information

may need to be adapted depending on the persons' specific cases. However, most

participants of the needs assessment argued that a TFS should provide information that

could help improve programs and services not only for specific individuals, but also the

support system in general. If a TFS gathers selective information depending on

individuals, it would make it difficult to identify factors that affect outcomes and

relations between the variables. In addition, in the needs assessment, the majority of the

participants of focus groups and individual interviews agreed that to be useful in program

development and worth sharing among support networks, comprehensive and specific

information should be available. When I pointed out this perspective to the whole group,

most of the stakeholders at the meeting were supportive. Nevertheless, it would be still

challenging to a TFS to collect comprehensive, useful, and yet manageable data about

individuals with disabilities.

There were two issues raised from the same discussion group regarding the TFS

model as an accountability measure. Firstly, the proposed TFS would have limited use as

a measure of accountability because there would be no public access to the reports on the

performance of specific schools, programs, or agencies. Indeed, I propose that the TFS

examines the accountability of transition services only on the provincial and geographical

regional levels, protecting the identities of individual agencies from the performance

reports. It is also true that when developing the TFS model I put greater emphasis on the

use of the TFS as a tool for providing information useful for the improvement of

programs and services than as an evaluative and monitoring measure. I believe that

identifying the factors of successful programs and services is more beneficial in

improving the support system than identifying specific programs with poor performance.

Publicizing the outcomes of individual agencies may cause unnecessary conflicts between the stakeholders. Secondly, the discussion group argued that transition outcomes of individuals with disabilities are dependent on schools and communities and if either one is not supportive, the outcomes cannot be successful. I agree with this perspective. In fact, this is part of my rationale that the TFS should not be used as evaluative or monitoring measure of the performance of individual agencies. There are so many factors that can affect individuals' transition that examining the outcomes of individual agencies without considering all the possible factors can be very misleading. This is the very reason that I think it is important that the TFS identify factors that affect the success or failure of the transition of persons with disabilities, rather than the performance of individual agencies.

One of the concerns expressed about the TFS model was regarding data entry, especially for those who have a heavy caseload. Although this can be applicable to teachers, Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), Supported Living (SL), and Employment and Income Assistance (EIA) counsellors, who have up to 80 consumers in their caseload, were even more concerned about this. The issue of overloaded government counsellors is well-known in Manitoba (Park, 2008). My suggestion is that the TFS sets up a database that maintains individuals' information in a way that the data collectors (e.g., teachers, counsellors, TFS agents) can update only changes in the information about the individuals from the last year instead of renewing all information annually. This would significantly reduce the amount of time required for data entry.

Two related concerns regarding the adult programs of FSCA (e.g. VR, SL, EIA) were raised: (a) duplication of data entry and (b) the expected lengthy process of

retooling of current data-collection practices. VR and SL have a different clientele – VR

serves those with mild or moderate support needs and SL serves those with more

intensive and extensive support needs – and their consumers do not overlap. However,

many of the consumers of both VR and SL receive services from EIA and therefore the

data entry for these individuals can be duplicated if these program input information

about their own consumers separately. Given that the FSCA programs are the primary

agencies that collect and maintain information regarding adults with disabilities in the

support system for the TFS, it is essential that the TFS develops its database in

cooperation with these programs from the onset so that the TFS database can be

compatible with their existing databases.

The stakeholders at the meeting expressed concerns about the capacity for the

government, schools, and agencies to embark together on establishing a TFS and about

the resources needed to maintain the database in Manitoba. Securing the funding and

resources necessary to develop and maintain a TFS and providing government programs,

schools, and agencies with the assistance needed in the process are essential. In addition,

some stakeholders suggested that the entity that initiates the development of a TFS in

Manitoba present a clear blueprint for its implementation. Otherwise, the requirement for

extensive changes to current data-collection practices and the need for additional

resources expected as part of this process may scare many stakeholders away from the

concept of establishing such a TFS. The Manitoba Centre for Health Policy has continued

to renew its five-year contracts with the Manitoba government since 1991. I recommend

that the Manitoba government undertake a five-year pilot project with a small sample size

to develop the prototype of a TFS and to test it on a small scale. Depending on the

outcomes and the feedback from the stakeholders, such a project can evolve into a

practical, sophisticated system for the province.

Suggestions for Improvement and Implementation of TFS Model

The stakeholders at the final review meeting made some suggestions for the

improvement and implementation of the TFS model that I proposed. One suggestion was

to extend the data-collection period for adults with disabilities in postsecondary

education. If the TFS gathers information about adults with disabilities until 4 years after

they leave high school, participants argued that it may fail to examine the real transition

outcomes of adults with disabilities who have had postsecondary education, because

many of them may still be in a school setting and not have had a chance to obtain

employment and settle down to an adult life. In order to address this, one change can be

made to the TFS model with regard to data collection of adults with disabilities. I

therefore suggest that the TFS conduct an additional survey for those with disabilities

who are still in postsecondary education four years after high school, on the condition of

their agreement, seven years after they leave high school. This would produce useful

information on postschool outcomes of those with disabilities who have had

postsecondary education in the province.

The stakeholders at the meeting suggested that the TFS collect information about

adults with disabilities who receive services from the Manitoba Deaf-Blind Association

Inc., a non-profit, non-government organization that supports persons with visual and

hearing impairments in Manitoba. There are many individuals with disabilities who are

excluded out from the target youth group of adults with disabilities in the support system.

This includes not only those with hearing or visual impairments, but also those with

various other conditions, such as Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, Autism Spectrum Disorder, and other conditions. The TFS would cover a large portion of these individuals in the target youth of adults with disabilities out of the support system who do not receive directly from the major government adult programs (i.e., VR, SL, EIA) and SMD.

Some stakeholders at the meeting suggested alternative timelines for data collection regarding adults with disabilities, such as once (4 years after high school), twice (2 years and 4 years after high school), and three times (1 year, 2 years, and 5 years after high school). These suggestions are consistent with the diversity of data-collection timelines recommended by the participants of the needs assessment. I discussed my rationale for the data-collection timelines that I proposed in the TFS model in the previous sections of Stage 1. Needs Assessment and Stage 2: Transition Follow-up System Model Development (see pp. 246-249 and pp. 253-273).

The feedback that I received from the stakeholders who examined the TFS model at the final review meeting demonstrated that they supported most of the key aspects of the model. However, they also identified some concerns and barriers that need to be addressed with regard to logistics of implementing such a TFS in Manitoba, such as securing sufficient funding and resources required, retooling the current data-collection practices, and finding the efficiencies in the data-entry process. In addition, although the stakeholders perceived that an interdepartmental government unit would be the best option as the administrator of TFS, some were still concerned about the potential for governmental interference with data management. This concern aside, I did not identify any conflicting perceptions among the stakeholders. Nonetheless, the various issues discussed above need to be further examined when developing a TFS in Manitoba. Based

on stakeholders' suggestions, I also recommended some strategies to supplement the TFS

model, including extended data collection for adults with disabilities who are in

postsecondary education and a pilot project prior to launching a full TFS.

Conclusions

The goal of this research was to develop a Transition Follow-up System (TFS)

model that is socially valid in Manitoba. In the process of developing a TFS, I addressed

the following questions:

(a) What information needs to be obtained through a TFS?

(b) How should a TFS be implemented?

(c) What are the local barriers and needs in implementing a TFS?

In order to obtain answers to these questions, I carried out a needs assessment, that

included (a) a telephone survey on schools' and school divisions' data-collection

practices about students with IEPs/ITPs, (b) a mixed-method survey on government

programs that deal with children and adults with disabilities, and (c) focus groups and

individual interviews with stakeholders on the key aspects of a TFS. I have used the

results of these surveys to develop a TFS model, indicating key operative aspects

including the model's proposed scope, purposes, administrator, target youth, information

to be collected, data collectors, data-collection methods, data sources, the timeline for

data collection, reporting framework, confidentiality and privacy considerations, and

methods to ensure the reliability and validity of data. In addition, after outlining the

proposed TFS model to participants, I have incorporated feedback from some

stakeholders on the TFS model.

The TFS model thus developed is specifically tailored to the current Manitoba milieu and socially valid within that context. Some of the key results from this research are as follows:

1. Stakeholders requested that a TFS produce information that can help not only the improvement of the support system for youth with disabilities in the transition process on a macro level (e.g., province-wide), but also all the stakeholders involved on a micro level (e.g., school-wide, agency-wide, individual-specific). The information that a TFS reports includes data on (a) the outcomes of youth with disabilities in the transition process at the provincial level, (b) the outcomes of individual schools, school divisions, adult programs and agencies (both government and non-government); however these should be reported only to the institution in question, (c) the outcomes of individual students and consumers, available only to those students and consumers themselves and their support network, (d) best practices and factors that affect the success of the transition, (e), demographic trends that can help future planning for services, and (f) resources and postsecondary options that are locally available.

2. The key suggestions that stakeholders made with regard to implementing a TFS are (a) ensuring impartial, reliable data management, (b) minimizing any additional work required for schools and adult services programs/agencies, (c) utilizing existing data-collection practices, (d) applying various data-collection methods, (e) carrying out longitudinal data collection regarding individuals with disabilities, (f) including persons with various disabilities, from mild to severe, (g) involving various government departments that are involved in the transition

process, (h) protecting privacy and confidentiality, and i) ensuring user-friendly data collection and reporting.

3. The most significant concerns and barriers that stakeholders expressed with regard to developing and implementing a TFS in Manitoba were about the capacity (e.g., funding, human resources, time, etc.) of the government, schools, and adult programs/agencies not only to establish such a TFS, but also to maintain it.

There are some limitations that need to be taken into account when interpreting the results of this study. These limitations are as follows:

1. The scope of this research was within Manitoba. Therefore, the results of this research may only be relevant to the Manitoban context. In addition, the schools of First Nations that are federally funded were beyond the scope of this research, because they are not under the jurisdiction of the Manitoba government. The target youth of the proposed TFS model does not include the students who attend those schools.

2. Voluntary participation in the telephone survey imposes limitations and potential biases. I believe that the participants of the telephone survey represent a reasonable cross-section of stakeholder groups across the province and therefore adequately reflect the diversity of the data-collection practices of schools and school divisions in Manitoba. In addition, the information provided by respondents indicated a great deal of consistency in data collection practices among all the school divisions that participated in this study. Nonetheless, it is not

clear whether this consistency applies more broadly among school divisions that did not participate.

3. The focus group and individual interview part of this study has limitations in terms of the representation of certain groups of stakeholders for the focus groups and individual interviews. The participants of the focus groups and interviews were evenly distributed across the province, except northern Manitoba, and both rural areas and urban areas were well represented. The participating stakeholder groups had family members or worked with people whose disabilities varied considerably in type and degree. Nonetheless, the people with disabilities who participated in this research did not represent such a broad cross-section because only limited participation from persons with moderate or severe intellectual disabilities and those with sensory impairments was possible. Due to the nature of interview questions, which dealt with the operative aspects of a TFS, persons with disabilities who are intellectually high functioning (e.g. those with physical disabilities or psychiatric disorders) may have been more willing to participate. The participants with moderate or severe intellectual disabilities did not understand many of the interview questions and when they did, their responses were expressed in simple forms, such as yes/no or in a few words. In addition, the majority of the adult service professionals who participated in this study were from employment service agencies, with fewer from residential or other adult service agencies. The government representatives who I interviewed were from only two departments, Manitoba Education and Manitoba Family Services and Consumer Affairs, and did not include those from other departments that are

involved in the transition process of persons with disabilities, such as Manitoba Health. Addressing these limitations in scope would require considerably more resources and authority to ensure broader participation than was possible in this study.

4. The participation of stakeholders in Northern Manitoba in the focus groups or individual interviews was limited. Part of the reason is that there are relatively fewer schools and adult services agencies in the north compared to the rest of the province. In addition, despite my suggestion that they could choose either an in-person or a telephone interview, I was not successful in recruiting any participant for a focus group or individual interview. Given that the culture of Northern Manitoba is distinctive from the southern regions of the province, the results of this research may not reflect the needs of northern region regarding a TFS.

5. A relatively small number of the participants (12 out of a total of 114 participants) attended the final review meeting of the TFS model: high representation from the government (5 people) and no representation from university faculty members and persons with disabilities. It is possible therefore that the feedback that the attendees provided may not reflect the perspectives that the majority of stakeholders hold.

6. A focus group allows the participants to have interactive discussions on a given topic. In this research, I had focus groups with only some of the stakeholder groups, such as Special Education/Resource teachers, Student Services administrators, adult services professionals, and the representatives of Manitoba Education. When given a choice between a focus group and an individual

interview, all of the participants of parents and principals preferred the latter. In addition, I arranged only individual interviews with some stakeholder groups where the number of the participants was small, such as advocates, university faculty members, and representatives of FSH [Manitoba Family Services and Housing]. In addition, I had individual interviews with persons with disabilities in order to better accommodate their individual communicative needs during the interviews.

I specified my recommendations as to how to develop and implement a TFS in Manitoba in detail in the section entitled *Stage 2: Transition Follow-up System Model Development Chapter* (see pp. 253-273). One of two additional suggestions to the TFS model from the final review meeting is to set up a database that maintains individuals' information in a way that it allows updating information from the previous year with new information, rather than inputting all data from scratch. This would reduce the time required for data entry. Another suggestion is carry out an additional survey seven years after leaving high school for those adults with disabilities who are in postsecondary education four years after high school (my original proposal was that a TFS collect information about adults with disabilities until four years after they leave high school). This will allow the TFS to examine the adjustment to community life of those adults with disabilities who have had postsecondary education.

In order to realize a TFS in Manitoba, I recommend that the Manitoba government initiate a pilot project that tests the feasibility of the proposed TFS model and refines the model as required. Firstly, a steering committee with representation from relevant government departments needs to be established to initiate such a pilot project. If

preferable, an existing collaborative government body, such as Healthy Child Manitoba, may act as a provisional directing agency. The pilot project may be executed, taking the following steps:

1. Determining a standard information template: An assigned coordinator will prepare template prototypes and definitions of key terms used in the prototypes based on the IEPs/ITPs and the consumer information forms that are currently used by schools and adult service programs and empirical studies. Then, an advisory board would be formed to select a standard information template. The advisory board would consist of representatives from key stakeholders groups, such as individuals with disabilities, parents, teachers, government counsellors, adult services professionals, advocates, and faculty members in related disciplines in postsecondary education.

2. Pilot-testing the standard information template: A task force will be formed to carry out the pilot test with a small sample of persons with disabilities. The task force will recruit volunteers to participate in the pilot study (e.g., students from two school division in urban areas and another two in rural areas), and gather information about them utilizing the information template two months before they leave school and 6 months after high school. The task force will then analyse the results, provide the individuals with disabilities, schools, and adult service programs that participate with reports, and evaluate the pilot project based on the feedback from the stakeholders involved.

Once the pilot project is completed, the steering committee will need to encourage schools, government adult programs, and adult service agencies across the province to

utilize the information template. The steering committee should then establish two databases: one based on the standard information template that maintains individuals' information and another that manages pooled data for data analysis and reporting. Schools and government programs across the province can then be encouraged to participate.

This research is the first to propose and describe a TFS model for persons with disabilities in North America. Through an extensive literature review, there appears to be no documentation outlining a TFS model in operation anywhere. Browning et al. (1995) described the procedure of a pilot study that they carried out to establish a TFS in Alabama; however, it does not specify the TFS model that they developed and its implementation. In addition, National Post-School Outcomes Center (2003) reported that 25 states in USA implemented a statewide TFS and briefly summarized the practices of those TFSs in terms of some operative aspects, such as target subjects for data-collection, data collection methods, data sources, and data collectors. However, the report was short in providing detailed specifics of each TFS implemented. This research offers concrete ideas as to how a TFS can be developed and implemented.

Although the results of this research reflect the Manitoba context, I believe that they provide a useful, more general, set of guidelines on critical issues that need to be considered in determining operative aspects of a TFS. For example, this research identifies various factors that might affect the efficiency and effectiveness of a TFA, about which little is currently known, regarding primary use of data obtained through a TFS, the administrator of a TFS, timeline for data collection, and confidential data management.

In addition, I propose a TFS model that tracks information about impacts of postschool programs and services, as well as those of school programs and services, on postschool outcomes of persons with disabilities. This is particularly important because most published follow-up/along studies and existing TFSs for persons with disabilities overlook the role of postschool programs and services, focusing on that of school programs and services. The stakeholders who participated in this research contented that adequate postschool programs and services are critical for successful adjustment of many people with disabilities to adult life. Postschool programs and services need to be considered not only when developing a TFS, but also when studying factors to postschool outcomes of persons with disabilities.

There is very limited knowledge about perceptions and needs of stakeholders (e.g., persons with disabilities, families, professionals, government, etc.) in regards to assessing outcomes of persons with disabilities (i.e., what information to collect, how to gather data, and how to use the data collected). This research generated empirical data about the perspectives of stakeholders as to how to develop and implement such a model. Numerous empirical studies have examined student outcomes and postschool outcomes for persons with disabilities. Additionally, a lot of states in USA implemented TFSs as a tool to gather data about persons with disabilities (National Post-School Outcomes Center, 2003). Most of these data-collection efforts took top-down approaches, of which logistic aspects were determined from the onset by researchers or administrators of TFSs. An understanding of consumers' perspectives is essential if a TFS is to be used for the benefits of all stakeholders.

This research raises recognition of a need for case specific information about persons with disabilities. The vast majority of follow-up studies for persons with disabilities and existing TFSs aim to identify general trends or factors. Stakeholders in this research agreed that case specific information about the outcomes of individual persons with disabilities, schools, or agencies is as useful, if not more, as the statistics of collective information in improving services and programs.

This research addressed a group of people with disabilities who often have been overlooked from previous follow-up studies and existing TFSs for persons with disabilities: individuals with disabilities who have not had an IEP at school. For example, all of the states in USA that implemented a TFS in 2003 tracked information only about persons with disabilities who had had an IEP (National Post-School Outcomes Center, 2003). This is partly because IEPs are the most commonly used criteria to identify students with disabilities in school system and partly because most of the studies and TFSs intended to investigate the outcomes of persons with disabilities who had received additional supports (e.g., IEPs) at school. However, excluding those with disabilities who have not had an IEP but still struggle to adjusting to adult life from the sample is highly likely to limit the capacity of a TFS to identify gaps in school services.

Completing this research, I see a few research topics that could be further explored. Firstly, as suggested previously, I hope that a pilot study is carried out in the process of initiating a TFS in Manitoba to verify the practicality and validity of the proposed model and to refine it as needed. In addition, it would be interesting to undertake a parallel study to this research in a different jurisdiction. Such a parallel study would allow us to identify disparities and commonalities of the stakeholders'

perspectives between the two jurisdictions as to how to develop and implement a TFS. This information would help further understand how different cultures, geographic areas, policies and support systems can affect the design of a TFS.

There is a need for empirical data to identify best practices of TFSs. Although there is no TFS currently in use in any Canadian jurisdiction, a number of states in the USA have been implementing a TFS for the past two decades. Nonetheless, there appears to be no empirical data that demonstrate the efficacy of the various TFS models in use. The impacts and efficacy of TFSs in use can be looked at by examining (a) the feedback from stakeholders on the use of a TFS, (b) changes made in the support system for persons with disabilities based on the results of a TFS, and (c) ultimately outcomes of persons with disabilities. Such research would also be able to identify factors to effective and efficient TFSs, helping establish strong guidelines for the development or improvement of a TFS.

There is a need to study transition experiences of students who attend First Nations schools that are federally funded. While carrying out this research, I have learned that the First Nations schools in Manitoba run their own programs which do not fall under the jurisdiction of Manitoba government and very little is known about the transition experiences of persons with disabilities from these schools and the transition services provided. Given that adult service programs and services in the province are equally available to First Nations people with disabilities, it is essential to obtain an understanding of their transition experiences in order to best support their needs.

There have been limited efforts to measure student outcomes of persons with disabilities. Most of follow-up/along studies of persons with disabilities that examined

student outcomes of persons with disabilities investigated typical student outcome

variables, such as attendance, school completion status, and averages in grade. Given that

many students with special needs require modified or adapted assessment measures,

however, examining student outcomes of persons with disabilities only in those typical

student outcome variables may fail to grasp real progress and outcomes of students with

special needs. Therefore, there is a need to develop guidelines for assessing student

outcomes of persons with disabilities who use modified/adapted assessment measures.

Although numerous follow-up/along studies investigated postschool outcomes of

persons with disabilities, very little is known about how long it takes for persons with

disabilities to settle down as an adult after leaving high school. Hence, I recommend

research that examines the time range that takes persons with disabilities to adjust to adult

life. The indicator of settling down as an adult can be employment, marital status,

residential arrangement or other. The period required for the adjustment to adult life can

be a critical benchmark of postschool outcomes. Such data would be useful for the

support system to plan for programs and services required and for individuals with

disabilities and their support network to set a realistic timeline to make progress.

Despite an extensive literature review, I have not found any formal transition

follow-up practices for youth with disabilities in Manitoba or in other regions of Canada.

A TFS will go a long way to addressing this void. I believe that a TFS will be extremely

useful improving programs and services for youth with disabilities in the transition

process. In fact, a TFS will benefit the support system as whole for persons with

disabilities in Manitoba. This research demonstrates that there is a strong sense of need

for the implementation of a follow-up system such as a TFS in Manitoba. This research

has sparked discussions among the stakeholders as to how to develop and implement a

TFS in Manitoba and has identified specific local needs in this regard. The results of this

research on the local needs for a TFS provide the province with strong grounds to

establish a socially valid, supported TFS. I hope that this research leads to the

establishment of a TFS in Manitoba and promotes such an initiative in other jurisdictions.

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Research Project Title: A school-to-adulthood transition follow-up system for youth with disabilities in Manitoba
Researcher: Youn-Young Park
Sponsor: Education Graduate Research Support Scholarship from University of Manitoba

PART I. Letter of Consent

Dear (name of superintendent),

I am a PhD student at the University of Manitoba. My thesis project is to develop a transition follow-up system (hereafter TFS) for youth with disabilities in Manitoba. A TFS is a database that tracks the student outcomes (educational achievements and results) and post-school outcomes (work and adult life) of youth with disabilities. As part of this project, I will conduct 1) a telephone survey and 2) focus groups and individual interviews with high school special education teachers, high school principals, and Student Services administrators. I am asking you to allow me to contact the relevant personnel in your division to invite them to participate in my research.

Telephone survey: I will ask one special education teacher in each high school and one Student Services administrator about the data they are collecting about students with IEPs. With your consent, I would like to contact all the high schools in your division and Student Services to recruit participants. The phone interview will last about 15 minutes.

Focus groups and interviews: I will invite high school special education teachers, principals, and Student Service administrators to examine their perspectives on key aspects of a TFS, such as the purpose of a TFS, data sources, data collector(s), etc. The focus groups will consist of 7-9 participants grouped by their respective roles (e.g., a teachers group and a principals' group). Each participant will be asked to attend one focus group meeting. Each focus group meeting will last 60-90 minutes and will be tape-recorded. For those who are interested in participating in this study but cannot attend the meeting due to conflicting schedules or distance, I will also conduct individual interviews as appropriate.

Once a TFS model is developed, I will invite all the participants to a final review meeting to report my research and to obtain feedback on the TFS model developed. All participation will be on a voluntary basis.

Data management and confidentiality: The audio recordings will be transcribed to assist in the analysis. For confidentiality, the original tapes and their transcripts will be kept in a secured, locked location until end of the project (c. August 2010). I will then destroy the original tapes and transcripts. The results will be published and discussed in my dissertation; however, while I may directly quote interviewees, neither the participant's, the school's, nor your school division's name will be used in any part of the report or in any ensuing publication. Pseudonyms will be used for all participants. I will not include any unique information in my report that might identify particular teachers, schools or school divisions. The participants will be free to withdraw from the study at any time.

For the participants of focus groups who come from outside Winnipeg, I will compensate their travel cost with a $15 gift card as an honorarium. I will also provide some

refreshment for the focus group meetings. Other than these, no payment or compensation will be provided for the participants. However, there are no risks involved in this study. I will share an executive summary of the research results by email or mail with you and with all individuals who are involved in this study and are interested in receiving the summary. The benefit to the participants of this study is to have an opportunity to learn about the data-collecting practices of other schools and school divisions regarding students with IEPs, as well as learning other stakeholders' perspectives regarding how a TFS should be developed and implemented. Through this research I hope I can develop a TFS model that is socially valid and reflects the needs of educational professionals in Manitoba. Any contribution from your school division would be greatly appreciated.

If you have any questions, please feel free to ask me or my program advisor:
Researcher: Youn-Young Park;   Tel: xxx-xxx-xxxx;   xxx@xxxx
                     xxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxx. Winnipeg, Manitoba R3T 2N5
Program Advisor: Dr. Zana Lutfiyya;   Tel: xxx-xxx-xxxx;   xxx@xxxx

Thank you,

Youn-Young Park

This research has been approved by the Education and Nursing Research and Ethics Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Secretariat at 474-7122, or e-mail margaret_bowman@umanitoba.ca. A copy of this letter has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

PART II. Consent form

In no way does signing this form waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and /or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. If you wish to withdraw from the study, please contact me or my program advisor (Dr. Lutfiyya).

I, _____, understand the information on this research project and grant Youn-Young Park the permission to contact teachers, principals, and Student Service administrators in our division for the purpose of the participant recruitment.

_____   _____
      (Superintendent's signature)   (Date)

_____   _____
      (Researcher's signature)   (Date)

Please provide an email (or mailing) address below if you wish to receive an executive summary of the research results:

_____

Example Questionnaire for Phone Survey of High School Special Education Teachers

My name is Youn-Young Park, a PhD candidate at University of Manitoba. This telephone survey is a part of my dissertation project. I greatly appreciate your willingness to participate in this survey. For my dissertation, I will develop a transition follow-up system model for youth with disabilities. A transition follow-up system is a database that tracks data regarding the student outcomes and experiences and adult outcomes and experiences of youth with disabilities. Prior to developing a model, I would like to examine what data are currently collected by schools, school divisions, and Family Services and Housing. The target youth for this research are youth who have or have had an IEP. Therefore, I would like to ask you what information your school collects about students who have an IEP. As you see, many of the questions are yes/no questions. I will ask these questions one by one. You can provide supplementary explanation or comments anytime during the interview. The survey will take about 15 minutes. Do you have any questions before we start? For the record, will you confirm that you have given permission to participate in this questionnaire? Even with that permission, I remind you that you can choose not to answer any question or terminate the interview at any time.

Youth/Family/Community Characteristics

Q1. In terms of students' characteristics and their background, which of the following data does your school collect about students with IEP?

- Individual student's characteristics
  - ____ Age
  - ____ Gender
  - ____ Type of disability
  - ____ IQ
  - ____ Ethnicity
  - ____ Health concerns
  - ____ Functional skills (e.g. life skills, motor skills, communication skills)
  - ____ Postsecondary goals
  - ____ Level of self-determination

Q2. Does your school collect any other data about individual student's characteristics?
  - ____ Others: _____

- Family characteristics (e.g. social status, income)
  - ____ Household income
  - ____ Primary caregiver

Q3. Does your school collect any other data about individual students' family characteristics?
  - ____ Other: _____

- Information for post-school contacts
  - ____ Address of parents/caregiver
  - ____ Phone number of parents/caregiver
  - ____ E-mail address of parents/caregiver
  - ____ Address of student
  - ____ Phone number of student
  - ____ E-mail address of student

Q4. Does your school collect any other contact information from students?
  - ____ Other: _____

School Programs/Transition Services Provided

Q5. In terms of school programs and transition services provided for the students during school years, which of the following data does your school collect about students with an IEP?

    ____   IEP or ITP developed
    ____   Age of a student when his or her IEP or ITP first addresses transition issues
    ____   Educational placement (e.g. hours in regular classes)
    ____   Academic coursework taken
    ____   Vocational training and coursework taken (e.g. career exploration, resume writing)
    ____   Work experiences done (paid/unpaid)
    ____   Life skills training and coursework taken
    ____   Extracurricular activities participated in
    ____   Support services provided (e.g. educational assistant, counseling, therapies, assistive equipments)
    ____   Student satisfaction with school programs/transition services
    ____   Parent satisfaction with school programs/transition services
    ____   Other: _____

Student Outcomes and Assessments

Q7. In terms of student outcomes and assessment, which of the following data does your school collect about students with IEP?

    ____   Attendance
    ____   GPA
    ____   Grade level of reading, writing, math
    ____   School completion status (e.g. graduation, drop-out, or age-out)
    ____   Degree and certificate (e.g. regular high school degree, modified degree)
    ____   IEP goals and outcomes
    ____   Province-wide test scores

Q8. Does your school modify assessments or use alternate assessments for students with IEP? If so, do you maintain data about the results of the assessment?

    ____   Results of modified/adapted assessments
         Describe: _____
         _____

    ____   Results of alternate assessments
         Describe: _____
         _____

Q9. Does your school collect any other data regarding student outcomes or assessment?

    ____   Other data: _____
         _____

Transition follow-up practice

Q10. Are you aware of any follow-up of adult outcomes of former students with IEPs conducted by your school?

    ____ Yes   ____ No

Q11. Do you have anything to add or comment?

_____

Thank you very much for your participation.

Appendix B.   Cover Letter for Principals

Research Project Title: A school-to-adulthood transition follow-up system for youth with disabilities in Manitoba
Researcher: Youn-Young Park
Sponsor: Education Graduate Research Support Scholarship from University of Manitoba

Dear (name of principal),

I am a PhD student at the University of Manitoba. My thesis project is to develop a transition follow-up system (hereafter TFS) for youth with disabilities in Manitoba. A TFS is a database that tracks the student outcomes (educational achievements and results) and post-school outcomes (work and adult life) of youth with disabilities. As part of this project, I will conduct a telephone survey of high school special education teachers to investigate which data they collected from high schools about students with IEPs. I am asking you to distribute the enclosed recruitment letter and example questionnaire for participation to one of the special education teachers in your school who maintains the records of students with IEPs.

Research procedure: In the telephone survey, I will ask one special education teacher in each high school about the data they are collecting about students with IEPs (For your reference, please see the attached example questionnaire). The phone interview will last about 15 minutes. Once a TFS model is developed, I will invite all the participants to a final review meeting to report my research and to obtain feedback on the TFS model developed. All participation will be on a voluntary basis.

Data management and confidentiality: For confidentiality, I will keep the completed survey questionnaires in a secured lock location until end of the project (c. August 2010) and will then destroy them. The results will be published and discussed in my dissertation; however, while I may directly quote interviewees, neither the participant's, the school's, nor your school division's name will be used in any part of the report or in any ensuing publication. Pseudonyms will be used for all participants. I will not include any unique information in my report that might identify particular teachers, schools or school divisions. The participants will be free to withdraw from the study at any time.

No compensation will be provided for the participants; yet, there are no risks involved in this study. I will share an executive summary of the research results by email or mail with you and with all individuals who are involved in this study and are interested in receiving the summary. The benefit to the participants of this study is to have an opportunity to learn about the data-collecting practices of other schools and school divisions regarding students with IEPs, as well as learning other stakeholders' perspectives regarding how a TFS should be developed and implemented. Through this research I hope I can develop a TFS model that is socially valid and reflects the needs of educational professionals in Manitoba. If you wish to receive an executive summary of the research results, please contact me. Your assistance would be greatly appreciated.

If you have any questions, please feel free to ask me or my program advisor:
Researcher: Youn-Young Park;   Tel: 204-261-5148;   xxx@xxxx
                     xxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx. Winnipeg, Manitoba R3T 2N5
Program Advisor: Dr. Zana Lutfiyya;   Tel: xxx-xxx-xxxx;   xxx@xxxx

Thank you,

Youn-Young Park

This research has been approved by the Education and Nursing Research and Ethics Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Secretariat at 474-7122, or e-mail margaret_bowman@umanitoba.ca. A copy of this letter has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

Example Questionnaire for Phone Survey of High School Special Education Teachers

My name is Youn-Young Park, a PhD candidate at University of Manitoba. This telephone survey is a part of my dissertation project. I greatly appreciate your willingness to participate in this survey. For my dissertation, I will develop a transition follow-up system model for youth with disabilities. A transition follow-up system is a database that tracks data regarding the student outcomes and experiences and adult outcomes and experiences of youth with disabilities. Prior to developing a model, I would like to examine what data are currently collected by schools, school divisions, and Family Services and Housing. The target youth for this research are youth who have or have had an IEP. Therefore, I would like to ask you what information your school collects about students who have an IEP. As you see, many of the questions are yes/no questions. I will ask these questions one by one. You can provide supplementary explanation or comments anytime during the interview. The survey will take about 15 minutes. Do you have any questions before we start? For the record, will you confirm that you have given permission to participate in this questionnaire? Even with that permission, I remind you that you can choose not to answer any question or terminate the interview at any time.

Youth/Family/Community Characteristics

Q1. In terms of students' characteristics and their background, which of the following data does your school collect about students with IEP?

- Individual student's characteristics
  - ____ Age
  - ____ Gender
  - ____ Type of disability
  - ____ IQ
  - ____ Ethnicity
  - ____ Health concerns
  - ____ Functional skills (e.g. life skills, motor skills, communication skills)
  - ____ Postsecondary goals
  - ____ Level of self-determination

Q2. Does your school collect any other data about individual student's characteristics?
  - ____ Others: _____

- Family characteristics (e.g. social status, income)
  - ____ Household income
  - ____ Primary caregiver

Q3. Does your school collect any other data about individual students' family characteristics?
  - ____ Other: _____

- Information for post-school contacts
  - ____ Address of parents/caregiver
  - ____ Phone number of parents/caregiver
  - ____ E-mail address of parents/caregiver
  - ____ Address of student
  - ____ Phone number of student
  - ____ E-mail address of student

Q4. Does your school collect any other contact information from students?
  - ____ Other: _____

School Programs/Transition Services Provided

Q5. In terms of school programs and transition services provided for the students during school years, which of the following data does your school collect about students with an IEP?

____ IEP or ITP developed
____ Age of a student when his or her IEP or ITP first addresses transition issues
____ Educational placement (e.g. hours in regular classes)
____ Academic coursework taken
____ Vocational training and coursework taken (e.g. career exploration, resume writing, job shadowing)
____ Work experiences done (paid/unpaid)
____ Life skills training and coursework taken
____ Extracurricular activities participated in
____ Support services provided (e.g. educational assistant, counselling, therapies)
____ Student satisfaction with school programs/transition services
____ Parent satisfaction with school programs/transition services
____ Other: _____

Student Outcomes and Assessments

Q7. In terms of student outcomes and assessment, which of the following data does your school collect about students with IEP?

____ Attendance
____ GPA
____ Grade level of reading, writing, math
____ School completion status (e.g. graduation, drop-out, or age-out)
____ Degree and certificate (e.g. regular high school degree, modified degree)
____ IEP goals and outcomes
____ Province-wide test scores

Q8. Does your school modify assessments or use alternate assessments for students with IEP? If so, do you maintain data about the results of the assessment?

____ Results of modified/adapted assessments
Describe: _____
_____

____ Results of alternate assessments
Describe: _____
_____

Q9. Does your school collect any other data regarding student outcomes or assessment?

____ Other data: _____
_____

Transition follow-up practice

Q10. Are you aware of any follow-up of adult outcomes of former students with IEPs conducted by your school?

____ Yes   ____ No

Q11. Do you have anything to add or comment?

_____

Appendix C.   Cover Letter for Representative of FSCA

Research Project Title: A school-to-adulthood transition follow-up system for youth with disabilities in Manitoba
Researcher: Youn-Young Park
Sponsor: Education Graduate Research Support Scholarship from University of Manitoba

Dear (name of a representative of FSCA),

I am a PhD student at the University of Manitoba. My thesis project is to develop a transition follow-up system (hereafter TFS) for youth with disabilities in Manitoba. A TFS is a database that tracks the student outcomes (educational achievements and results) and post-school outcomes (work and adult life) of youth with disabilities. As part of this project, I will conduct a telephone survey of FSCA representatives to investigate which data they collected about post-school outcomes of adults with disabilities. I am asking you to distribute the enclosed recruitment letter and example questionnaire for participation to the best representatives of sub-departments (e.g., Children Special Services, Vocational Rehabilitation, Supported Living) of FSCA who maintain the records of individuals with disabilities.

Research procedure: In the telephone survey, I will ask the representatives of sub-departments of FSCA about the data they are collecting about post-school outcomes of adults with disabilities who receive services from FSCA. The survey consists of yes/no questions but also allows for additional information to be provided (For your reference, please see the attached example questionnaire). The phone interview will last about 30 minutes. Once a TFS model is developed, I will invite all the participants to a final review meeting to report my research and to obtain feedback on the TFS model developed. All participation will be on a voluntary basis.

Data management and confidentiality: For confidentiality, I will keep the completed survey questionnaires in a secured lock location until end of the project (c. August 2010) and will then destroy them. The results will be published and discussed in my dissertation; however, while I may directly quote interviewees, neither the participant's nor specific sub-department's name will be used in any part of the report or in any ensuing publication. Pseudonyms will be used for all participants. I will not include any unique information in my report that might identify particular individual or sub-department from FSCA. The participants will be free to withdraw from the study at any time.

No compensation will be provided for the participants; yet, there are no risks involved in this study. I will share an executive summary of the research results by email or mail with you and with all individuals who are involved in this study and are interested in receiving the summary. The benefit to the participants of this study is to have an opportunity to learn about the data-collecting practices of schools and governments in Manitoba regarding youth with disabilities, as well as learning other stakeholders' perspectives regarding how a TFS should be developed and implemented. Through this research I hope I can develop a TFS model that is socially valid and reflects the perspectives of government representatives in Manitoba. If you wish to receive an executive summary of the research results, please contact me. Your assistance would be greatly appreciated.

If you have any questions, please feel free to ask me or my program advisor:

Researcher: Youn-Young Park;   Tel: xxx-xxx-xxxx;   xxx@xxxx
                     xxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxx. Winnipeg, Manitoba R3T 2N5
Program Advisor: Dr. Zana Lutfiyya;   Tel: xxx-xxx-xxxx;   xxx@xxxx

Thank you,

Youn-Young Park

> This research has been approved by the Education and Nursing Research and Ethics Board. If you
> have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named
> persons or the Human Ethics Secretariat at 474-7122, or e-mail
> margaret_bowman@umanitoba.ca. A copy of this letter has been given to you to keep for your
> records and reference.

Phone Survey Questionnaire for Representatives of FSCA

My name is Youn-Young Park, a PhD candidate at University of Manitoba. This telephone survey is a part of my dissertation project. I greatly appreciate your willingness to participate in this survey. For my dissertation, I will develop a transition follow-up system model for youth with disabilities. A transition follow-up system is a database that tracks data regarding the student outcomes and experiences and adult outcomes and experiences of youth with disabilities. Prior to developing a model, I would like to examine what data are currently collected by schools, school divisions, and Family Services and Housing. The target youth for this survey is youth with disabilities who graduated high school and have received services from your department. Therefore, I would like to ask you what information your department collects about them. As you see, many of the questions are yes/no questions. I will ask these questions one by one. You can provide supplementary explanation or comments anytime during the interview. The survey will take about 15 minutes. Do you have any questions before we start? For the record, will you confirm that you have given permission to participate in this questionnaire? Even with that permission, I remind you that you can choose not to answer any question or terminate the interview at any time.

Youth/Family/Community Characteristics

Q1. In terms of background information, which of the following data does your department collect about of adults with disabilities?

- Individual student's characteristics
  - ____ Age/Birthday
  - ____ Gender
  - ____ Type of disability
  - ____ IQ
  - ____ Ethnicity
  - ____ Primary caregiver (if applicable)

Q2. Does your department collect any other data about individuals' characteristics?
  - ____ Others: _____

Q3. Which of the following data does your department collect about of adults with disabilities?

- Contact Information
  - ____ Mail address of individual
  - ____ Phone number of individual
  - ____ E-mail address of individual
  - ____ Mail address of parents/caregiver
  - ____ Phone number of parents/caregiver
  - ____ E-mail address of parents/caregiver

Q4. Does your department collect any other contact information from individuals?
  - ____ Other: _____

Adult Programs/Services Provided and Service Needs

Q5. What services does your department provide?
_____

Q6. About whom does your department collect data?
_____   clients for whom your department provide services. If applicable, what are eligibility criteria required?
_____

_____   non-clients If applicable, could you tell me whom, what data, and why your department collects data of non-clients?
_____

Q7. Does your department collect data about what services (e.g., vocational, residential, financial, etc.) your clients receive from other than your department?
_____ Yes   _____ No
If your answer is yes, please specify what information your department collects in this regard.
_____

Q8. Does your department collect data about individual client's satisfaction with the services provided by the department?
_____ Yes   _____ No

Post-school Outcomes

Q9. Which of the following data does your department collect about of adults with disabilities?

- Employment outcomes
  - _____   Weekly/monthly income
  - _____   Financial assistance received
  - _____   Type of jobs (e.g., retail, food services, construction)
  - _____   Employment status (e.g. (un)employment, volunteer, permanent or seasonal)
  - _____   Work hours (e.g., full- or part-time, weekly work hours)
  - _____   Job stability (e.g., length of time on the current/former jobs)
  - _____   Job satisfaction
  - _____   Job acquisition (e.g., by himself/herself, by recruitment agency)

- Postsecondary education outcomes
  - _____   Type of education/training (e.g. 2 or 4 year college, vocational/trade schools)
  - _____   Full- or part-time enrolment
  - _____   Field of study (e.g. Engineering, English, Arts)

- Residential outcomes
  - _____   Living status (e.g. on own, with family, supervised living)
  - _____   Marital status (e.g. (un)married, with common-law married)
  - _____   Individual's contribution to his/her living expense

- Outcomes of other aspects of life
  - _____   Physical/health conditions
  - _____   Personal and social networks (e.g., social/leisure activities)
  - _____   Community living (e.g. transporting, shopping, voting)
  - _____   Life satisfaction, choice-making, and general well-being

Thank you very much for your participation.

Appendix D.   Letter of Recruitment and Questionnaire for High School Special Education Teacher

Research Project Title: A school-to-adulthood transition follow-up system for youth with disabilities in Manitoba
Researcher: Youn-Young Park
Sponsor: Education Graduate Research Support Scholarship from University of Manitoba

PART I. Letter of Recruitment

Dear teachers,

I am a PhD student at the University of Manitoba. My thesis project is to develop a transition follow-up system (hereafter TFS) for youth with disabilities in Manitoba. A TFS is a database that tracks the student outcomes (educational achievements and results) and post-school outcomes (work and adult life) of youth with disabilities. I will conduct a telephone survey of high school special education teachers to investigate which data they collected from high schools about students with IEPs. I am asking you to participate in this telephone survey.

All participation will be on a voluntary basis. In the telephone survey, I will ask you about the data your school is collecting about students with IEPs. The survey consists of yes/no questions but also allows for additional information about the data-collecting practice of your school to be provided (please see the attached example questionnaire). A telephone interview will be arranged at your convenience and will last approximately 15 minutes. Once the telephone interview is completed, I will send the result of the survey to you by email or mail, depending of your preference, to confirm your answers. In addition, all the participants of this study will be invited to a final review meeting where once I develop a TFS model I report my research and obtain feedback on the model developed.

Data management and confidentiality: For confidentiality, I will keep the completed survey questionnaires in a secured lock location until end of the project (c. August 2010) and will then destroy them. The results will be published and discussed in my dissertation; however, while I may directly quote interviewees, neither the participant's, the school's, nor your school division's name will be used in any part of the report or in any ensuing publication. Pseudonyms will be used for all participants. I will not include any unique information in my report that might identify particular teachers, schools or school divisions. The participants will be free to withdraw from the study at any time.

No compensation will be provided for the participants; yet, there are no risks involved in this study. I will share an executive summary of the research results by email or mail with you and with all individuals who are involved in this study and are interested in receiving the summary. The benefit to the participants of this study is to have an opportunity to learn about the data-collecting practices of other schools and school divisions regarding students with IEPs, as well as learning other stakeholders' perspectives regarding how a TFS should be developed and implemented. Through this research I hope I can develop a TFS model that is socially valid and reflects the needs of educational professionals in Manitoba. Your assistance would be greatly appreciated.

If you are interested in participating in the phone survey, please contact me by email or by telephone:

Researcher: Youn-Young Park;   Tel: xxx-xxx-xxxx;   xxx@xxxx
                     xxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxx. Winnipeg, Manitoba R3T 2N5

Or, if you have any questions, please feel free to ask me or my program advisor:

Program Advisor: Dr. Zana Lutfiyya;   Tel: xxx-xxx-xxxx;   xxx@xxxx

Thank you,

Youn-Young Park

This research has been approved by the Education and Nursing Research and Ethics Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons   or   the   Human   Ethics   Secretariat   at   474-7122,   or   e-mail margaret_bowman@umanitoba.ca. A copy of this letter has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

PART II. Consent form

Your signature on this form indicates that you understand the information provided about this study and that you agree to participate. If you want to participate in this study, please complete the form below and return it to me by email or mail. If you send this form by email, you may type in your name instead of writing your signature.

In no way does signing this form waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and /or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. If you wish to withdraw from the study, please contact me or my program advisor (Dr. Lutfiyya).

I _____ understand the information on this research project and agree to participate.

_____   _____
       (Participant's signature)   (Date)

_____   _____
       (Researcher's signature)   (Date)

Please provide an email (or mailing) address below if you wish to receive an executive summary of the research results:

_____

Phone Survey Questionnaire for High School Special Education Teachers

My name is Youn-Young Park, a PhD candidate at University of Manitoba. This telephone survey is a part of my dissertation project. I greatly appreciate your willingness to participate in this survey. For my dissertation, I will develop a transition follow-up system model for youth with disabilities. A transition follow-up system is a database that tracks data regarding the student outcomes and experiences and adult outcomes and experiences of youth with disabilities. Prior to developing a model, I would like to examine what data are currently collected by schools, school divisions, and Family Services and Housing. The target youth for this research are youth who have or have had an IEP. Therefore, I would like to ask you what information your school collects about students who have an IEP. As you see, many of the questions are yes/no questions. I will ask these questions one by one. You can provide supplementary explanation or comments anytime during the interview. The survey will take about 15 minutes. Do you have any questions before we start? For the record, will you confirm that you have given permission to participate in this questionnaire? Even with that permission, I remind you that you can choose not to answer any question or terminate the interview at any time.

Youth/Family/Community Characteristics

Q1. In terms of students' characteristics and their background, which of the following data does your school collect about students with IEP?

- Individual student's characteristics
  - ____ Age
  - ____ Gender
  - ____ Type of disability
  - ____ IQ
  - ____ Ethnicity
  - ____ Health concerns
  - ____ Functional skills (e.g. life skills, motor skills, communication skills)
  - ____ Postsecondary goals
  - ____ Level of self-determination

Q2. Does your school collect any other data about individual student's characteristics?
  - ____ Others: _____

- Family characteristics (e.g. social status, income)
  - ____ Household income
  - ____ Primary caregiver

Q3. Does your school collect any other data about individual students' family characteristics?
  - ____ Other: _____

- Information for post-school contacts
  - ____ Address of parents/caregiver
  - ____ Phone number of parents/caregiver
  - ____ E-mail address of parents/caregiver
  - ____ Address of student
  - ____ Phone number of student
  - ____ E-mail address of student

Q4. Does your school collect any other contact information from students?
  - ____ Other: _____

School Programs/Transition Services Provided

Q5. In terms of school programs and transition services provided for the students during school years, which of the following data does your school collect about students with an IEP?

____ IEP or ITP developed
____ Age of a student when his or her IEP or ITP first addresses transition issues
____ Educational placement (e.g. hours in regular classes)
____ Academic coursework taken
____ Vocational training and coursework taken (e.g. career exploration, resume writing)
____ Work experiences done (paid/unpaid)
____ Life skills training and coursework taken
____ Extracurricular activities participated in
____ Support services provided (e.g. educational assistant, counselling, therapies)
____ Student satisfaction with school programs/transition services
____ Parent satisfaction with school programs/transition services
____ Other: _____

Student Outcomes and Assessments

Q7. In terms of student outcomes and assessment, which of the following data does your school collect about students with IEP?

____ Attendance
____ GPA
____ Grade level of reading, writing, math
____ School completion status (e.g. graduation, drop-out, or age-out)
____ Degree and certificate (e.g. regular high school degree, modified degree)
____ IEP goals and outcomes
____ Province-wide test scores

Q8. Does your school modify assessments or use alternate assessments for students with IEP? If so, do you maintain data about the results of the assessment?

____ Results of modified/adapted assessments
Describe: _____
_____

____ Results of alternate assessments
Describe: _____
_____

Q9. Does your school collect any other data regarding student outcomes or assessment?
____ Other data: _____
_____

Transition follow-up practice

Q10. Are you aware of any follow-up of adult outcomes of former students with IEPs conducted by your school?
____ Yes   ____ No

Q11. Do you have anything to add or comment?
_____

Thank you very much for your participation.

Appendix E.   Letter of Recruitment and Questionnaire for Student Services Administrator

Research Project Title: A school-to-adulthood transition follow-up system for youth with disabilities in Manitoba
Researcher: Youn-Young Park
Sponsor: Education Graduate Research Support Scholarship from University of Manitoba

PART I. Letter of Recruitment

Dear (name of the director of Student Services department of a school division),

I am a PhD student at the University of Manitoba. My thesis project is to develop a transition follow-up system (hereafter TFS) for youth with disabilities in Manitoba. A TFS is a database that tracks the student outcomes (educational achievements and results) and post-school outcomes (work and adult life) of youth with disabilities. I will conduct a telephone survey of Student Services Administrators to investigate which data they collected about students with IEPs in their school divisions. I am asking you to participate in this telephone survey.

All participation will be on a voluntary basis. In the telephone survey, I will ask you about the data your division is collecting about students with IEPs. The survey consists of yes/no questions but also allows for additional information about the data-collecting practice of your division to be provided (please see the attached example questionnaire). A telephone interview will be arranged at your convenience and will last approximately 15 minutes. Once the telephone interview is completed, I will send the result of the survey to you by email or mail, depending of your preference, to confirm your answers. In addition, all the participants of this study will be invited to a final review meeting where once I develop a TFS model I report my research and obtain feedback on the model developed.

Data management and confidentiality: For confidentiality, I will keep the completed survey questionnaires in a secured lock location until end of the project (c. August 2010) and will then destroy them. The results will be published and discussed in my dissertation; however, while I may directly quote interviewees, neither the participant's nor your school division's name will be used in any part of the report or in any ensuing publication. Pseudonyms will be used for all participants. I will not include any unique information in my report that might identify particular participants, schools or school divisions. The participants will be free to withdraw from the study at any time.

No compensation will be provided for the participants; yet, there are no risks involved in this study. I will share an executive summary of the research results by email or mail with you and with all individuals who are involved in this study and are interested in receiving the summary. The benefit to the participants of this study is to have an opportunity to learn about the data-collecting practices of other schools and school divisions regarding students with IEPs, as well as learning other stakeholders' perspectives regarding how a TFS should be developed and implemented. Through this research I hope I can develop a TFS model that is socially valid and reflects the needs of educational professionals in Manitoba. Your assistance would be greatly appreciated.

If you are interested in participating in the phone survey, please contact me by email or by telephone:

Researcher: Youn-Young Park; Tel: xxx-xxx-xxxx;   xxx@xxxx
                       xxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxx. Winnipeg, Manitoba R3T 2N5

Or, if you have any questions, please feel free to ask me or my program advisor:

Program Advisor: Dr. Zana Lutfiyya; Tel: xxx-xxx-xxxx;   xxx@xxxx

Thank you,

Youn-Young Park

This research has been approved by the Education and Nursing Research and Ethics Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons   or   the   Human   Ethics   Secretariat   at   474-7122,   or   e-mail margaret_bowman@umanitoba.ca. A copy of this letter has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

PART II. Consent form

Your signature on this form indicates that you understand the information provided about this study and that you agree to participate. If you want to participate in this study, please complete the form below and return it to me by email or mail. If you send this form by email, you may type in your name instead of writing your signature.

In no way does signing this form waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and /or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. If you wish to withdraw from the study, please contact me or my program advisor (Dr. Lutfiyya).

I _____ understand the information on this research project and agree to participate.

_____   _____
        (Participant's signature)   (Date)

_____   _____
        (Researcher's signature)   (Date)

Please provide an email (or mailing) address below if you wish to receive an executive summary of the research results:

_____

Appendix E.   Phone Survey Questionnaire for Student Services Administrator

My name is Youn-Young Park, a PhD candidate at University of Manitoba. This telephone survey is a part of my dissertation project. I greatly appreciate your willingness to participate in this survey. For my dissertation, I will develop a transition follow-up system model for youth with disabilities. A transition follow-up system is a database that tracks data regarding the student outcomes and experiences and adult outcomes and experiences of youth with disabilities. Prior to developing a model, I would like to examine what data are currently collected by schools, school divisions, and Family Services and Housing. The target youth for this research are youth who have or have had an IEP. Therefore, I would like to ask you what information your school division collects about students who have an IEP. As you see, many of the questions are yes/no questions. I will ask these questions one by one. You can provide supplementary explanation or comments anytime during the interview. The survey will take about 15 minutes. Do you have any questions before we start? For the record, will you confirm that you have given permission to participate in this questionnaire? Even with that permission, I remind you that you can choose not to answer any question or terminate the interview at any time.

Youth/Family/Community Characteristics

Q1. In terms of students' characteristics and their background, which of the following data does your school division collect about students with IEP?

- Individual student's characteristics
  - ____   Age
  - ____   Gender
  - ____   Type of disability
  - ____   IQ
  - ____   Ethnicity
  - ____   Health concerns
  - ____   Functional skills (e.g. life skills, motor skills, communication skills)
  - ____   Postsecondary goals
  - ____   Level of self-determination

Q2. Does your school division collect any other data about individual student's characteristics?
  - ____   Others: _____

- Family characteristics (e.g. social status, income)
  - ____   Household income
  - ____   Primary caregiver

Q3. Does your division collect any other data about individual students' family characteristics?
  - ____   Other: _____

- Information for post-school contacts
  - ____   Address of parents/caregiver
  - ____   Phone number of parents/caregiver
  - ____   E-mail address of parents/caregiver
  - ____   Address of student
  - ____   Phone number of student
  - ____   E-mail address of student

Q4. Does your division collect any other contact information from students?
  - ____   Other: _____

School Programs/Transition Services Provided

Q5. In terms of school programs and transition services provided for the students during school years, which of the following data does your division collect about students with an IEP?
_____ IEP or ITP developed
_____ Age of a student when his or her IEP or ITP first addresses transition issues
_____ Educational placement (e.g. hours in regular classes)
_____ Academic coursework taken
_____ Vocational training and coursework taken (e.g. career exploration, resume writing)
_____ Work experiences done (paid/unpaid)
_____ Life skills training and coursework taken
_____ Extracurricular activities participated in
_____ Support services provided (e.g. educational assistant, counselling, therapies)
_____ Student satisfaction with school programs/transition services
_____ Parent satisfaction with school programs/transition services
_____ Other: _____

Student Outcomes and Assessments

Q7. In terms of student outcomes and assessment, which of the following data does your division collect about students with IEP?
_____ Attendance
_____ GPA
_____ Grade level of reading, writing, math
_____ School completion status (e.g. graduation, drop-out, or age-out)
_____ Degree and certificate (e.g. regular high school degree, modified degree)
_____ IEP goals and outcomes
_____ Province-wide test scores

Q8. Does your division modify assessments or use alternate assessments for students with IEP? If so, do you maintain data about the results of the assessment?
_____ Results of modified/adapted assessments
Describe: _____
_____

_____ Results of alternate assessments
Describe: _____
_____

Q9. Does your division collect any other data regarding student outcomes or assessment?
_____ Other data: _____
_____

Transition follow-up practice

Q10. Are you aware of any follow-up of adult outcomes of former students with IEPs conducted by your school
division?
_____ Yes   _____ No

Q11. Do you have anything to add or comment?
_____
Thank you very much for your participation.

Appendix F.   Letter of Recruitment and Questionnaire for Representatives of FSCA

Research Project Title: A school-to-adulthood transition follow-up system for youth with disabilities in Manitoba
Researcher: Youn-Young Park
Sponsor: Education Graduate Research Support Scholarship from University of Manitoba

PART I. Letter of Recruitment

Dear (name of a representative of FSCA),

I am a PhD student at the University of Manitoba. My thesis project is to develop a transition follow-up system (hereafter TFS) for youth with disabilities in Manitoba. A TFS is a database that tracks the student outcomes (educational achievements and results) and post-school outcomes (work and adult life) of youth with disabilities. As part of this project, I will conduct a telephone survey of FSCA representatives to investigate which data they collected about post-school outcomes of adults with disabilities. I am asking you to participate in this telephone survey.

Research procedure: In the telephone survey, I will ask you about the data your department is collecting about post-school outcomes of adults with disabilities who receive services from FSCA. The survey consists of yes/no questions but also allows for additional information to be provided (please see the attached example questionnaire). The phone interview will last about 30 minutes. Once a TFS model is developed, I will invite all the participants to a final review meeting to report my research and to obtain feedback on the TFS model developed. All participation will be on a voluntary basis.

Data management and confidentiality: For confidentiality, I will keep the completed survey questionnaires in a secured lock location until end of the project (c. August 2010) and will then destroy them. The results will be published and discussed in my dissertation; however, while I may directly quote interviewees, neither the participant's nor specific sub-department's name will be used in any part of the report or in any ensuing publication. Pseudonyms will be used for all participants. I will not include any unique information in my report that might identify you or your department. The participants will be free to withdraw from the study at any time.

No compensation will be provided for the participants; yet, there are no risks involved in this study. I will share an executive summary of the research results by email or mail with you and with all individuals who are involved in this study and are interested in receiving the summary. The benefit to the participants of this study is to have an opportunity to learn about the data-collecting practices of schools and governments in Manitoba regarding youth with disabilities, as well as learning other stakeholders' perspectives regarding how a TFS should be developed and implemented. Through this research I hope I can develop a TFS model that is socially valid and reflects the perspectives of government representatives in Manitoba. If you wish to receive an executive summary of the research results, please contact me. Your assistance would be greatly appreciated.

If you are interested in participating in the phone survey, please contact me by email or by telephone:

Researcher: Youn-Young Park; Tel: xxx-xxx-xxxx;   xxx@xxxx
                     xxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxx. Winnipeg, Manitoba R3T 2N5

Or, if you have any questions, please feel free to ask me or my program advisor:

Program Advisor: Dr. Zana Lutfiyya; Tel: xxx-xxx-xxxx;   xxx@xxxx

Thank you,

Youn-Young Park

This research has been approved by the Education and Nursing Research and Ethics Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons   or   the   Human   Ethics   Secretariat   at   474-7122,   or   e-mail margaret_bowman@umanitoba.ca. A copy of this letter has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

PART II. Consent form

Your signature on this form indicates that you understand the information provided about this study and that you agree to participate. If you want to participate in this study, please complete the form below and return it to me by email or mail. If you send this form by email, you may type in your name instead of writing your signature.

In no way does signing this form waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and /or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. If you wish to withdraw from the study, please contact me or my program advisor (Dr. Lutfiyya).

I _____ understand the information on this research project and agree to participate.

_____   _____
       (Participant's signature)   (Date)

_____   _____
       (Researcher's signature)   (Date)

Please provide an email (or mailing) address below if you wish to receive an executive summary of the research results:

_____

Phone Survey Questionnaire for Representatives of FSCA

My name is Youn-Young Park, a PhD candidate at University of Manitoba. This telephone survey is a part of my dissertation project. I greatly appreciate your willingness to participate in this survey. For my dissertation, I will develop a transition follow-up system model for youth with disabilities. A transition follow-up system is a database that tracks data regarding the student outcomes and experiences and adult outcomes and experiences of youth with disabilities. Prior to developing a model, I would like to examine what data are currently collected by schools, school divisions, and Family Services and Housing. The target youth for this survey is youth with disabilities who graduated high school and have received services from your department. Therefore, I would like to ask you what information your department collects about them. As you see, many of the questions are yes/no questions. I will ask these questions one by one. You can provide supplementary explanation or comments anytime during the interview. The survey will take about 30 minutes. Do you have any questions before we start? For the record, will you confirm that you have given permission to participate in this questionnaire? Even with that permission, I remind you that you can choose not to answer any question or terminate the interview at any time.

Youth/Family/Community Characteristics

Q1. In terms of background information, which of the following data does your department collect about of adults with disabilities?

- Individual student's characteristics
  ____   Age/Birthday
  ____   Gender
  ____   Type of disability
  ____   IQ
  ____   Ethnicity
  ____   Primary caregiver (if applicable)

Q2. Does your department collect any other data about individuals' characteristics?
  ____   Others: _____

Q3. Which of the following data does your department collect about of adults with disabilities?

- Contact Information
  ____   Mail address of individual
  ____   Phone number of individual
  ____   E-mail address of individual
  ____   Mail address of parents/caregiver
  ____   Phone number of parents/caregiver
  ____   E-mail address of parents/caregiver

Q4. Does your department collect any other contact information from individuals?
  ____   Other: _____

Adult Programs/Services Provided and Service Needs

Q5. What services does your department provide?
_____

Q6. About whom does your department collect data?
_____   clients for whom your department provide services. If applicable, what are eligibility criteria required?
_____

_____   non-clients If applicable, could you tell me whom, what data, and why your department collects data of non-clients?
_____

Q7. Does your department collect data about what services (e.g., vocational, residential, financial, etc.) your clients receive from other than your department?
_____ Yes   _____ No
   If your answer is yes, please specify what information your department collects in this regard.
_____

Q8. Does your department collect data about individual client's satisfaction with the services provided by the department?
_____ Yes   _____ No

Post-school Outcomes

Q9. Which of the following data does your department collect about of adults with disabilities?

- Employment outcomes
  - _____   Weekly/monthly income
  - _____   Financial assistance received
  - _____   Type of jobs (e.g., retail, food services, construction)
  - _____   Employment status (e.g. (un)employment, volunteer, permanent or seasonal)
  - _____   Work hours (e.g., full- or part-time, weekly work hours)
  - _____   Job stability (e.g., length of time on the current/former jobs)
  - _____   Job satisfaction
  - _____   Job acquisition (e.g., by himself/herself, by recruitment agency)

- Postsecondary education outcomes
  - _____   Type of education/training (e.g. 2 or 4 year college, vocational/trade schools)
  - _____   Full- or part-time enrolment
  - _____   Field of study (e.g. Engineering, English, Arts)

- Residential outcomes
  - _____   Living status (e.g. on own, with family, supervised living)
  - _____   Marital status (e.g. (un)married, with common-law married)
  - _____   Individual's contribution to his/her living expense

- Outcomes of other aspects of life
  - _____   Physical/health conditions
  - _____   Personal and social networks (e.g., social/leisure activities)
  - _____   Community living (e.g. transporting, shopping, voting)
  - _____   Life satisfaction, choice-making, and general well-being

Thank you very much for your participation.

Appendix G.   Cover Letter for Representative of Manitoba Education

Research Project Title: A school-to-adulthood transition follow-up system for youth with disabilities in Manitoba
Researcher: Youn-Young Park
Sponsor: Education Graduate Research Support Scholarship from University of Manitoba

Dear (name of a representative of Manitoba Education),

I am a PhD student at the University of Manitoba. My thesis project is to develop a transition follow-up system (hereafter TFS) for youth with disabilities in Manitoba. A TFS is a database that tracks the student outcomes (educational achievements and results) and post-school outcomes (work and adult life) of youth with disabilities. As part of this project, I will conduct in-person interviews with the representatives of Manitoba Education who are familiar with or responsible for the transition process of students with special needs. I would like to interview three or four representatives of Manitoba Education. I am asking you to recommend suitable candidates for these interviews.

Interview procedure: The purpose of the interview is to examine government representatives' perspectives on key aspects of TFS. The questions that will be discussed in the interview include the following:
- What purpose should a TFS need to be used for?
- What information to collect?
- Who should collect the data?
- From whom to collect data?
- When to collect the data?
- How to collect the data?
- How to report the results? (i.e., at what level? How often?)
- Concerns and suggestions?

I will interview each participants in-person only once. If necessary, supplementary information or opinions may be obtained by phone or email. Each interview will take 30-60 minutes and will be tape-recorded. The time and location for each interview will be arranged at the convenience of the participant.

Once a TFS model is developed, I will invite all the participants to a final review meeting to report my research and to obtain feedback on the TFS model developed. All participation will be on a voluntary basis.

Data management and confidentiality: The audio recordings will be transcribed to assist in the analysis. For confidentiality, the original tapes and their transcripts will be kept in a secured, locked location until end of the project (c. August 2010). I will then destroy the original tapes and transcripts. The results may be published and discussed in my dissertation. The results will be published and discussed in my dissertation; however, while I may directly quote interviewees, I will not include any unique information in my report that might identify particular individuals. Pseudonyms will be used for all participants. The participants will be free to withdraw from the study at any time.

No compensation will be provided for the participants: yet, there are no risks involved in this study. I will share an executive summary of the research results by email or mail with you and with all individuals who are involved in this study and are interested in receiving the summary. By participating in this study, you will have an opportunity to contribute to the development of a

TFS model, which I hope will be a valuable measure to improve the current transition support system for youth with disabilities. I hope that through this research I can develop a TFS model that is socially valid in Manitoba and reflects the perspectives of government representatives in Manitoba. Your assistance will be greatly appreciated.

If you have any questions, please feel free to ask me or my program advisor:
Researcher: Youn-Young Park; Tel: xxx-xxx-xxxx;   xxx@xxxx
                     xxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx. Winnipeg, Manitoba R3T 2N5
Program Advisor: Dr. Zana Lutfiyya; Tel: xxx-xxx-xxxx;   xxx@xxxx

Thank you,

Youn-Young Park

This research has been approved by the Education and Nursing Research and Ethics Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons   or   the   Human   Ethics   Secretariat   at   474-7122,   or   e-mail margaret_bowman@umanitoba.ca. A copy of this letter has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

Appendix H.   Cover Letter for Representative of FSCA

Research Project Title: A school-to-adulthood transition follow-up system for youth with disabilities in Manitoba
Researcher: Youn-Young Park
Sponsor: Education Graduate Research Support Scholarship from University of Manitoba

Dear (name of a representative of FSCA),

I am a PhD student at the University of Manitoba. My thesis project is to develop a transition follow-up system (hereafter TFS) for youth with disabilities in Manitoba. A TFS is a database that tracks the student outcomes (educational achievements and results) and post-school outcomes (work and adult life) of youth with disabilities. As part of this project, I will conduct in-person interviews with the representatives of FSCA who are familiar with or responsible for the transition process of youth with disabilities. I would like to interview three or four representatives of FSCA. I am asking you to recommend suitable candidates for these interviews.

Interview procedure: The purpose of the interview is to examine government representatives' perspectives on key aspects of TFS. The questions that will be discussed in the interview include the following:
- What purpose should a TFS need to be used for?
- What information to collect?
- Who should collect the data?
- From whom to collect data?
- When to collect the data?
- How to collect the data?
- How to report the results? (i.e., at what level? How often?)
- Concerns and suggestions?

I will interview each participants in-person only once. If necessary, supplementary information or opinions may be obtained by phone or email. Each interview will take 30-60 minutes and will be tape-recorded. The time and location for each interview will be arranged at the convenience of the participant.

Once a TFS model is developed, I will invite all the participants to a final review meeting to report my research and to obtain feedback on the TFS model developed. All participation will be on a voluntary basis.

Data management and confidentiality: The audio recordings will be transcribed to assist in the analysis. For confidentiality, the original tapes and their transcripts will be kept in a secured, locked location until end of the project (c. August 2010). I will then destroy the original tapes and transcripts. The results may be published and discussed in my dissertation. The results will be published and discussed in my dissertation; however, while I may directly quote interviewees, I will not include any unique information in my report that might identify particular individuals. Pseudonyms will be used for all participants. The participants will be free to withdraw from the study at any time.

No compensation will be provided for the participants: yet, there are no risks involved in this study. I will share an executive summary of the research results by email or mail with you and with all individuals who are involved in this study and are interested in receiving the summary. By participating in this study, you will have an opportunity to contribute to the development of a TFS model, which I hope will be a valuable measure to improve the current transition support

system for youth with disabilities. I hope that through this research I can develop a TFS model that is socially valid in Manitoba and reflects the perspectives of government representatives in Manitoba. Your assistance will be greatly appreciated.

If you have any questions, please feel free to ask me or my program advisor:
Researcher: Youn-Young Park; Tel: xxx-xxx-xxxx;   xxx@xxxx
                     xxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx. Winnipeg, Manitoba R3T 2N5
Program Advisor: Dr. Zana Lutfiyya; Tel: xxx-xxx-xxxx;   xxx@xxxx

Thank you,

Youn-Young Park

This research has been approved by the Education and Nursing Research and Ethics Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Secretariat at 474-7122, or e-mail margaret_bowman@umanitoba.ca. A copy of this letter has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

Appendix I.   Cover Letter for Faculty Member

Research Project Title: A school-to-adulthood transition follow-up system for youth with disabilities in Manitoba
Researcher: Youn-Young Park
Sponsor: Education Graduate Research Support Scholarship from University of Manitoba

Dear (name of a Faculty Member at University of Manitoba),

I am a PhD student at the University of Manitoba. My thesis project is to develop a transition follow-up system (hereafter TFS) for youth with disabilities in Manitoba. A TFS is a database that tracks the student outcomes (educational achievements and results) and post-school outcomes (work and adult life) of youth with disabilities. As part of this project, I will conduct in-person interviews with faculty members of postsecondary institutions in Manitoba who are involved in the topic area, transition for youth with disabilities. I would like to interview three or four faculty members. I am asking you to recommend suitable candidates for these interviews.

Interview procedure: The purpose of the interview is to examine scholars' perspectives on key aspects of TFS. The questions that will be discussed in the interview include the following:
- What purpose should a TFS need to be used for?
- What information to collect?
- Who should collect the data?
- From whom to collect data?
- When to collect the data?
- How to collect the data?
- How to report the results? (i.e., at what level? How often?)
- Concerns and suggestions?

I will interview each participants in-person only once. If necessary, supplementary information or opinions may be obtained by phone or email. Each interview will take 30-60 minutes and will be tape-recorded. The time and location for each interview will be arranged at the convenience of the participant.

Once a TFS model is developed, I will invite all the participants to a final review meeting to report my research and to obtain feedback on the TFS model developed. All participation will be on a voluntary basis.

Data management and confidentiality: The audio recordings will be transcribed to assist in the analysis. For confidentiality, the original tapes and their transcripts will be kept in a secured, locked location until end of the project (c. August 2010). I will then destroy the original tapes and transcripts. The results may be published and discussed in my dissertation. The results will be published and discussed in my dissertation; however, while I may directly quote interviewees, I will not include any unique information in my report that might identify particular individuals. Pseudonyms will be used for all participants. The participants will be free to withdraw from the study at any time.

No compensation will be provided for the participants: yet, there are no risks involved in this study. I will share an executive summary of the research results by email or mail with you and with all individuals who are involved in this study and are interested in receiving the summary. By participating in this study, you will have an opportunity to contribute to the development of a TFS model, which I hope will be a valuable measure to improve the current transition support

system for youth with disabilities. I hope that through this research I can develop a TFS model that is socially valid in Manitoba and reflects the perspectives of scholars and practitioners in relevant fields in Manitoba. Your assistance will be greatly appreciated.

If you have any questions, please feel free to ask me or my program advisor:

Researcher: Youn-Young Park; Tel: xxx-xxx-xxxx;   xxx@xxxx
                      xxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx. Winnipeg, Manitoba R3T 2N5
Program Advisor: Dr. Zana Lutfiyya; Tel: xxx-xxx-xxxx;   xxx@xxxx

Thank you,

Youn-Young Park

This research has been approved by the Education and Nursing Research and Ethics Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Secretariat at 474-7122, or e-mail margaret_bowman@umanitoba.ca. A copy of this letter has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

Appendix J.   Cover Letter for Director of Adult Service Agency

Research Project Title: A school-to-adulthood transition follow-up system for youth with disabilities in Manitoba
Researcher: Youn-Young Park
Sponsor: Education Graduate Research Support Scholarship from University of Manitoba

Dear (name of a director of adult service agency for individuals with disabilities),

I am a PhD student at the University of Manitoba. My thesis project is to develop a transition follow-up system (hereafter TFS) for youth with disabilities in Manitoba. A TFS is a database that tracks the student outcomes (educational achievements and results) and post-school outcomes (work and adult life) of youth with disabilities. As part of this project, I will conduct focus groups with adult service (e.g., vocational and residential) professionals who have been involved in the intake process of and have worked with recent high school graduates with disabilities. I am asking you to recommend a suitable candidate from your agency for the focus groups.

Focus group: A focus group refers to a group interview, in other words a group meeting, that discusses a topic or addresses questions. Each focus group of teachers or principals will have 7-9 participants. The purpose of the focus group is to examine adult service professionals' perspectives on key aspects of TFS. The questions that will be discussed in the focus group include the following:
- What purpose should a TFS need to be used for?
- What information to collect?
- Who should collect the data?
- From whom to collect data?
- When to collect the data?
- How to collect the data?
- How to report the results? (i.e., at what level? How often?)
- Concerns and suggestions?

One participant needs to attend one focus group meeting. Each focus group meeting will take 60-90 minutes and will be tape-recorded. The specific time and location for focus groups are yet to be determined. I will arrange focus groups based on the availability and convenience of the people who show interest in participating in the focus groups. The location for the focus group is very likely to be in Winnipeg. Please note that those who are interested in participating in a focus group but cannot attend the scheduled meeting may instead participate in an individual interview, which will be arranged at their convenience.

Once a TFS model is developed, I will invite all the participants to a final review meeting to report my research and to obtain feedback on the TFS model developed. All participation will be on a voluntary basis.

Data management and confidentiality: The audio recordings will be transcribed to assist in the analysis. For confidentiality, the original tapes and their transcripts will be kept in a secured, locked location until end of the project (c. August 2010). I will then destroy the original tapes and transcripts. The results may be published and discussed in my dissertation. The results will be published and discussed in my dissertation; however, while I may directly quote interviewees, neither the participant's nor your agency's name will be used in any part of the report or in any ensuing publication. Pseudonyms will be used for all participants. I will not include any unique information in my report that might identify particular individual or agency. The participants will be free to withdraw from the study at any time.

For the participants of focus groups who come from outside Winnipeg, I will compensate their travel cost with a $15 gift card as an honorarium. I will also provide some refreshment for the focus group meetings. Other than these, no payment or compensation will be provided for the participants. However, there are no risks involved in this study. I will share an executive summary of the research results by email or mail with you and with all individuals who are involved in this study and are interested in receiving the summary. By participating in this study, you will have an opportunity to contribute to the development of a TFS model, which I hope will be a valuable measure to improve the current transition support system for youth with disabilities. I hope that through this research I can develop a TFS model that is socially valid in Manitoba and reflects the perspectives of adult service professionals in Manitoba. Your assistance will be greatly appreciated.

If you have any questions, please feel free to ask me or my program advisor:
Researcher: Youn-Young Park; Tel: xxx-xxx-xxxx;   xxx@xxxx
                      xxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxx. Winnipeg, Manitoba R3T 2N5
Program Advisor: Dr. Zana Lutfiyya; Tel: xxx-xxx-xxxx;   xxx@xxxx

Thank you,

Youn-Young Park

This research has been approved by the Education and Nursing Research and Ethics Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons   or   the   Human   Ethics   Secretariat   at   474-7122,   or   e-mail margaret_bowman@umanitoba.ca. A copy of this letter has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

Appendix K.   Cover Letter for Director of Community Organizations

Research Project Title: A school-to-adulthood transition follow-up system for youth with disabilities in Manitoba
Researcher: Youn-Young Park
Sponsor: Education Graduate Research Support Scholarship from University of Manitoba

Dear (name of a director of community organization for individuals with disabilities),

I am a PhD student at the University of Manitoba. My thesis project is to develop a transition follow-up system (hereafter TFS) for youth with disabilities in Manitoba. A TFS is a database that tracks the student outcomes (educational achievements and results) and post-school outcomes (work and adult life) of youth with disabilities. As part of this project, I will conduct interviews with personnel of community organizations in Manitoba who have been involved in the transition process for high school graduates with disabilities. I am asking you to recommend a suitable candidate from your agency for the interview.

Interview procedure: The purpose of the interview is to examine the perspectives of community organization personnel on key aspects of TFS. The questions that will be discussed in the interview include the following:

- What purpose should a TFS need to be used for?
- What information to collect?
- Who should collect the data?
- From whom to collect data?
- When to collect the data?
- How to collect the data?
- How to report the results? (i.e., at what level? How often?)
- Concerns and suggestions?

I will interview each participants in-person only once. If necessary, supplementary information or opinions may be obtained by phone or email. Each interview will take 30-60 minutes and will be tape-recorded. The time and location for each interview will be arranged at the convenience of the participant.

Once a TFS model is developed, I will invite all the participants to a final review meeting to report my research and to obtain feedback on the TFS model developed. All participation will be on a voluntary basis.

Data management and confidentiality: The audio recordings will be transcribed to assist in the analysis. For confidentiality, the original tapes and their transcripts will be kept in a secured, locked location until end of the project (c. August 2010). I will then destroy the original tapes and transcripts. The results may be published and discussed in my dissertation. The results will be published and discussed in my dissertation; however, while I may directly quote interviewees, I will not include any unique information in my report that might identify particular individuals. Pseudonyms will be used for all participants. The participants will be free to withdraw from the study at any time.

No compensation will be provided for the participants: yet, there are no risks involved in this study. I will share an executive summary of the research results by email or mail with you and with all individuals who are involved in this study and are interested in receiving the summary. By participating in this study, you will have an opportunity to contribute to the development of a TFS model, which I hope will be a valuable measure to improve the current transition support

system for youth with disabilities. I hope that through this research I can develop a TFS model that is socially valid in Manitoba and reflects the perspectives of personnel of community organizations in relevant fields in Manitoba. Your assistance will be greatly appreciated.

If you have any questions, please feel free to ask me or my program advisor:
Researcher: Youn-Young Park; Tel: xxx-xxx-xxxx;   xxx@xxxx
                     xxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx. Winnipeg, Manitoba R3T 2N5
Program Advisor: Dr. Zana Lutfiyya; Tel: xxx-xxx-xxxx;   xxx@xxxx

Thank you,

Youn-Young Park

This research has been approved by the Education and Nursing Research and Ethics Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons   or   the   Human   Ethics   Secretariat   at   474-7122,   or   e-mail margaret_bowman@umanitoba.ca. A copy of this letter has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

Appendix L. Letter of Recruitment and Consent Form for Principals

Research Project Title: A School-To-Adulthood Transition Follow-up System for Youth with Disabilities in Manitoba
Researcher: Youn-Young Park
Sponsor: Education Graduate Research Support Scholarship from University of Manitoba

<u>**PART I. Letter of Recruitment**</u>

Dear high school principals,

I am a PhD student at the University of Manitoba. My thesis project is to develop a transition follow-up system (hereafter TFS) for youth with disabilities in Manitoba. A TFS is a database that tracks the student outcomes (educational achievements and results) and post-school outcomes (work and adult life) of youth with disabilities. As part of this project, I will conduct focus groups with stakeholders, including individuals with disabilities, teachers, principals, and other stakeholders. I am asking you to participate in a focus group of high school principals.

Focus group: A focus group refers to a group interview, in other words a group meeting, that discusses a topic or addresses questions. The focus group of principals will have 7-9 high school principals who are interested in the transition planning process for students with IEPs. The purpose of the focus group is to examine principals' perspectives on key aspects of TFS. The questions that will be discussed in the focus group include the following:
- What purpose should a TFS need to be used for?
- What information to collect?
- Who should collect the data?
- From whom to collect data?
- When to collect the data?
- How to collect the data?
- How to report the results? (i.e., at what level? How often?)
- Concerns and suggestions?

One participant needs to attend one focus group meeting. Each focus group meeting will take 60-90 minutes and will be tape-recorded. The specific time and location for focus groups are yet to be determined. I will arrange focus groups based on the availability and convenience of the people who show interest in participating in the focus groups. The location for the focus group is very likely to be in Winnipeg. Please note that those who are interested in participating in a focus group but cannot attend the scheduled meeting may instead participate in an individual interview, which will be arranged at their convenience.

Once a TFS model is developed, I will invite all the participants to a final review meeting to report my research and to obtain feedback on the TFS model developed. All participation will be on a voluntary basis.

Data management and confidentiality: The audio recordings will be transcribed to assist in the analysis. For confidentiality, the original tapes and their transcripts will be kept in a secured, locked location until end of the project (c. August 2010). I will then destroy the original tapes and transcripts. The results may be published and discussed in my dissertation. The results will be published and discussed in my dissertation; however, while I may directly quote interviewees, neither the participant's, the school's, nor your school division's name will be used in any part of the report or in any ensuing publication. Pseudonyms will be used for all participants. I will not include any unique information in my report that might identify particular individuals, schools or school divisions. The participants will be free to withdraw from the study at any time.

For the participants of focus groups who come from outside Winnipeg, I will compensate their travel cost with a $15 gift card as an honorarium. I will also provide some refreshment for the focus group meetings. Other than these, no payment or compensation will be provided for the participants. However, there are no risks involved in this study. I will share an executive summary of the research results by email or mail with you and with all individuals who are involved in this study and are interested in receiving the summary. By participating in this study, you will have an opportunity to contribute to the development of a TFS model, which I hope will be a valuable measure to improve the current transition support system for youth with disabilities. I hope that through this research I can develop a TFS model that is socially valid in Manitoba and reflects the needs of educational professionals in Manitoba. Your assistance will be greatly appreciated.

If you are interested in participating in the focus group, please contact me by email or by telephone:
Researcher: Youn-Young Park; Tel: xxx-xxx-xxxx;   xxx@xxxx
                         xxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxx. Winnipeg, Manitoba R3T 2N5

I will contact you to confirm your interest in participating in this study and to inquire about your preferences regarding the time and location for the focus group.

Or, if you have any questions, please feel free to ask me or my program advisor:
Program Advisor: Dr. Zana Lutfiyya; Tel: xxx-xxx-xxxx;   xxx@xxxx

Thank you,

Youn-Young Park

This research has been approved by the Education and Nursing Research and Ethics Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Secretariat at 474-7122, or e-mail margaret_bowman@umanitoba.ca. A copy of this letter has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

PART II. Consent form

Your signature on this form indicates that you understand the information provided about this study and that you agree to participate. I will ask you to sign this form at the time of the focus group meeting.

In no way does signing this form waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and /or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. If you wish to withdraw from the study, please contact me or my program advisor (Dr. Lutfiyya).

I _____ understand the information on this research project and agree to participate.

_____   _____
(Participant's signature)   (Date)

_____   _____
(Researcher's signature)   (Date)

Please provide an email (or mailing) address below if you wish to receive an executive summary of the research results:

_____

**Appendix M.   Letter of Recruitment and Consent Form for
Student Services Administrators**

Research Project Title: A School-To-Adulthood Transition Follow-up System for Youth with
Disabilities in Manitoba
Researcher: Youn-Young Park
Sponsor: Education Graduate Research Support Scholarship from University of Manitoba

PART I. Letter of Recruitment

Dear Student Services administrator,

I am a PhD student at the University of Manitoba. My thesis project is to develop a transition
follow-up system (hereafter TFS) for youth with disabilities in Manitoba. A TFS is a database
that tracks the student outcomes (educational achievements and results) and post-school outcomes
(work and adult life) of youth with disabilities. As part of this project, I will conduct focus
groups with stakeholders, including individuals with disabilities, teachers, Student Services
administrators, and other stakeholders. I am asking you to participate in a focus group of Student
Services administrators.

Focus group: A focus group refers to a group interview, in other words a group meeting, that
discusses a topic or addresses questions. A focus group of Student Services administrators will
have 7-9 participants who work with students with IEPs at their school division. The purpose of
the focus group is to examine Student Services administrators' perspectives on key aspects of
TFS. The questions that will be discussed in the focus group include the following:
- What purpose should a TFS need to be used for?
- What information to collect?
- Who should collect the data?
- From whom to collect data?
- When to collect the data?
- How to collect the data?
- How to report the results? (i.e., at what level? How often?)
- Concerns and suggestions?

One participant needs to attend one focus group meeting. Each focus group meeting will take 60-
90 minutes and will be tape-recorded. The specific time and location for focus groups are yet to
be determined. I will arrange focus groups based on the availability and convenience of the
people who show interest in participating in the focus groups. The location for the focus group is
very likely to be in Winnipeg. Please note that those who are interested in participating in a focus
group but cannot attend the scheduled meeting may instead participate in an individual interview,
which will be arranged at their convenience.

Once a TFS model is developed, I will invite all the participants to a final review meeting to
report my research and to obtain feedback on the TFS model developed. All participation will be
on a voluntary basis.

Data management and confidentiality: The audio recordings will be transcribed to assist in the
analysis. For confidentiality, the original tapes and their transcripts will be kept in a secured,
locked location until end of the project (c. August 2010). I will then destroy the original tapes and
transcripts. The results may be published and discussed in my dissertation. The results will be
published and discussed in my dissertation; however, while I may directly quote interviewees,

neither the participant's, the school's, nor your school division's name will be used in any part of the report or in any ensuing publication. Pseudonyms will be used for all participants. I will not include any unique information in my report that might identify particular individuals, schools or school divisions. The participants will be free to withdraw from the study at any time.

For the participants of focus groups who come from outside Winnipeg, I will compensate their travel cost with a $15 gift card as an honorarium. I will also provide some refreshment for the focus group meetings. Other than these, no payment or compensation will be provided for the participants. However, there are no risks involved in this study. I will share an executive summary of the research results by email or mail with you and with all individuals who are involved in this study and are interested in receiving the summary. By participating in this study, you will have an opportunity to contribute to the development of a TFS model, which I hope will be a valuable measure to improve the current transition support system for youth with disabilities. I hope that through this research I can develop a TFS model that is socially valid in Manitoba and reflects the needs of educational professionals in Manitoba. Your assistance will be greatly appreciated.

If you are interested in participating in the focus group, please contact me by email or by telephone:

Researcher: Youn-Young Park; Tel: xxx-xxx-xxxx;   xxx@xxxx
                    xxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx. Winnipeg, Manitoba R3T 2N5

I will contact you to confirm your interest in participating in this study and to inquire about your preferences regarding the time and location for the focus group.

Or, if you have any questions, please feel free to ask me or my program advisor:

Program Advisor: Dr. Zana Lutfiyya; Tel: xxx-xxx-xxxx;   xxx@xxxx

Thank you,

Youn-Young Park

This research has been approved by the Education and Nursing Research and Ethics Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Secretariat at 474-7122, or e-mail margaret_bowman@umanitoba.ca. A copy of this letter has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

PART II. Consent form

Your signature on this form indicates that you understand the information provided about this study and that you agree to participate. I will ask you to sign this form at the time of the focus group meeting.

In no way does signing this form waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and /or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. If you wish to withdraw from the study, please contact me or my program advisor (Dr. Lutfiyya).

I _____ understand the information on this research project and agree to participate.

_____   _____
        (Participant's signature)   (Date)

_____   _____
        (Researcher's signature)   (Date)

Please provide an email (or mailing) address below if you wish to receive an executive summary of the research results:
_____

Appendix N. Letter of Recruitment and Consent Form for Teachers

Research Project Title: A School-To-Adulthood Transition Follow-up System for Youth with Disabilities in Manitoba
Researcher: Youn-Young Park
Sponsor: Education Graduate Research Support Scholarship from University of Manitoba

PART I. Letter of Recruitment

Dear high school special education teachers,

I am a PhD student at the University of Manitoba. My thesis project is to develop a transition follow-up system (hereafter TFS) for youth with disabilities in Manitoba. A TFS is a database that tracks the student outcomes (educational achievements and results) and post-school outcomes (work and adult life) of youth with disabilities. As part of this project, I will conduct focus groups with stakeholders, including individuals with disabilities, parents, teachers, and other stakeholders. I am asking you to participate in a focus group of high school special education teachers.

Focus group: A focus group refers to a group interview, in other words a group meeting, that discusses a topic or addresses questions. The focus group of teachers will have 7-9 participants who have been involved in the transition planning process for students with IEPs at school. The purpose of the focus group is to examine teachers' perspectives on key aspects of TFS. The questions that will be discussed in the focus group include the following:
- What purpose should a TFS need to be used for?
- What information to collect?
- Who should collect the data?
- From whom to collect data?
- When to collect the data?
- How to collect the data?
- How to report the results? (i.e., at what level? How often?)
- Concerns and suggestions?

One participant needs to attend one focus group meeting. Each focus group meeting will take 60-90 minutes and will be tape-recorded. The specific time and location for focus groups are yet to be determined. I will arrange focus groups based on the availability and convenience of the people who show interest in participating in the focus groups. The location for the focus group is very likely to be in Winnipeg. Please note that those who are interested in participating in a focus group but cannot attend the scheduled meeting may instead participate in an individual interview, which will be arranged at their convenience.

Once a TFS model is developed, I will invite all the participants to a final review meeting to report my research and to obtain feedback on the TFS model developed. All participation will be on a voluntary basis.

Data management and confidentiality: The audio recordings will be transcribed to assist in the analysis.
For confidentiality, the original tapes and their transcripts will be kept in a secured, locked location until end of the project (c. August 2010). I will then destroy the original tapes and transcripts. The results may be published and discussed in my dissertation. The results will be

published and discussed in my dissertation; however, while I may directly quote interviewees, neither the participant's, the school's, nor your school division's name will be used in any part of the report or in any ensuing publication. Pseudonyms will be used for all participants. I will not include any unique information in my report that might identify particular teachers, schools or school divisions. The participants will be free to withdraw from the study at any time.

For the participants of focus groups who come from outside Winnipeg, I will compensate their travel cost with a $15 gift card as an honorarium. I will also provide some refreshment for the focus group meetings. Other than these, no payment or compensation will be provided for the participants. However, there are no risks involved in this study. I will share an executive summary of the research results by email or mail with you and with all individuals who are involved in this study and are interested in receiving the summary. By participating in this study, you will have an opportunity to contribute to the development of a TFS model, which I hope will be a valuable measure to improve the current transition support system for youth with disabilities. I hope that through this research I can develop a TFS model that is socially valid in Manitoba and reflects the needs of educational professionals in Manitoba. Your assistance will be greatly appreciated.

If you are interested in participating in the focus group, please contact me by email or by telephone:
Researcher: Youn-Young Park; Tel: xxx-xxx-xxxx;   xxx@xxxx
                        xxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx. Winnipeg, Manitoba R3T 2N5

I will contact you to confirm your interest in participating in this study and to inquire about your preferences regarding the time and location for the focus group.

Or, if you have any questions, please feel free to ask me or my program advisor:
Program Advisor: Dr. Zana Lutfiyya; Tel: xxx-xxx-xxxx;   xxx@xxxx

Thank you,

Youn-Young Park

This research has been approved by the Education and Nursing Research and Ethics Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Secretariat at 474-7122, or e-mail margaret_bowman@umanitoba.ca. A copy of this letter has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

PART II. Consent form

Your signature on this form indicates that you understand the information provided about this study and that you agree to participate. I will ask you to sign this form at the time of the focus group meeting.

In no way does signing this form waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and /or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. If you wish to withdraw from the study, please contact me or my program advisor (Dr. Lutfiyya).

I _____ understand the information on this research project and agree to participate.

_____   _____
        (Participant's signature)   (Date)

_____   _____
        (Researcher's signature)   (Date)

Please provide an email (or mailing) address below if you wish to receive an executive summary of the research results:

_____

Appendix O.   Letter of Recruitment and Consent Form for Youth with Disabilities

Research Project Title: A School-To-Adulthood Transition Follow-up System for Youth with Disabilities in Manitoba
Researcher: Youn-Young Park
Sponsor: Education Graduate Research Support Scholarship from University of Manitoba

PART I. Letter of Recruitment

Dear parents,

I am a PhD student at the University of Manitoba. My thesis project is to develop a transition follow-up system (hereafter TFS) for youth with disabilities in Manitoba. A TFS is a database that tracks the student outcomes (educational achievements and results) and post-school outcomes (work and adult life) of youth with disabilities. As part of this project, I will conduct focus groups with stakeholders, including individuals with disabilities, parents, teachers, and other stakeholders. I am asking you to participate in a focus group of youth with disabilities.

Focus group: A focus group refers to a group interview, in other words a group meeting, that discusses a topic or addresses questions. A focus group of youth with disabilities will have 7-9 participants who had an IEP at school and have left high school in the last 8 years. The purpose of the focus group is to examine the perspectives of youth with disabilities on key aspects of TFS. The questions that will be discussed in the focus group include the following:
- What purpose should a TFS need to be used for?
- What information to collect?
- Who should collect the data?
- From whom to collect data?
- When to collect the data?
- How to collect the data?
- How to report the results? (i.e., at what level? How often?)
- Concerns and suggestions?

One participant needs to attend one focus group meeting. Each focus group meeting will take 60-90 minutes and will be tape-recorded. The specific time and location for focus groups are yet to be determined. I will arrange focus groups based on the availability and convenience of the people who show interest in participating in the focus groups. The location for the focus group is very likely to be in Winnipeg. Please note that those who are interested in participating in a focus group but cannot attend the scheduled meeting may instead participate in an individual interview, which will be arranged at their convenience.

If you are interested in participating in a focus group, prior to the focus group meeting you will have a chance to meet with me and to learn about my research and the procedure of focus group so that you can make a final decision about participating.

Once a TFS model is developed, I will invite all the participants to a final review meeting to report my research and to obtain feedback on the TFS model developed. All participation will be on a voluntary basis.

Data management and confidentiality: The audio recordings will be transcribed to assist in the analysis.

For confidentiality, the original tapes and their transcripts will be kept in a secured, locked location until end of the project (c. August 2010). I will then destroy the original tapes and transcripts. The results may be published and discussed in my dissertation. The results will be published and discussed in my dissertation; however, while I may directly quote interviewees, your identity will not be exposed in any part of the report or in any ensuing publication. Pseudonyms will be used for all participants. I will not include any unique information in my report that might identify particular participants. The participants will be free to withdraw from the study at any time.

For the participants of focus groups who come from outside Winnipeg, I will compensate their travel cost with a $15 gift card as an honorarium. I will also provide some refreshment for the focus group meetings. Other than these, no payment or compensation will be provided for the participants. However, there are no risks involved in this study. I will share an executive summary of the research results by email or mail with you and with all individuals who are involved in this study and are interested in receiving the summary. By participating in this study, you will have an opportunity to contribute to the development of a TFS model, which I hope will be a valuable measure to improve the current transition support system for youth with disabilities. I hope that through this research I can develop a TFS model that is socially valid in Manitoba and reflects the perspectives of individuals with disabilities. Your assistance will be greatly appreciated.

If you are interested in participating in the focus group, please contact me by email or by telephone:

Researcher:　　　　Youn-Young Park; Tel: xxx-xxx-xxxx;　　xxx@xxxx
　　　　　　　　　　xxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx. Winnipeg, Manitoba R3T 2N5

I will contact you to confirm your interest in participating in this study and to inquire about your preferences regarding the time and location for the focus group.

Or, if you have any questions, please feel free to ask me or my program advisor:

Program Advisor:　Dr. Zana Lutfiyya; Tel: xxx-xxx-xxxx;　　xxx@xxxx

Thank you,

Youn-Young Park

This research has been approved by the Education and Nursing Research and Ethics Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Secretariat at 474-7122, or e-mail margaret_bowman@umanitoba.ca. A copy of this letter has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

PART II. Consent form

Your signature on this form indicates that you understand the information provided about this study and that you agree to participate. I will ask you to sign this form at the time of the focus group meeting.

In no way does signing this form waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and /or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. If you wish to withdraw from the study, please contact me or my program advisor (Dr. Lutfiyya).

I _____ understand the information on this research project and agree to participate.

_____   _____
        (Participant's signature)   (Date)

_____   _____
        (Researcher's signature)   (Date)

Please provide an email (or mailing) address below if you wish to receive an executive summary of the research results:

_____

Appendix P. Letter of Recruitment and Consent Form for Parents

Research Project Title: A School-To-Adulthood Transition Follow-up System for Youth with Disabilities in Manitoba
Researcher: Youn-Young Park
Sponsor: Education Graduate Research Support Scholarship from University of Manitoba

PART I. Letter of Recruitment

Dear parents,

I am a PhD student at the University of Manitoba. My thesis project is to develop a transition follow-up system (hereafter TFS) for youth with disabilities in Manitoba. A TFS is a database that tracks the student outcomes (educational achievements and results) and post-school outcomes (work and adult life) of youth with disabilities. As part of this project, I will conduct focus groups with stakeholders, including individuals with disabilities, parents, teachers, and other stakeholders. I am asking you to participate in a focus group of parents.

Focus group: A focus group refers to a group interview, in other words a group meeting, that discusses a topic or addresses questions. The focus group of parents will have 7-9 participants whose son or daughter had an IEP at school and has left high school in the last 8 years. The purpose of the focus group is to examine parents' perspectives on key aspects of TFS. The questions that will be discussed in the focus group include the following:
- What purpose should a TFS need to be used for?
- What information to collect?
- Who should collect the data?
- From whom to collect data?
- When to collect the data?
- How to collect the data?
- How to report the results? (i.e., at what level? How often?)
- Concerns and suggestions?

One participant needs to attend one focus group meeting. Each focus group meeting will take 60-90 minutes and will be tape-recorded. The specific time and location for focus groups are yet to be determined. I will arrange focus groups based on the availability and convenience of the people who show interest in participating in the focus groups. The location for the focus group is very likely to be in Winnipeg. Please note that those who are interested in participating in a focus group but cannot attend the scheduled meeting may instead participate in an individual interview, which will be arranged at their convenience.

Once a TFS model is developed, I will invite all the participants to a final review meeting to report my research and to obtain feedback on the TFS model developed. All participation will be on a voluntary basis.

Data management and confidentiality: The audio recordings will be transcribed to assist in the analysis.
For confidentiality, the original tapes and their transcripts will be kept in a secured, locked location until end of the project (c. August 2010). I will then destroy the original tapes and transcripts. The results may be published and discussed in my dissertation. The results will be published and discussed in my dissertation; however, while I may directly quote interviewees,

your identity will not be exposed in any part of the report or in any ensuing publication. Pseudonyms will be used for all participants. I will not include any unique information in my report that might identify particular participants. The participants will be free to withdraw from the study at any time.

For the participants of focus groups who come from outside Winnipeg, I will compensate their travel cost with a $15 gift card as an honorarium. I will also provide some refreshment for the focus group meetings. Other than these, no payment or compensation will be provided for the participants. However, there are no risks involved in this study. I will share an executive summary of the research results by email or mail with you and with all individuals who are involved in this study and are interested in receiving the summary. By participating in this study, you will have an opportunity to contribute to the development of a TFS model, which I hope will be a valuable measure to improve the current transition support system for youth with disabilities. I hope that through this research I can develop a TFS model that is socially valid in Manitoba and reflects parents' perspectives. Your assistance will be greatly appreciated.

If you are interested in participating in the focus group, please contact me by email or by telephone:
Researcher: Youn-Young Park; Tel: xxx-xxx-xxxx;   xxx@xxxx
                              xxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx. Winnipeg, Manitoba R3T 2N5

I will contact you to confirm your interest in participating in this study and to inquire about your preferences regarding the time and location for the focus group.

Or, if you have any questions, please feel free to ask me or my program advisor:
Program Advisor: Dr. Zana Lutfiyya; Tel: xxx-xxx-xxxx;   xxx@xxxx

Thank you,

Youn-Young Park

This research has been approved by the Education and Nursing Research and Ethics Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Secretariat at 474-7122, or e-mail margaret_bowman@umanitoba.ca. A copy of this letter has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

PART II. Consent form

Your signature on this form indicates that you understand the information provided about this study and that you agree to participate. I will ask you to sign this form at the time of the focus group meeting.

In no way does signing this form waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and /or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. If you wish to withdraw from the study, please contact me or my program advisor (Dr. Lutfiyya).

I _____ understand the information on this research project and agree to participate.

_____   _____
        (Participant's signature)   (Date)

_____   _____
        (Researcher's signature)   (Date)

Please provide an email (or mailing) address below if you wish to receive an executive summary of the research results:

_____

Appendix Q.   Letter of Recruitment and Consent Form for FSCA Representatives

Research Project Title: A School-To-Adulthood Transition Follow-up System for Youth with Disabilities in Manitoba
Researcher: Youn-Young Park
Sponsor: Education Graduate Research Support Scholarship from University of Manitoba

PART I. Letter of Recruitment

Dear (name of the FSCA representative),

I am a PhD student at the University of Manitoba. My thesis project is to develop a transition follow-up system (hereafter TFS) for youth with disabilities in Manitoba. A TFS is a database that tracks the student outcomes (educational achievements and results) and post-school outcomes (work and adult life) of youth with disabilities. As part of this project, I will conduct in-person interviews with the representatives of Manitoba Education and FSCA in Manitoba. I am asking you to participate in the interview.

Interview procedure: The purpose of the interview is to examine government representatives' perspectives on key aspects of TFS. The questions that will be discussed in the interview include the following:
- What purpose should a TFS need to be used for?
- What information to collect?
- Who should collect the data?
- From whom to collect data?
- When to collect the data?
- How to collect the data?
- How to report the results? (i.e., at what level? How often?)
- Concerns and suggestions?

I will interview each participants in-person only once. If necessary, supplementary information or opinions may be obtained by phone or email. Each interview will take 30-60 minutes and will be tape-recorded. The time and location for each interview will be arranged at the convenience of the participant.

Once a TFS model is developed, I will invite all the participants to a final review meeting to report my research and to obtain feedback on the TFS model developed. All participation will be on a voluntary basis.

Data management and confidentiality: The audio recordings will be transcribed to assist in the analysis. For confidentiality, the original tapes and their transcripts will be kept in a secured, locked location until end of the project (c. August 2010). I will then destroy the original tapes and transcripts. The results may be published and discussed in my dissertation. The results will be published and discussed in my dissertation; however, while I may directly quote interviewees, I will not include any unique information in my report that might identify particular individuals, schools or school divisions. Pseudonyms will be used for all participants. The participants will be free to withdraw from the study at any time.

No compensation will be provided for the participants: yet, there are no risks involved in this study. I will share an executive summary of the research results by email or mail with you and with all individuals who are involved in this study and are interested in receiving the summary.

By participating in this study, you will have an opportunity to contribute to the development of a TFS model, which I hope will be a valuable measure to improve the current transition support system for youth with disabilities. I hope that through this research I can develop a TFS model that is socially valid in Manitoba and reflects the perspectives of government representatives in Manitoba. Your assistance will be greatly appreciated.

If you are interested in participating in the interview, please contact me by email or by telephone:
Researcher: Youn-Young Park; Tel: xxx-xxx-xxxx;   xxx@xxxx
                     xxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx. Winnipeg, Manitoba R3T 2N5

I will contact you to confirm your interest in participating in this study and to inquire about your preferences regarding the time and location for the interview.

Or, if you have any questions, please feel free to ask me or my program advisor:
Program Advisor: Dr. Zana Lutfiyya; Tel: xxx-xxx-xxxx;   xxx@xxxx

Thank you,

Youn-Young Park

This research has been approved by the Education and Nursing Research and Ethics Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Secretariat at 474-7122, or e-mail margaret_bowman@umanitoba.ca. A copy of this letter has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

PART II. Consent form

Your signature on this form indicates that you understand the information provided about this study and that you agree to participate. I will ask you to sign this form at the time of the interview.

In no way does signing this form waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and /or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. If you wish to withdraw from the study, please contact me or my program advisor (Dr. Lutfiyya).

I _____ understand the information on this research project and agree to participate.

_____   _____
        (Participant's signature)   (Date)

_____   _____
        (Researcher's signature)   (Date)

Please provide an email (or mailing) address below if you wish to receive an executive summary of the research results:

_____

**Appendix R.   Letter of Recruitment and Consent Form for
Manitoba Education Representatives**

Research Project Title: A School-To-Adulthood Transition Follow-up System for Youth with
Disabilities in Manitoba
Researcher: Youn-Young Park
Sponsor: Education Graduate Research Support Scholarship from University of Manitoba

PART I. Letter of Recruitment

Dear (name of the Manitoba Education representative),

I am a PhD student at the University of Manitoba. My thesis project is to develop a transition
follow-up system (hereafter TFS) for youth with disabilities in Manitoba. A TFS is a database
that tracks the student outcomes (educational achievements and results) and post-school outcomes
(work and adult life) of youth with disabilities. As part of this project, I will conduct in-person
interviews with the representatives of Manitoba Education and FSCA in Manitoba. I am asking
you to participate in the interview.

Interview procedure: The purpose of the interview is to examine government representatives'
perspectives on key aspects of TFS. The questions that will be discussed in the interview include
the following:
- What purpose should a TFS need to be used for?
- What information to collect?
- Who should collect the data?
- From whom to collect data?
- When to collect the data?
- How to collect the data?
- How to report the results? (i.e., at what level? How often?)
- Concerns and suggestions?

I will interview each participants in-person only once. If necessary, supplementary information or
opinions may be obtained by phone or email. Each interview will take 30-60 minutes and will be
tape-recorded. The time and location for each interview will be arranged at the convenience of the
participant.

Once a TFS model is developed, I will invite all the participants to a final review meeting to
report my research and to obtain feedback on the TFS model developed. All participation will be
on a voluntary basis.

Data management and confidentiality: The audio recordings will be transcribed to assist in the
analysis. For confidentiality, the original tapes and their transcripts will be kept in a secured,
locked location until end of the project (c. August 2010). I will then destroy the original tapes and
transcripts. The results may be published and discussed in my dissertation. The results will be
published and discussed in my dissertation; however, while I may directly quote interviewees, I
will not include any unique information in my report that might identify particular individuals,
schools or school divisions. Pseudonyms will be used for all participants. The participants will be
free to withdraw from the study at any time.

No compensation will be provided for the participants: yet, there are no risks involved in this
study. I will share an executive summary of the research results by email or mail with you and

with all individuals who are involved in this study and are interested in receiving the summary. By participating in this study, you will have an opportunity to contribute to the development of a TFS model, which I hope will be a valuable measure to improve the current transition support system for youth with disabilities. I hope that through this research I can develop a TFS model that is socially valid in Manitoba and reflects the perspectives of government representatives in Manitoba. Your assistance will be greatly appreciated.

If you are interested in participating in the interview, please contact me by email or by telephone:
Researcher: Youn-Young Park; Tel: xxx-xxx-xxxx;   xxx@xxxx
                      xxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxx. Winnipeg, Manitoba R3T 2N5

I will contact you to confirm your interest in participating in this study and to inquire about your preferences regarding the time and location for the interview.

Or, if you have any questions, please feel free to ask me or my program advisor:
Program Advisor: Dr. Zana Lutfiyya; Tel: xxx-xxx-xxxx;   xxx@xxxx

Thank you,

Youn-Young Park

This research has been approved by the Education and Nursing Research and Ethics Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Secretariat at 474-7122, or e-mail margaret_bowman@umanitoba.ca. A copy of this letter has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

PART II. Consent form

Your signature on this form indicates that you understand the information provided about this study and that you agree to participate. I will ask you to sign this form at the time of the interview.

In no way does signing this form waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and /or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. If you wish to withdraw from the study, please contact me or my program advisor (Dr. Lutfiyya).

I _____ understand the information on this research project and agree to participate.

_____   _____
    (Participant's signature)   (Date)

_____   _____
    (Researcher's signature)   (Date)

Please provide an email (or mailing) address below if you wish to receive an executive summary of the research results:

_____

**Appendix S.   Letter of Recruitment and Consent Form for
College/University Faculty Members**

Research Project Title: A School-To-Adulthood Transition Follow-up System for Youth with Disabilities in Manitoba
Researcher: Youn-Young Park
Sponsor: Education Graduate Research Support Scholarship from University of Manitoba

PART I. Letter of Recruitment

Dear (name of the faculty member),

I am a PhD student at the University of Manitoba. My thesis project is to develop a transition follow-up system (hereafter TFS) for youth with disabilities in Manitoba. A TFS is a database that tracks the student outcomes (educational achievements and results) and post-school outcomes (work and adult life) of youth with disabilities. As part of this project, I will conduct in-person interviews with faculty members in Manitoba who are involved in the topic area, transition for youth with disabilities. I am asking you to participate in the interview.

Interview procedure: The purpose of the interview is to examine scholars' perspectives on key aspects of TFS. The questions that will be discussed in the interview include the following:
- What purpose should a TFS need to be used for?
- What information to collect?
- Who should collect the data?
- From whom to collect data?
- When to collect the data?
- How to collect the data?
- How to report the results? (i.e., at what level? How often?)
- Concerns and suggestions?

I will interview each participants in-person only once. If necessary, supplementary information or opinions may be obtained by phone or email. Each interview will take 30-60 minutes and will be tape-recorded. The time and location for each interview will be arranged at the convenience of the participant.

Once a TFS model is developed, I will invite all the participants to a final review meeting to report my research and to obtain feedback on the TFS model developed. All participation will be on a voluntary basis.

Data management and confidentiality: The audio recordings will be transcribed to assist in the analysis. For confidentiality, the original tapes and their transcripts will be kept in a secured, locked location until end of the project (c. August 2010). I will then destroy the original tapes and transcripts. The results may be published and discussed in my dissertation. The results will be published and discussed in my dissertation; however, while I may directly quote interviewees, I will not include any unique information in my report that might identify you or your institution. Pseudonyms will be used for all participants. The participants will be free to withdraw from the study at any time.

No compensation will be provided for the participants: yet, there are no risks involved in this study. I will share an executive summary of the research results by email or mail with you and

with all individuals who are involved in this study and are interested in receiving the summary. By participating in this study, you will have an opportunity to contribute to the development of a TFS model, which I hope will be a valuable measure to improve the current transition support system for youth with disabilities. I hope that through this research I can develop a TFS model that is socially valid in Manitoba and reflects the perspectives of scholars and practitioners in relevant fields in Manitoba. Your assistance will be greatly appreciated.

If you are interested in participating in the interview, please contact me by email or by telephone:
Researcher: Youn-Young Park; Tel: xxx-xxx-xxxx;   xxx@xxxx
                        xxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxx. Winnipeg, Manitoba R3T 2N5

I will contact you to confirm your interest in participating in this study and to inquire about your preferences regarding the time and location for the interview.

Or, if you have any questions, please feel free to ask me or my program advisor:
Program Advisor: Dr. Zana Lutfiyya; Tel: xxx-xxx-xxxx;   xxx@xxxx

Thank you,

Youn-Young Park

This research has been approved by the Education and Nursing Research and Ethics Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Secretariat at 474-7122, or e-mail margaret_bowman@umanitoba.ca. A copy of this letter has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

PART II. Consent form

Your signature on this form indicates that you understand the information provided about this study and that you agree to participate. I will ask you to sign this form at the time of the interview.

In no way does signing this form waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and /or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. If you wish to withdraw from the study, please contact me or my program advisor (Dr. Lutfiyya).

I _____ understand the information on this research project and agree to participate.

_____   _____
      (Participant's signature)   (Date)

_____   _____
      (Researcher's signature)   (Date)

Please provide an email (or mailing) address below if you wish to receive an executive summary of the research results:

_____

Appendix T.   Letter of Recruitment and Consent Form for Adult Service Professionals

Research Project Title: A School-To-Adulthood Transition Follow-up System for Youth with Disabilities in Manitoba
Researcher: Youn-Young Park
Sponsor: Education Graduate Research Support Scholarship from University of Manitoba

PART I. Letter of Recruitment

Dear adult service professionals,

I am a PhD student at the University of Manitoba. My thesis project is to develop a transition follow-up system (hereafter TFS) for youth with disabilities in Manitoba. A TFS is a database that tracks the student outcomes (educational achievements and results) and post-school outcomes (work and adult life) of youth with disabilities. As part of this project, I will conduct focus groups with stakeholders, including individuals with disabilities, parents, adult service (e.g., vocational and residential) professionals, and other stakeholders. I am asking you to participate in a focus group of adult service professionals.

Focus group: A focus group refers to a group interview, in other words a group meeting, that discusses a topic or addresses questions. A focus group of adult service professionals will have 7-9 representatives of vocational or residential services agencies who have been involved in the intake process of and have worked with recent high school graduates with disabilities. The purpose of the focus group is to examine adult service professionals' perspectives on key aspects of TFS. The questions that will be discussed in the focus group include the following:
- What purpose should a TFS need to be used for?
- What information to collect?
- Who should collect the data?
- From whom to collect data?
- When to collect the data?
- How to collect the data?
- How to report the results? (i.e., at what level? How often?)
- Concerns and suggestions?

One participant needs to attend one focus group meeting. Each focus group meeting will take 60-90 minutes and will be tape-recorded. The specific time and location for focus groups are yet to be determined. I will arrange focus groups based on the availability and convenience of the people who show interest in participating in the focus groups. The location for the focus group is very likely to be in Winnipeg. Please note that those who are interested in participating in a focus group but cannot attend the scheduled meeting may instead participate in an individual interview, which will be arranged at their convenience.

Once a TFS model is developed, I will invite all the participants to a final review meeting to report my research and to obtain feedback on the TFS model developed. All participation will be on a voluntary basis.

Data management and confidentiality: The audio recordings will be transcribed to assist in the analysis. For confidentiality, the original tapes and their transcripts will be kept in a secured, locked location until end of the project (c. August 2010). I will then destroy the original tapes and transcripts. The results may be published and discussed in my dissertation. The results will be published and discussed in my dissertation; however, while I may directly quote interviewees,

neither the participant's nor your agency's name will be used in any part of the report or in any ensuing publication. Pseudonyms will be used for all participants. I will not include any unique information in my report that might identify particular individual or agency. The participants will be free to withdraw from the study at any time.

For the participants of focus groups who come from outside Winnipeg, I will compensate their travel cost with a $15 gift card as an honorarium. I will also provide some refreshment for the focus group meetings. Other than these, no payment or compensation will be provided for the participants. However, there are no risks involved in this study. I will share an executive summary of the research results by email or mail with you and with all individuals who are involved in this study and are interested in receiving the summary. By participating in this study, you will have an opportunity to contribute to the development of a TFS model, which I hope will be a valuable measure to improve the current transition support system for youth with disabilities. I hope that through this research I can develop a TFS model that is socially valid in Manitoba and reflects the perspectives of adult service professionals in Manitoba. Your assistance will be greatly appreciated.

If you are interested in participating in the focus group, please contact me by email or by telephone:
Researcher: Youn-Young Park; Tel: xxx-xxx-xxxx;   xxx@xxxx
                     xxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx. Winnipeg, Manitoba R3T 2N5

I will contact you to confirm your interest in participating in this study and to inquire about your preferences regarding the time and location for the focus group.

Or, if you have any questions, please feel free to ask me or my program advisor:
Program Advisor: Dr. Zana Lutfiyya; Tel: xxx-xxx-xxxx;   xxx@xxxx

Thank you,

Youn-Young Park

This research has been approved by the Education and Nursing Research and Ethics Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Secretariat at 474-7122, or e-mail margaret_bowman@umanitoba.ca. A copy of this letter has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

PART II. Consent form

Your signature on this form indicates that you understand the information provided about this study and that you agree to participate. I will ask you to sign this form at the time of the focus group.

In no way does signing this form waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and /or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. If you wish to withdraw from the study, please contact me or my program advisor (Dr. Lutfiyya).

I _____ understand the information on this research project and agree to participate.

_____   _____
(Participant's signature)   (Date)

_____   _____
(Researcher's signature)   (Date)

Please provide an email (or mailing) address below if you wish to receive an executive summary of the research results:

_____

**Appendix U.   Letter of Recruitment and Consent Form for
Personnel of Community Organization**

Research Project Title: A School-To-Adulthood Transition Follow-up System for Youth with Disabilities in Manitoba
Researcher: Youn-Young Park
Sponsor: Education Graduate Research Support Scholarship from University of Manitoba

PART I. Letter of Recruitment

Dear (name of the faculty member),

I am a PhD student at the University of Manitoba. My thesis project is to develop a transition follow-up system (hereafter TFS) for youth with disabilities in Manitoba. A TFS is a database that tracks the student outcomes (educational achievements and results) and post-school outcomes (work and adult life) of youth with disabilities. As part of this project, I will conduct in-person interviews with personnel of community organizations who have been involved in the transition process for recent high school graduates with disabilities. I am asking you to participate in the interview.

Interview procedure: The purpose of the interview is to examine scholars' perspectives on key aspects of TFS. The questions that will be discussed in the interview include the following:
- What purpose should a TFS need to be used for?
- What information to collect?
- Who should collect the data?
- From whom to collect data?
- When to collect the data?
- How to collect the data?
- How to report the results? (i.e., at what level? How often?)
- Concerns and suggestions?

I will interview each participants in-person only once. If necessary, supplementary information or opinions may be obtained by phone or email. Each interview will take 30-60 minutes and will be tape-recorded. The time and location for each interview will be arranged at the convenience of the participant.

Once a TFS model is developed, I will invite all the participants to a final review meeting to report my research and to obtain feedback on the TFS model developed. All participation will be on a voluntary basis.

Data management and confidentiality: The audio recordings will be transcribed to assist in the analysis. For confidentiality, the original tapes and their transcripts will be kept in a secured, locked location until end of the project (c. August 2010). I will then destroy the original tapes and transcripts. The results may be published and discussed in my dissertation. The results will be published and discussed in my dissertation; however, while I may directly quote interviewees, I will not include any unique information in my report that might identify you or your organization. Pseudonyms will be used for all participants. The participants will be free to withdraw from the study at any time.

No compensation will be provided for the participants: yet, there are no risks involved in this study. I will share an executive summary of the research results by email or mail with you and with all individuals who are involved in this study and are interested in receiving the summary. By participating in this study, you will have an opportunity to contribute to the development of a TFS model, which I hope will be a valuable measure to improve the current transition support system for youth with disabilities. I hope that through this research I can develop a TFS model that is socially valid in Manitoba and reflects the perspectives of scholars and practitioners in relevant fields in Manitoba. Your assistance will be greatly appreciated.

If you are interested in participating in the interview, please contact me by email or by telephone:

Researcher: Youn-Young Park; Tel: xxx-xxx-xxxx;   xxx@xxxx
                       xxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxx. Winnipeg, Manitoba R3T 2N5

I will contact you to confirm your interest in participating in this study and to inquire about your preferences regarding the time and location for the interview.

Or, if you have any questions, please feel free to ask me or my program advisor:
Program Advisor: Dr. Zana Lutfiyya; Tel: xxx-xxx-xxxx;   xxx@xxxx

Thank you,

Youn-Young Park

This research has been approved by the Education and Nursing Research and Ethics Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Secretariat at 474-7122, or e-mail margaret_bowman@umanitoba.ca. A copy of this letter has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

PART II. Consent form

Your signature on this form indicates that you understand the information provided about this study and that you agree to participate. I will ask you to sign this form at the time of the interview.

In no way does signing this form waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and /or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. If you wish to withdraw from the study, please contact me or my program advisor (Dr. Lutfiyya).

I _____ understand the information on this research project and agree to participate.

_____   _____
      (Participant's signature)   (Date)

_____   _____
      (Researcher's signature)   (Date)

Please provide an email (or mailing) address below if you wish to receive an executive summary of the research results:

_____

Appendix V-1. Summary Questionnaire for Parent Focus Group

Research Project Title: A School-To-Adulthood Transition Follow-up System for Youth with Disabilities in Manitoba
Researcher: Youn-Young Park

Thank you for participating in the focus group discussion. This questionnaire asks you to answer your final position about the key issues of a TFS discussed in this meeting. After we discuss each key issue regarding a TFS, you will have 2-3 minutes to answer to the relevant question in this questionnaire. If you would like to suggest any alternative for the answer options or to add comments, you are welcome to do so. Thank you.

Purpose of Transition Follow-up System

1. The followings are potential benefits of conducting a transition follow-up system. Which one do you think should be the most important purpose of a TFS? (please choose *only one item*)

   _____ a. To improve current transition support systems (e.g. school programs and adult services)
   _____ b. To ensure the accountability of educational and social services
   _____ c. To identify critical factors that affect successful transition
   _____ d. To examine the student outcomes and adult outcomes of youth with disabilities
   _____ e. Other (specify):

   _____

Post-School Information to Collect by Transition Follow-up System

2. In terms of post-school outcomes and services, which of the following information of your youth do you think a TFS should collect?

   Employment Outcomes (check *every item applicable*)
   _____ a. Financial status (e.g. earnings, finance source)
   _____ b. Type of jobs (e.g. retail, food services, construction)
   _____ c. Employment status (e.g. (un)employment, volunteer)
   _____ d. Work hours (e.g. full- or part-time, and seasonal)
   _____ e. Job benefits (e.g. pension, health insurance, vacation)
   _____ f.. Job stability (e.g. length of time on the current/former jobs)
   _____ g. Job satisfaction
   _____ h. Job acquisition (e.g. by himself/herself, by parents/relatives)
   _____ i. Other (describe) _____
   _____ j. Other (describe) _____

   Postsecondary Education Outcomes (check *every item applicable*)
   _____ a. Type of education/training (e.g. 2 year college, university, vocational schools)
   _____ b. Full- or part-time enrolment
   _____ c. Field of study (e.g. Engineering, English, Arts)
   _____ d. Other (describe) _____
   _____ e. Other (describe) _____

Post-School Information to Collect by Transition Follow-up System (Continued.)

Residential Outcomes (check *every item applicable*)
_____ a.   Living status (e.g. on own, with family, supervised living)
_____ b.   Marital status (e.g. (un)married, with common-law married)
_____ c.   Youth's contribution to his/her living expense
_____ d.   Other (describe) _____
_____ e.   Other (describe) _____

Other Aspects of Life (check every item applicable)
_____ a.   Physical/health condition
_____ b.   Personal and social networks (e.g., social/leisure activities)
_____ c.   Community living (e.g. transporting, shopping, voting)
_____ d.   Life satisfaction, choice-making, and general well-being
_____ e.   Other (describe) _____
_____ f.   Other (describe) _____

Adult Program/Service Needs (check *every item applicable*)
_____ a.   Services received (e.g. vocational, residential, leisure)
_____ b.   Services required (e.g. vocational, residential, leisure)
_____ c.   Satisfaction with services provided (e.g. vocational, residential, leisure)
_____ d.   Other (describe) _____
_____ e.   Other (describe) _____

Data-Collector / Agent of Transition Follow-up System

3.   Who do you think is the most suitable personnel in a transition follow-up system to collect information of youth with disabilities (e.g. youth's background, school experiences, and adult outcomes)? (please choose *only one item*)

_____ a.   High school personnel (e.g. teacher, Student Services administrator, etc.)
_____ b.   Representative of Education Department (government)
_____ c.   Representative of Family Services and Housing (government)
_____ d.   Trained independent agent
_____ e.   Other: _____

Data-Source for Information about Youth with Disabilities

4.   Who do you think is the most suitable in providing postschool information about youth with disabilities (e.g. residential and employment conditions, community involvement, and adult services received)? (please choose *only one item*)

_____ a.   Youth with disabilities
_____ b.   Primary care giver (e.g. parents, guardians, or professional care giver)
_____ c.   Youth or his/her primary care giver depending on the case
_____ d.   Both of a and b above
_____ e.   Other: _____

Timeline of Data-Collection / Timeline of Transition Follow-up

5.   When do you think would be the best time to collect information of your youth's post-school experiences?
(if you think more than one time of data collection is necessary, check *every item applicable*)

Post-School Experiences (e.g. adult outcomes and adult services provided)
_____ a. 6 months after leaving school
_____ b. 1 year after leaving school
_____ c. 2 years after leaving school
_____ d. 3 years after leaving school
_____ e. 4 years after leaving school
_____ f. 5 years after leaving school or later
_____ g. Other (describe) _____

Data-Collection Method / Method of Transition Follow-up

6.   If you were asked to provide the information of your youth, which of the following approaches would you prefer?
_____ a. On-line database/survey
_____ b. Mailed survey
_____ c. Phone-interview
_____ d. In-person interview
_____ e. Other (describe) _____

7.   If **your youth** were asked to provide the information of their school and post-school experiences, which of the following approaches do you think is the most suitable?
_____ a. On-line database/survey
_____ b. Mailed survey
_____ c. Phone-interview
_____ d. In-person interview
_____ e. None (not likely to be able to provide the information about him/her)
_____ f. Other (describe) _____

Results Report of Transition Follow-up

8. At which level do you think the results of the transition follow-up should be reported?
    (check *every item applicable*)
    _____ a. At the school level
    _____ b. At the school division level
    _____ c. At the city/area level
    _____ d. At the province level
    _____ e. Other (describe) _____

9. How often do you think this follow-up system should report the province-wide results?
    (choose *only one item*)
    _____ a. Annually
    _____ b. Biannually
    _____ c. Every 3 years
    _____ d. Every 4 years
    _____ e. Other (describe) _____

Suggestions or Concerns

10. Do you have any suggestions or concerns regarding implementing a transition follow-up
    system of youth with disabilities?

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

Please return the completed survey to the researcher, Youn-Young Park. Thank you.

Appendix V-2. Summary Questionnaire for Youth Focus Group

Research Project Title: A School-To-Adulthood Transition Follow-up System for Youth with Disabilities in Manitoba
Researcher: Youn-Young Park

Thank you for participating in the focus group discussion. This questionnaire asks you to answer your final position about the key issues of a TFS discussed in this meeting. After we discuss each key issue regarding a TFS, you will have 2-3 minutes to answer to the relevant question in this questionnaire. If you would like to suggest any alternative for the answer options or to add comments, you are welcome to do so. If you have any questions or need assistance in answering the questions, please let me know. Thank you.

Purpose of Transition Follow-up System

1. Do you think a transition follow-up system is necessary? If yes, why do you think so?
    _____

Post-School Information to Collect by Transition Follow-up System

2. In terms of post-school outcomes and services, which of the following information do you think is important? Please check every item applicable.

    Employment Outcomes
    _____ a. Financial status (e.g. earnings, finance source)
    _____ b. Type of jobs (e.g. retail, food services, construction)
    _____ c. Employment status (e.g. (un)employment, volunteer)
    _____ d. Work hours (e.g. full- or part-time, and seasonal)
    _____ e. Job benefits (e.g. pension, health insurance, vacation)
    _____ f.. Job stability (e.g. length of time on the current/former jobs)
    _____ g. Job satisfaction
    _____ h. Job acquisition (e.g. by himself/herself, by an adult service agency)
    _____ i. Other (describe) _____
    _____ j. Other (describe) _____

    Postsecondary Education Outcomes
    _____ a. Type of education/training (e.g. 2 year college, university, vocational schools)
    _____ b. Full- or part-time enrolment
    _____ c. Field of study (e.g. Engineering, English, Arts)
    _____ d. Other (describe) _____
    _____ e. Other (describe) _____

    Residential Outcomes
    _____ a. Living status (e.g. on own, with family, supervised living)
    _____ b. Marital status (e.g. (un)married, with common-law married)
    _____ c. Youth's contribution to his/her living expense
    _____ d. Other (describe) _____
    _____ e. Other (describe) _____

Post-School Information to Collect by Transition Follow-up System (Continued.)

Other Aspects of Life

_____ a. Physical/health condition

_____ b. Personal and social networks (e.g., social/leisure activities)

_____ c. Community living (e.g. transporting, shopping, voting)

_____ d. Life satisfaction, choice-making, and general well-being

_____ e. Other (describe) _____

_____ f. Other (describe) _____

Adult Program/Service Needs (check *every item applicable*)

_____ a. Services received (e.g. vocational, residential, leisure)

_____ b. Services required (e.g. vocational, residential, leisure)

_____ c. Satisfaction with services provided (e.g. vocational, residential, leisure)

_____ d. Other (describe) _____

_____ e. Other (describe) _____

Data-Collector / Agent of Transition Follow-up System

3. Who would you like to contact you to ask about how you are doing after graduation? (please choose *only one item*)

_____ a. Someone from your high school, such as your former teacher

_____ b. Your social worker from the government

_____ c. Does not matter. Anyone is okay.

_____ d. Other: _____

Data-Source for Information about Youth with Disabilities

4. Who do you think is the best person to provide information about you, such as where you live, who you live with, where you work, how many hours you work, how much money you make, what you do during free time, and so on? (please choose *only one item*)

_____ a. Myself

_____ b. My parents or someone who knows me well

_____ c. Both of a and b above

_____ d. Other: _____

Timeline of Data-Collection / Timeline of Transition Follow-up

5. When do you think would be the best time to collect information about your post-school experiences?
(if you think more than one time of data collection is necessary, check *every item applicable*)

Post-School Experiences (e.g. adult outcomes and adult services provided)

_____ a. 6 months after leaving school

_____ b. 1 year after leaving school

_____ c. 2 years after leaving school

_____ d. 3 years after leaving school

_____ e. 4 years after leaving school

_____ f. 5 years after leaving school or later

_____ g. Other (describe) _____

Data-Collection Method / Method of Transition Follow-up

6. If you were asked to provide the information of your school and post-school experiences, which of the following approaches would you prefer?
    _____ a. On-line database/survey
    _____ b. Mailed survey
    _____ c. Phone-interview
    _____ d. In-person interview
    _____ e. Other (describe) _____

Suggestions or Concerns

7. Do you have any suggestions or concerns regarding implementing a transition follow-up system of youth with disabilities?

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

Please return the completed survey to the researcher, Youn-Young Park. Thank you.

Appendix V-3. Summary Questionnaire for Teacher Focus Group

Research Project Title: A School-To-Adulthood Transition Follow-up System for Youth with Disabilities in Manitoba
Researcher: Youn-Young Park

> Thank you for participating in the focus group discussion. This questionnaire asks you to answer your final position about the key issues of a TFS discussed in this meeting. After we discuss each key issue regarding a TFS, you will have 2-3 minutes to answer to the relevant question in this questionnaire. If you would like to suggest any alternative for the answer options or to add comments, you are welcome to do so. Thank you.

Purpose of Transition Follow-up System

1. The followings are potential benefits of conducting a transition follow-up system. Which one do you think should be the most important purpose of a TFS? (please choose **only one item**)

    _____ a. To improve current transition support systems (e.g. school programs and adult services)
    _____ b. To ensure the accountability of educational and social services
    _____ c. To identify critical factors that affect successful transition
    _____ d. To examine the student outcomes and adult outcomes of youth with disabilities
    _____ e. Other (specify): _____

Information to Collect by Transition Follow-up System

2. Which of the following information of your youth do you think a TFS should collect?

    2-1. Individual/Family/Community Characteristics (check *every item applicable*)
    _____ a. Contact information (e.g. address, phone number)
    _____ b. Disability type
    _____ c. Gender
    _____ d. Ethnicity
    _____ e. Household income
    _____ f. Primary caregiver
    _____ g. Health problems
    _____ h. Post-school goals (employment, education, etc.)
    _____ i. Functional skills (e.g. life skills, self-care, motor skills)
    _____ j. Other (describe) _____
    _____ k. Other (describe) _____

    2-2. School Programs/Transition Services Provided for Youth (check *every item applicable*)
    _____ a. Educational placement (e.g., hours in regular classes or special education)
    _____ b. IEP or ITP (Individual Transition Plan) developed
    _____ c. Academic coursework taken
    _____ d. Vocational/career assessment conducted and the results
    _____ e. Vocational/career training and coursework taken (e.g., vocational education, work experiences)
    _____ f. Functional skills training and coursework taken (e.g., hygiene, social skills)
    _____ g. Extracurricular activities participated in

Information to Collect by Transition Follow-up System (Continued.)

    2-3. Student Outcomes of Youth (check *every item applicable*)
      _____ a. Attendance rate
      _____ b. Suspension history
      _____ c. IEP/ITP (Individual Transition Plan) goals and outcomes
      _____ d. School completion status (e.g. dropout, graduation, age-out, diploma)
      _____ e. Academic Achievement (e.g. GPA, test scores, grade level of reading)
      _____ f. Functional skills level (e.g., hygiene, money management, social skills)
      _____ g. Results of alternative/accommodated assessments

Data-Collector / Agent of Transition Follow-up System

3. Who do you think is the most suitable personnel in a transition follow-up system to collect information of youth with disabilities (e.g. youth's background, school experiences, and adult outcomes)? (please choose *only one item*)

      _____ a. High school personnel (e.g. teacher, Student Services administrator, etc.)
      _____ b. Representative of Education Department (government)
      _____ c. Representative of Family Services and Housing (government)
      _____ d. Trained independent agent
      _____ e. Other: _____

Data-Source for Information about Youth with Disabilities

4. Who do you think is the most suitable in providing postschool information about youth with disabilities (e.g. residential and employment conditions, community involvement, and adult services received)? (please choose *only one item*)

      _____ a. Individual with disabilities
      _____ b. Primary care giver (e.g. parents, guardians, or professional care giver)
      _____ c. Youth or his/her primary care giver depending on the case
      _____ d. Both of a and b above
      _____ e. Other: _____

Timeline of Data-Collection / Timeline of Transition Follow-up

5. When do you think would be the best time to collect information of your youth's post-school experiences? (check *only one item*)

    School Experiences (e.g. school programs/transition services, and student outcomes)
      _____ a. 3-6 months prior to leaving school
      _____ b. Within 3 months of leaving school
      _____ c. Immediately after leaving school
      _____ d. Other (describe) _____

Data-Collection Method / Method of Transition Follow-up

6. If you were asked to provide the information about the school experiences of your students with special needs, which of the following approaches would you prefer?

    _____ a. On-line database/survey

    _____ b. Mailed survey

    _____ c. Phone-interview

    _____ d. In-person interview

    _____ e. Other (describe) _____

Results Report of Transition Follow-up

7. At which level do you think the results of the transition follow-up should be reported? (check *every item applicable*)

    _____ a. At the school level

    _____ b. At the school division level

    _____ c. At the city/area level

    _____ d. At the province level

    _____ e. Other (describe) _____

8. How often do you think this follow-up system should report the province-wide results? (choose *only one item*)

    _____ a. Annually

    _____ b. Biannually

    _____ c. Every 3 years

    _____ d. Every 4 years

    _____ e. Other (describe) _____

Suggestions or Concerns

9. Do you have any suggestions or concerns regarding implementing a transition follow-up system of youth with disabilities?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Please return the completed survey to the researcher, Youn-Young Park. Thank you.

Appendix V-4. Summary Questionnaire for Principal Focus Group

Research Project Title: A School-To-Adulthood Transition Follow-up System for Youth with Disabilities in Manitoba
Researcher: Youn-Young Park

Thank you for participating in the focus group discussion. This questionnaire asks you to answer your final position about the key issues of a TFS discussed in this meeting. After we discuss each key issue regarding a TFS, you will have 2-3 minutes to answer to the relevant question in this questionnaire. If you would like to suggest any alternative for the answer options or to add comments, you are welcome to do so. Thank you.

Purpose of Transition Follow-up System

1. The followings are potential benefits of conducting a transition follow-up system. Which one do you think should be the most important purpose of a TFS? (please choose *only one item*)

    _____ a. To improve current transition support systems (e.g. school programs and adult services)
    _____ b. To ensure the accountability of educational and social services
    _____ c. To identify critical factors that affect successful transition
    _____ d. To examine the student outcomes and adult outcomes of youth with disabilities
    _____ e. Other (specify): _____

Information to Collect by Transition Follow-up System

2. Which of the following information of your youth do you think a TFS should collect?

    2-1. Individual/Family/Community Characteristics (check *every item applicable*)
    _____ a. Contact information (e.g. address, phone number)
    _____ b. Disability type
    _____ c. Gender
    _____ d. Ethnicity
    _____ e. Household income
    _____ f. Primary caregiver
    _____ g. Health problems
    _____ h. Post-school goals (employment, education, etc.)
    _____ i. Functional skills (e.g. life skills, self-care, motor skills)
    _____ j. Other (describe) _____
    _____ k. Other (describe) _____

    2-2. School Programs/Transition Services Provided for Youth (check *every item applicable*)
    _____ a. Educational placement (e.g., hours in regular classes or special education)
    _____ b. IEP or ITP (Individual Transition Plan) developed
    _____ c. Academic coursework taken
    _____ d. Vocational/career assessment conducted and the results
    _____ e. Vocational/career training and coursework taken (e.g., vocational education, work experiences)
    _____ f. Functional skills training and coursework taken (e.g., hygiene, social skills)
    _____ g. Extracurricular activities participated in

Information to Collect by Transition Follow-up System (Continued.)

2-3. Student Outcomes of Youth (check *every item applicable*)
_____ a. Attendance rate
_____ b. Suspension history
_____ c. IEP/ITP (Individual Transition Plan) goals and outcomes
_____ d. School completion status (e.g. dropout, graduation, age-out, diploma)
_____ e. Academic Achievement (e.g. GPA, test scores, grade level of reading)
_____ f. Functional skills level (e.g., hygiene, money management, social skills)
_____ g. Results of alternative/accommodated assessments

Data-Collector / Agent of Transition Follow-up System

3. Who do you think is the most suitable personnel in a transition follow-up system to collect information of youth with disabilities (e.g. youth's background, school experiences, and adult outcomes)? (please choose *only one item*)

_____ a. High school personnel (e.g. teacher, Student Services administrator, etc.)
_____ b. Representative of Education Department (government)
_____ c. Representative of Family Services and Housing (government)
_____ d. Trained independent agent
_____ e. Other: _____

Data-Source for Information about Youth with Disabilities

4. Who do you think is the most suitable in providing postschool information about youth with disabilities (e.g. residential and employment conditions, community involvement, and adult services received)? (please choose *only one item*)

_____ a. Individual with disabilities
_____ b. Primary care giver (e.g. parents, guardians, or professional care giver)
_____ c. Youth or his/her primary care giver depending on the case
_____ d. Both of a and b above
_____ e. Other: _____

Timeline of Data-Collection / Timeline of Transition Follow-up

5. When do you think would be the best time to collect information of your youth's post-school experiences? (check *only one item*)

School Experiences (e.g. school programs/transition services, and student outcomes)
_____ a. 3-6 months prior to leaving school
_____ b. Within 3 months of leaving school
_____ c. Immediately after leaving school
_____ d. Other (describe) _____

Data-Collection Method / Method of Transition Follow-up

6. If you were asked to provide the information about the school experiences of your students with special needs, which of the following approaches would you prefer?
    _____ a. On-line database/survey
    _____ b. Mailed survey
    _____ c. Phone-interview
    _____ d. In-person interview
    _____ e. Other (describe) _____

Results Report of Transition Follow-up

7. At which level do you think the results of the transition follow-up should be reported? (check *every item applicable*)
    _____ a. At the school level
    _____ b. At the school division level
    _____ c. At the city/area level
    _____ d. At the province level
    _____ e. Other (describe) _____

8. How often do you think this follow-up system should report the province-wide results? (choose *only one item*)
    _____ a. Annually
    _____ b. Biannually
    _____ c. Every 3 years
    _____ d. Every 4 years
    _____ e. Other (describe) _____

Suggestions or Concerns

9. Do you have any suggestions or concerns regarding implementing a transition follow-up system of youth with disabilities?

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

Please return the completed survey to the researcher, Youn-Young Park. Thank you.

Appendix V-5. Summary Questionnaire for Student Services Administrator Focus Group

Research Project Title: A School-To-Adulthood Transition Follow-up System for Youth with
Disabilities in Manitoba
Researcher: Youn-Young Park

Thank you for participating in the focus group discussion. This questionnaire asks you to answer
your final position about the key issues of a TFS discussed in this meeting. After we discuss each
key issue regarding a TFS, you will have 2-3 minutes to answer to the relevant question in this
questionnaire. If you would like to suggest any alternative for the answer options or to add
comments, you are welcome to do so. Thank you.

Purpose of Transition Follow-up System

1. The followings are potential benefits of conducting a transition follow-up system. Which one
    do you think should be the most important purpose of a TFS? (please choose *only one item*)

    _____ a. To improve current transition support systems (e.g. school programs and adult
                services)
    _____ b. To ensure the accountability of educational and social services
    _____ c. To identify critical factors that affect successful transition
    _____ d. To examine the student outcomes and adult outcomes of youth with disabilities
    _____ e. Other (specify): _____

Information to Collect by Transition Follow-up System

2. Which of the following information of your youth do you think a TFS should collect?

    2-1. Individual/Family/Community Characteristics (check *every item applicable*)
    _____ a. Contact information (e.g. address, phone number)
    _____ b. Disability type
    _____ c. Gender
    _____ d. Ethnicity
    _____ e. Household income
    _____ f. Primary caregiver
    _____ g. Health problems
    _____ h. Post-school goals (employment, education, etc.)
    _____ i. Functional skills (e.g. life skills, self-care, motor skills)
    _____ j. Other (describe) _____
    _____ k. Other (describe) _____

    2-2. School Programs/Transition Services Provided for Youth (check *every item
    applicable*)
    _____ a. Educational placement (e.g., hours in regular classes or special education)
    _____ b. IEP or ITP (Individual Transition Plan) developed
    _____ c. Academic coursework taken
    _____ d. Vocational/career assessment conducted and the results
    _____ e. Vocational/career training and coursework taken (e.g., vocational education,
                work experiences)
    _____ f. Functional skills training and coursework taken (e.g., hygiene, social skills)
    _____ g. Extracurricular activities participated in

Information to Collect by Transition Follow-up System (Continued.)

     2-3. Student Outcomes of Youth (check *every item applicable*)
     _____ a. Attendance rate
     _____ b. Suspension history
     _____ c. IEP/ITP (Individual Transition Plan) goals and outcomes
     _____ d. School completion status (e.g. dropout, graduation, age-out, diploma)
     _____ e. Academic Achievement (e.g. GPA, test scores, grade level of reading)
     _____ f. Functional skills level (e.g., hygiene, money management, social skills)
     _____ g. Results of alternative/accommodated assessments

Data-Collector / Agent of Transition Follow-up System

3. Who do you think is the most suitable personnel in a transition follow-up system to collect information of youth with disabilities (e.g. youth's background, school experiences, and adult outcomes)? (please choose *only one item*)

     _____ a. High school personnel (e.g. teacher, Student Services administrator, etc.)
     _____ b. Representative of Education Department (government)
     _____ c. Representative of Family Services and Housing (government)
     _____ d. Trained independent agent
     _____ e. Other: _____

Data-Source for Information about Youth with Disabilities

4. Who do you think is the most suitable in providing postschool information about youth with disabilities (e.g. residential and employment conditions, community involvement, and adult services received)? (please choose *only one item*)

     _____ a. Individual with disabilities
     _____ b. Primary care giver (e.g. parents, guardians, or professional care giver)
     _____ c. Youth or his/her primary care giver depending on the case
     _____ d. Both of a and b above
     _____ e. Other: _____

Timeline of Data-Collection / Timeline of Transition Follow-up

5. When do you think would be the best time to collect information of your youth's post-school experiences? (check *only one item*)

     School Experiences (e.g. school programs/transition services, and student outcomes)
     _____ a. 3-6 months prior to leaving school
     _____ b. Within 3 months of leaving school
     _____ c. Immediately after leaving school
     _____ d. Other (describe) _____

Data-Collection Method / Method of Transition Follow-up

6. If you were asked to provide the information about the school experiences of your students
    with special needs, which of the following approaches would you prefer?

    _____ a. On-line database/survey

    _____ b. Mailed survey

    _____ c. Phone-interview

    _____ d. In-person interview

    _____ e. Other (describe) _____

Results Report of Transition Follow-up

7. At which level do you think the results of the transition follow-up should be reported? (check
    every item applicable)

    _____ a. At the school level

    _____ b. At the school division level

    _____ c. At the city/area level

    _____ d. At the province level

    _____ e. Other (describe) _____

8. How often do you think this follow-up system should report the province-wide results?
    (choose *only one item*)

    _____ a. Annually

    _____ b. Biannually

    _____ c. Every 3 years

    _____ d. Every 4 years

    _____ e. Other (describe) _____

Suggestions or Concerns

9. Do you have any suggestions or concerns regarding implementing a transition follow-up
    system of youth with disabilities?

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

Please return the completed survey to the researcher, Youn-Young Park. Thank you.

Appendix V-6. Summary Questionnaire for Adult Services Professional Focus Group

Research Project Title: A School-To-Adulthood Transition Follow-up System for Youth with Disabilities in Manitoba
Researcher: Youn-Young Park

Thank you for participating in the focus group discussion. This questionnaire asks you to answer your final position about the key issues of a TFS discussed in this meeting. After we discuss each key issue regarding a TFS, you will have 2-3 minutes to answer to the relevant question in this questionnaire. If you would like to suggest any alternative for the answer options or to add comments, you are welcome to do so. Thank you.

Purpose of Transition Follow-up System

1. The followings are potential benefits of conducting a transition follow-up system. Which one do you think should be the most important purpose of a TFS? (please choose **only one item**)

    _____ a. To improve current transition support systems (e.g. school programs and adult services)
    _____ b. To ensure the accountability of educational and social services
    _____ c. To identify critical factors that affect successful transition
    _____ d. To examine the student outcomes and adult outcomes of youth with disabilities
    _____ e. Other (specify): _____

Information to Collect by Transition Follow-up System

2. Which of the following information of your youth do you think a TFS should collect?

    2-1. Individual/Family/Community Characteristics (check *every item applicable*)
    _____ a. Contact information (e.g. address, phone number)
    _____ b. Disability type
    _____ c. Gender
    _____ d. Ethnicity
    _____ e. Household income
    _____ f. Primary caregiver
    _____ g. Health problems
    _____ h. Post-school goals (employment, education, etc.)
    _____ i. Functional skills (e.g. life skills, self-care, motor skills)
    _____ j. Other (describe) _____
    _____ k. Other (describe) _____

    2-2. School Programs/Transition Services Provided for Youth (check *every item applicable*)
    _____ a. Educational placement (e.g., hours in regular classes or special education)
    _____ b. IEP or ITP (Individual Transition Plan) developed
    _____ c. Academic coursework taken
    _____ d. Vocational/career assessment conducted and the results
    _____ e. Vocational/career training and coursework taken (e.g., vocational education, work experiences)
    _____ f. Functional skills training and coursework taken (e.g., hygiene, social skills)
    _____ g. Extracurricular activities participated in

Information to Collect by Transition Follow-up System (Continued.)

2-3. Student Outcomes of Youth (check *every item applicable*)
_____ a. Attendance rate
_____ b. Suspension history
_____ c. IEP/ITP (Individual Transition Plan) goals and outcomes
_____ d. School completion status (e.g. dropout, graduation, age-out, diploma)
_____ e. Academic Achievement (e.g. GPA, test scores, grade level of reading)
_____ f. Functional skills level (e.g., hygiene, money management, social skills)
_____ g. Results of alternative/accommodated assessments

2-4. Post-school Outcomes and Service Needs of Youth (check *every item applicable*)
 Employment Outcomes
_____ a. Financial status (e.g. earnings, finance source)
_____ b. Type of jobs (e.g. retail, food services, construction)
_____ c. Employment status (e.g. (un)employment, volunteer)
_____ d. Work hours (e.g. full- or part-time, and seasonal)
_____ e. Job benefits (e.g. pension, health insurance, vacation)
_____ f.. Job stability (e.g. length of time on the current/former jobs)
_____ g. Job satisfaction
_____ h. Job acquisition (e.g. by himself/herself, by an adult service agency)
_____ i. Other (describe) _____
_____ j. Other (describe) _____

Postsecondary Education Outcomes
_____ a. Type of education/training (e.g. 2 year college, university, vocational schools)
_____ b. Full- or part-time enrolment
_____ c. Field of study (e.g. Engineering, English, Arts)
_____ d. Other (describe) _____
_____ e. Other (describe) _____

Residential Outcomes
_____ a. Living status (e.g. on own, with family, supervised living)
_____ b. Marital status (e.g. (un)married, with common-law married)
_____ c. Youth's contribution to his/her living expense
_____ d. Other (describe) _____
_____ e. Other (describe) _____

Other Aspects of Life
_____ a. Physical/health condition
_____ b. Personal and social networks (e.g., social/leisure activities)
_____ c. Community living (e.g. transporting, shopping, voting)
_____ d. Life satisfaction, choice-making, and general well-being
_____ e. Other (describe) _____
_____ f. Other (describe) _____

Adult Program/Service Needs (check *every item applicable*)
_____ a. Services received (e.g. vocational, residential, leisure)
_____ b. Services required (e.g. vocational, residential, leisure)
_____ c. Satisfaction with services provided (e.g. vocational, residential, leisure)
_____ d. Other (describe) _____
_____ e. Other (describe) _____

Data-Collector / Agent of Transition Follow-up System

3. Who do you think is the most suitable personnel in a transition follow-up system to collect information of youth with disabilities (e.g. youth's background, school experiences, and adult outcomes)? (please choose *only one item*)

    _____ a. High school personnel (e.g. teacher, Student Services administrator, etc.)
    _____ b. Representative of Education Department (government)
    _____ c. Representative of Family Services and Housing (government)
    _____ d. Trained independent agent
    _____ e. Other: _____

Data-Source for Information about Youth with Disabilities

4. Who do you think is the most suitable in providing postschool information about youth with disabilities (e.g. residential and employment conditions, community involvement, and adult services received)? (please choose *only one item*)

    _____ a. Individual with disabilities
    _____ b. Primary care giver (e.g. parents, guardians, or professional care giver)
    _____ c. Youth or his/her primary care giver depending on the case
    _____ d. Both of a and b above
    _____ e. Other: _____

Timeline of Data-Collection / Timeline of Transition Follow-up

5. When do you think would be the best time to collect information of youth's post-school experiences (e.g. adult outcomes and adult services provided)? (if you think more than one time of data collection is necessary, check *every item applicable*)

    _____ a. 6 months after leaving school
    _____ b. 1 year after leaving school
    _____ c. 2 years after leaving school
    _____ d. 3 years after leaving school
    _____ e. 4 years after leaving school
    _____ f. 5 years after leaving school or later
    _____ g. Other (describe) _____

Data-Collection Method / Method of Transition Follow-up

7. If youth with disabilities or their caregivers were asked to provide the information of youth's post-school experiences, which of the following approaches do you think is the most suitable?
    _____ a. On-line database/survey
    _____ b. Mailed survey
    _____ c. Phone-interview
    _____ d. In-person interview
    _____ f. Other (describe) _____

Results Report of Transition Follow-up

8. At which level do you think the results of the transition follow-up should be reported? (check *every item applicable*)

　　＿＿＿＿ a. At the school level
　　＿＿＿＿ b. At the school division level
　　＿＿＿＿ c. At the city/area level
　　＿＿＿＿ d. At the province level
　　＿＿＿＿ e. Other (describe) ＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿

9. How often do you think this follow-up system should report the province-wide results? (choose *only one item*)

　　＿＿＿＿ a. Annually
　　＿＿＿＿ b. Biannually
　　＿＿＿＿ c. Every 3 years
　　＿＿＿＿ d. Every 4 years
　　＿＿＿＿ e. Other (describe) ＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿

Suggestions or Concerns

10. Do you have any suggestions or concerns regarding implementing a transition follow-up system of youth with disabilities?

＿＿

＿＿

＿＿

＿＿

Please return the completed survey to the researcher, Youn-Young Park. Thank you.

Appendix V-7. Summary Questionnaire for Manitoba Education Representative Interview

Research Project Title: A School-To-Adulthood Transition Follow-up System for Youth with
Disabilities in Manitoba
Researcher: Youn-Young Park

Thank you for participating in this interview. This questionnaire asks you to answer your final
position about the key issues of a TFS. After we discuss each key issue regarding a TFS, you will
have 5-10 minutes to answer to the relevant question in this questionnaire. If you would like to
suggest any alternative for the answer options or to add comments, you are welcome to do so.
Thank you.

Purpose of Transition Follow-up System

1. The followings are potential benefits of conducting a transition follow-up system. Which one
    do you think should be the most important purpose of a TFS? (please choose *only one item*)

    _____ a. To improve current transition support systems (e.g. school programs and adult
    services)
    _____ b. To ensure the accountability of educational and social services
    _____ c. To identify critical factors that affect successful transition
    _____ d. To examine the student outcomes and adult outcomes of youth with disabilities
    _____ e. Other (specify): _____

Information to Collect by Transition Follow-up System

2. Which of the following information of your youth do you think a TFS should collect?

    2-1. Individual/Family/Community Characteristics (check *every item applicable*)
    _____ a. Contact information (e.g. address, phone number)
    _____ b. Disability type
    _____ c. Gender
    _____ d. Ethnicity
    _____ e. Household income
    _____ f. Primary caregiver
    _____ g. Health problems
    _____ h. Post-school goals (employment, education, etc.)
    _____ i. Functional skills (e.g. life skills, self-care, motor skills)
    _____ j. Other (describe) _____
    _____ k. Other (describe) _____

    2-2. School Programs/Transition Services Provided for Youth (check *every item
    applicable*)
    _____ a. Educational placement (e.g., hours in regular classes or special education)
    _____ b. IEP or ITP (Individual Transition Plan) developed
    _____ c. Academic coursework taken
    _____ d. Vocational/career assessment conducted and the results
    _____ e. Vocational/career training and coursework taken (e.g., vocational education,
    work experiences)
    _____ f. Functional skills training and coursework taken (e.g., hygiene, social skills)
    _____ g. Extracurricular activities participated in

Information to Collect by Transition Follow-up System (Continued.)

2-3. Student Outcomes of Youth (check *every item applicable*)

_____ a. Attendance rate
_____ b. Suspension history
_____ c. IEP/ITP (Individual Transition Plan) goals and outcomes
_____ d. School completion status (e.g. dropout, graduation, age-out, diploma)
_____ e. Academic Achievement (e.g. GPA, test scores, grade level of reading)
_____ f. Functional skills level (e.g., hygiene, money management, social skills)
_____ g. Results of alternative/accommodated assessments

2-4. Post-school Outcomes and Service Needs of Youth (check *every item applicable*)

Employment Outcomes

_____ a. Financial status (e.g. earnings, finance source)
_____ b. Type of jobs (e.g. retail, food services, construction)
_____ c. Employment status (e.g. (un)employment, volunteer)
_____ d. Work hours (e.g. full- or part-time, and seasonal)
_____ e. Job benefits (e.g. pension, health insurance, vacation)
_____ f.. Job stability (e.g. length of time on the current/former jobs)
_____ g. Job satisfaction
_____ h. Job acquisition (e.g. by himself/herself, by an adult service agency)
_____ i. Other (describe) _____
_____ j. Other (describe) _____

Postsecondary Education Outcomes

_____ a. Type of education/training (e.g. 2 year college, university, vocational schools)
_____ b. Full- or part-time enrolment
_____ c. Field of study (e.g. Engineering, English, Arts)
_____ d. Other (describe) _____
_____ e. Other (describe) _____

Residential Outcomes

_____ a. Living status (e.g. on own, with family, supervised living)
_____ b. Marital status (e.g. (un)married, with common-law married)
_____ c. Youth's contribution to his/her living expense
_____ d. Other (describe) _____
_____ e. Other (describe) _____

Other Aspects of Life

_____ a. Physical/health condition
_____ b. Personal and social networks (e.g., social/leisure activities)
_____ c. Community living (e.g. transporting, shopping, voting)
_____ d. Life satisfaction, choice-making, and general well-being
_____ e. Other (describe) _____
_____ f. Other (describe) _____

Adult Program/Service Needs (check *every item applicable*)

_____ a. Services received (e.g. vocational, residential, leisure)
_____ b. Services required (e.g. vocational, residential, leisure)
_____ c. Satisfaction with services provided (e.g. vocational, residential, leisure)
_____ d. Other (describe) _____
_____ e. Other (describe) _____

Data-Collector / Agent of Transition Follow-up System

3. Who do you think is the most suitable personnel in a transition follow-up system to collect information of youth with disabilities (e.g. youth's background, school experiences, and adult outcomes)? (please choose *only one item*)

    _____ a. High school personnel (e.g. teacher, Student Services administrator, etc.)
    _____ b. Representative of Education Department (government)
    _____ c. Representative of Family Services and Housing (government)
    _____ d. Trained independent agent
    _____ e. Other: _____

Data-Source for Information about Youth with Disabilities

4. Who do you think is the most suitable in providing postschool information about youth with disabilities (e.g. residential and employment conditions, community involvement, and adult services received)? (please choose *only one item*)

    _____ a. Individual with disabilities
    _____ b. Primary care giver (e.g. parents, guardians, or professional care giver)
    _____ c. Youth or his/her primary care giver depending on the case
    _____ d. Both of a and b above
    _____ e. Other: _____

Timeline of Data-Collection / Timeline of Transition Follow-up

5. When do you think would be the best time to collect information in each of the categories listed below?
    (if you think more than one time of data collection is necessary, check *every item applicable*)

    5-1. School Experiences (e.g. school programs/transition services, and student outcomes)
    _____ a. 3-6 months prior to leaving school
    _____ b. Within 3 months of leaving school
    _____ c. Immediately after leaving school
    _____ d. Other (describe) _____

    5-2. Post-School Experiences (e.g. adult outcomes and adult services provided)
    _____ a. 6 months after leaving school
    _____ b. 1 year after leaving school
    _____ c. 2 years after leaving school
    _____ d. 3 years after leaving school
    _____ e. 4 years after leaving school
    _____ f. 5 years after leaving school or later
    _____ g. Other (describe) _____

Data-Collection Method / Method of Transition Follow-up

6. If schools were asked to provide the information about the **school experiences of your students** with special needs, which of the following approaches would you think the most suitable? (please choose *only one item*)
     _____ a. On-line database/survey
     _____ b. Mailed survey
     _____ c. Phone-interview
     _____ d. In-person interview
     _____ e. Other (describe) _____

7. If youth with disabilities or their caregivers were asked to provide the information of youth's post-school experiences, which of the following approaches do you think is the most suitable?
     _____ a. On-line database/survey
     _____ b. Mailed survey
     _____ c. Phone-interview
     _____ d. In-person interview
     _____ f. Other (describe) _____

Results Report of Transition Follow-up

8. At which level do you think the results of the transition follow-up should be reported? (check *every item applicable*)
     _____ a. At the school level
     _____ b. At the school division level
     _____ c. At the city/area level
     _____ d. At the province level
     _____ e. Other (describe) _____

9. How often do you think this follow-up system should report the province-wide results? (choose *only one item*)
     _____ a. Annually
     _____ b. Biannually
     _____ c. Every 3 years
     _____ d. Every 4 years
     _____ e. Other (describe) _____

Suggestions or Concerns

10. Do you have any suggestions or concerns regarding implementing a transition follow-up system of youth with disabilities?

     _____

     _____

     _____

     _____

Please return the completed survey to the researcher, Youn-Young Park. Thank you.

Appendix V-8. Summary Questionnaire for FSCA Representative Interview

Research Project Title: A School-To-Adulthood Transition Follow-up System for Youth with Disabilities in Manitoba
Researcher: Youn-Young Park

Thank you for participating in this interview. This questionnaire asks you to answer your final position about the key issues of a TFS. After we discuss each key issue regarding a TFS, you will have 5-10 minutes to answer to the relevant question in this questionnaire. If you would like to suggest any alternative for the answer options or to add comments, you are welcome to do so. Thank you.

Purpose of Transition Follow-up System

1. The followings are potential benefits of conducting a transition follow-up system. Which one do you think should be the most important purpose of a TFS? (please choose *only one item*)

   _____ a. To improve current transition support systems (e.g. school programs and adult services)
   _____ b. To ensure the accountability of educational and social services
   _____ c. To identify critical factors that affect successful transition
   _____ d. To examine the student outcomes and adult outcomes of youth with disabilities
   _____ e. Other (specify): _____

Information to Collect by Transition Follow-up System

2. Which of the following information of your youth do you think a TFS should collect?

   2-1. Individual/Family/Community Characteristics (check *every item applicable*)
   _____ a. Contact information (e.g. address, phone number)
   _____ b. Disability type
   _____ c. Gender
   _____ d. Ethnicity
   _____ e. Household income
   _____ f. Primary caregiver
   _____ g. Health problems
   _____ h. Post-school goals (employment, education, etc.)
   _____ i. Functional skills (e.g. life skills, self-care, motor skills)
   _____ j. Other (describe) _____
   _____ k. Other (describe) _____

   2-2. School Programs/Transition Services Provided for Youth (check *every item applicable*)
   _____ a. Educational placement (e.g., hours in regular classes or special education)
   _____ b. IEP or ITP (Individual Transition Plan) developed
   _____ c. Academic coursework taken
   _____ d. Vocational/career assessment conducted and the results
   _____ e. Vocational/career training and coursework taken (e.g., vocational education, work experiences)
   _____ f. Functional skills training and coursework taken (e.g., hygiene, social skills)
   _____ g. Extracurricular activities participated in

Information to Collect by Transition Follow-up System (Continued.)

2-3. Student Outcomes of Youth (check *every item applicable*)
_____ a. Attendance rate
_____ b. Suspension history
_____ c. IEP/ITP (Individual Transition Plan) goals and outcomes
_____ d. School completion status (e.g. dropout, graduation, age-out, diploma)
_____ e. Academic Achievement (e.g. GPA, test scores, grade level of reading)
_____ f. Functional skills level (e.g., hygiene, money management, social skills)
_____ g. Results of alternative/accommodated assessments

2-4. Post-school Outcomes and Service Needs of Youth (check *every item applicable*)

Employment Outcomes
_____ a. Financial status (e.g. earnings, finance source)
_____ b. Type of jobs (e.g. retail, food services, construction)
_____ c. Employment status (e.g. (un)employment, volunteer)
_____ d. Work hours (e.g. full- or part-time, and seasonal)
_____ e. Job benefits (e.g. pension, health insurance, vacation)
_____ f.. Job stability (e.g. length of time on the current/former jobs)
_____ g. Job satisfaction
_____ h. Job acquisition (e.g. by himself/herself, by an adult service agency)
_____ i. Other (describe) _____
_____ j. Other (describe) _____

Postsecondary Education Outcomes
_____ a. Type of education/training (e.g. 2 year college, university, vocational schools)
_____ b. Full- or part-time enrolment
_____ c. Field of study (e.g. Engineering, English, Arts)
_____ d. Other (describe) _____
_____ e. Other (describe) _____

Residential Outcomes
_____ a. Living status (e.g. on own, with family, supervised living)
_____ b. Marital status (e.g. (un)married, with common-law married)
_____ c. Youth's contribution to his/her living expense
_____ d. Other (describe) _____
_____ e. Other (describe) _____

Other Aspects of Life
_____ a. Physical/health condition
_____ b. Personal and social networks (e.g., social/leisure activities)
_____ c. Community living (e.g. transporting, shopping, voting)
_____ d. Life satisfaction, choice-making, and general well-being
_____ e. Other (describe) _____
_____ f. Other (describe) _____

Adult Program/Service Needs (check *every item applicable*)
_____ a. Services received (e.g. vocational, residential, leisure)
_____ b. Services required (e.g. vocational, residential, leisure)
_____ c. Satisfaction with services provided (e.g. vocational, residential, leisure)
_____ d. Other (describe) _____
_____ e. Other (describe) _____

Data-Collector / Agent of Transition Follow-up System

3. Who do you think is the most suitable personnel in a transition follow-up system to collect information of youth with disabilities (e.g. youth's background, school experiences, and adult outcomes)? (please choose *only one item*)

    _____ a. High school personnel (e.g. teacher, Student Services administrator, etc.)
    _____ b. Representative of Education Department (government)
    _____ c. Representative of Family Services and Housing (government)
    _____ d. Trained independent agent
    _____ e. Other: _____

Data-Source for Information about Youth with Disabilities

4. Who do you think is the most suitable in providing postschool information about youth with disabilities (e.g. residential and employment conditions, community involvement, and adult services received)? (please choose *only one item*)

    _____ a. Individual with disabilities
    _____ b. Primary care giver (e.g. parents, guardians, or professional care giver)
    _____ c. Youth or his/her primary care giver depending on the case
    _____ d. Both of a and b above
    _____ e. Other: _____

Timeline of Data-Collection / Timeline of Transition Follow-up

5. When do you think would be the best time to collect information of youth's post-school experiences (e.g. adult outcomes and adult services provided)? (if you think more than one time of data collection is necessary, check *every item applicable*)

    _____ a. 6 months after leaving school
    _____ b. 1 year after leaving school
    _____ c. 2 years after leaving school
    _____ d. 3 years after leaving school
    _____ e. 4 years after leaving school
    _____ f. 5 years after leaving school or later
    _____ g. Other (describe) _____

Data-Collection Method / Method of Transition Follow-up

6. If youth with disabilities or their caregivers were asked to provide the information of youth's post-school experiences, which of the following approaches do you think is the most suitable?
    _____ a. On-line database/survey
    _____ b. Mailed survey
    _____ c. Phone-interview
    _____ d. In-person interview
    _____ f. Other (describe) _____

Results Report of Transition Follow-up

7. At which level do you think the results of the transition follow-up should be reported? (check *every item applicable*)

_____ a. At the school level
_____ b. At the school division level
_____ c. At the city/area level
_____ d. At the province level
_____ e. Other (describe) _____

8. How often do you think this follow-up system should report the province-wide results? (choose *only one item*)

_____ a. Annually
_____ b. Biannually
_____ c. Every 3 years
_____ d. Every 4 years
_____ e. Other (describe) _____

Suggestions or Concerns

9. Do you have any suggestions or concerns regarding implementing a transition follow-up system of youth with disabilities?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Please return the completed survey to the researcher, Youn-Young Park. Thank you.

Appendix V-9. Summary Questionnaire for Faculty Member Interview

Research Project Title: A School-To-Adulthood Transition Follow-up System for Youth with Disabilities in Manitoba
Researcher: Youn-Young Park

Thank you for participating in this interview. This questionnaire asks you to answer your final position about the key issues of a TFS. After we discuss each key issue regarding a TFS, you will have 5-10 minutes to answer to the relevant question in this questionnaire. If you would like to suggest any alternative for the answer options or to add comments, you are welcome to do so. Thank you.

Purpose of Transition Follow-up System

1. The followings are potential benefits of conducting a transition follow-up system. Which one do you think should be the most important purpose of a TFS? (please choose **only one item**)

    _____ a. To improve current transition support systems (e.g. school programs and adult services)
    _____ b. To ensure the accountability of educational and social services
    _____ c. To identify critical factors that affect successful transition
    _____ d. To examine the student outcomes and adult outcomes of youth with disabilities
    _____ e. Other (specify): _____

Information to Collect by Transition Follow-up System

2. Which of the following information of youth do you think a TFS should collect?

    2-1. Individual/Family/Community Characteristics (check *every item applicable*)
    _____ a. Contact information (e.g. address, phone number)
    _____ b. Disability type
    _____ c. Gender
    _____ d. Ethnicity
    _____ e. Household income
    _____ f. Primary caregiver
    _____ g. Health problems
    _____ h. Post-school goals (employment, education, etc.)
    _____ i. Functional skills (e.g. life skills, self-care, motor skills)
    _____ j. Other (describe) _____
    _____ k. Other (describe) _____

    2-2. School Programs/Transition Services Provided for Youth (check *every item applicable*)
    _____ a. Educational placement (e.g., hours in regular classes or special education)
    _____ b. IEP or ITP (Individual Transition Plan) developed
    _____ c. Academic coursework taken
    _____ d. Vocational/career assessment conducted and the results
    _____ e. Vocational/career training and coursework taken (e.g., vocational education, work experiences)
    _____ f. Functional skills training and coursework taken (e.g., hygiene, social skills)
    _____ g. Extracurricular activities participated in

Information to Collect by Transition Follow-up System (Continued.)

     2-3. Student Outcomes of Youth (check *every item applicable*)
        _____ a. Attendance rate
        _____ b. Suspension history
        _____ c. IEP/ITP (Individual Transition Plan) goals and outcomes
        _____ d. School completion status (e.g. dropout, graduation, age-out, diploma)
        _____ e. Academic Achievement (e.g. GPA, test scores, grade level of reading)
        _____ f. Functional skills level (e.g., hygiene, money management, social skills)
        _____ g. Results of alternative/accommodated assessments

     2-4. Post-school Outcomes and Service Needs of Youth (check *every item applicable*)

     Employment Outcomes
        _____ a. Financial status (e.g. earnings, finance source)
        _____ b. Type of jobs (e.g. retail, food services, construction)
        _____ c. Employment status (e.g. (un)employment, volunteer)
        _____ d. Work hours (e.g. full- or part-time, and seasonal)
        _____ e. Job benefits (e.g. pension, health insurance, vacation)
        _____ f.. Job stability (e.g. length of time on the current/former jobs)
        _____ g. Job satisfaction
        _____ h. Job acquisition (e.g. by himself/herself, by an adult service agency)
        _____ i. Other (describe) _____
        _____ j. Other (describe) _____

     Postsecondary Education Outcomes
        _____ a. Type of education/training (e.g. 2 year college, university, vocational schools)
        _____ b. Full- or part-time enrolment
        _____ c. Field of study (e.g. Engineering, English, Arts)
        _____ d. Other (describe) _____
        _____ e. Other (describe) _____

     Residential Outcomes
        _____ a. Living status (e.g. on own, with family, supervised living)
        _____ b. Marital status (e.g. (un)married, with common-law married)
        _____ c. Youth's contribution to his/her living expense
        _____ d. Other (describe) _____
        _____ e. Other (describe) _____

     Other Aspects of Life
        _____ a. Physical/health condition
        _____ b. Personal and social networks (e.g., social/leisure activities)
        _____ c. Community living (e.g. transporting, shopping, voting)
        _____ d. Life satisfaction, choice-making, and general well-being
        _____ e. Other (describe) _____
        _____ f. Other (describe) _____

     Adult Program/Service Needs (check *every item applicable*)
        _____ a. Services received (e.g. vocational, residential, leisure)
        _____ b. Services required (e.g. vocational, residential, leisure)
        _____ c. Satisfaction with services provided (e.g. vocational, residential, leisure)
        _____ d. Other (describe) _____
        _____ e. Other (describe) _____

Data-Collector / Agent of Transition Follow-up System

3. Who do you think is the most suitable personnel in a transition follow-up system to collect information of youth with disabilities (e.g. youth's background, school experiences, and adult outcomes)? (please choose *only one item*)

    _____ a. High school personnel (e.g. teacher, Student Services administrator, etc.)
    _____ b. Representative of Education Department (government)
    _____ c. Representative of Family Services and Housing (government)
    _____ d. Trained independent agent
    _____ e. Other: _____

Data-Source for Information about Youth with Disabilities

4. Who do you think is the most suitable in providing postschool information about youth with disabilities (e.g. residential and employment conditions, community involvement, and adult services received)? (please choose *only one item*)

    _____ a. Individual with disabilities
    _____ b. Primary care giver (e.g. parents, guardians, or professional care giver)
    _____ c. Youth or his/her primary care giver depending on the case
    _____ d. Both of a and b above
    _____ e. Other: _____

Timeline of Data-Collection / Timeline of Transition Follow-up

5. When do you think would be the best time to collect information of youth's post-school experiences (e.g., adult outcomes and adult services provided)? (if you think more than one time of data collection is necessary, check *every item applicable*)

    _____ a. 6 months after leaving school
    _____ b. 1 year after leaving school
    _____ c. 2 years after leaving school
    _____ d. 3 years after leaving school
    _____ e. 4 years after leaving school
    _____ f. 5 years after leaving school or later
    _____ g. Other (describe) _____

Data-Collection Method / Method of Transition Follow-up

6. If schools were asked to provide the information about the **school experiences of your students** with special needs, which of the following approaches would you think the most suitable? (please choose *only one item*)

    _____ a. On-line database/survey
    _____ b. Mailed survey
    _____ c. Phone-interview
    _____ d. In-person interview
    _____ e. Other (describe) _____

7. If youth with disabilities or their caregivers were asked to provide the information of youth's post-school experiences, which of the following approaches do you think is the most suitable?

    _____ a. On-line database/survey
    _____ b. Mailed survey
    _____ c. Phone-interview
    _____ d. In-person interview
    _____ f. Other (describe) _____

Results Report of Transition Follow-up

8. At which level do you think the results of the transition follow-up should be reported? (check *every item applicable*)

    _____ a. At the school level
    _____ b. At the school division level
    _____ c. At the city/area level
    _____ d. At the province level
    _____ e. Other (describe) _____

9. How often do you think this follow-up system should report the province-wide results? (choose *only one item*)

    _____ a. Annually
    _____ b. Biannually
    _____ c. Every 3 years
    _____ d. Every 4 years
    _____ e. Other (describe) _____

Suggestions or Concerns

10. Do you have any suggestions or concerns regarding implementing a transition follow-up system of youth with disabilities?

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

Please return the completed survey to the researcher, Youn-Young Park. Thank you.

Appendix V-10. Summary Questionnaire for Personnel of Community Organization

Research Project Title: A School-To-Adulthood Transition Follow-up System for Youth with Disabilities in Manitoba
Researcher: Youn-Young Park

Thank you for participating in this interview. This questionnaire asks you to answer your final position about the key issues of a TFS. After we discuss each key issue regarding a TFS, you will have 5-10 minutes to answer to the relevant question in this questionnaire. If you would like to suggest any alternative for the answer options or to add comments, you are welcome to do so. Thank you.

Purpose of Transition Follow-up System

1. The followings are potential benefits of conducting a transition follow-up system. Which one do you think should be the most important purpose of a TFS? (please choose *only one item*)
    _____ a. To improve current transition support systems (e.g. school programs and adult services)
    _____ b. To ensure the accountability of educational and social services
    _____ c. To identify critical factors that affect successful transition
    _____ d. To examine the student outcomes and adult outcomes of youth with disabilities
    _____ e. Other (specify): _____

Information to Collect by Transition Follow-up System

2. Which of the following information of youth do you think a TFS should collect?

    2-1. Individual/Family/Community Characteristics (check *every item applicable*)
    _____ a. Contact information (e.g. address, phone number)
    _____ b. Disability type
    _____ c. Gender
    _____ d. Ethnicity
    _____ e. Household income
    _____ f. Primary caregiver
    _____ g. Health problems
    _____ h. Post-school goals (employment, education, etc.)
    _____ i. Functional skills (e.g. life skills, self-care, motor skills)
    _____ j. Other (describe) _____
    _____ k. Other (describe) _____

    2-2. School Programs/Transition Services Provided for Youth (check *every item applicable*)
    _____ a. Educational placement (e.g., hours in regular classes or special education)
    _____ b. IEP or ITP (Individual Transition Plan) developed
    _____ c. Academic coursework taken
    _____ d. Vocational/career assessment conducted and the results
    _____ e. Vocational/career training and coursework taken (e.g., vocational education, work experiences)
    _____ f. Functional skills training and coursework taken (e.g., hygiene, money management, social skills)
    _____ g. Extracurricular activities participated in

Information to Collect by Transition Follow-up System (Continued.)

2-3. Student Outcomes of Youth (check *every item applicable*)

_____ a. Attendance rate
_____ b. Suspension history
_____ c. IEP/ITP (Individual Transition Plan) goals and outcomes
_____ d. School completion status (e.g. dropout, graduation, age-out, diploma)
_____ e. Academic Achievement (e.g. GPA, test scores, grade level of reading)
_____ f. Functional skills level (e.g., hygiene, money management, social skills)
_____ g. Results of alternative/accommodated assessments

2-4. Post-school Outcomes and Service Needs of Youth (check *every item applicable*)

Employment Outcomes
_____ a. Financial status (e.g. earnings, finance source)
_____ b. Type of jobs (e.g. retail, food services, construction)
_____ c. Employment status (e.g. (un)employment, volunteer)
_____ d. Work hours (e.g. full- or part-time, and seasonal)
_____ e. Job benefits (e.g. pension, health insurance, vacation)
_____ f.. Job stability (e.g. length of time on the current/former jobs)
_____ g. Job satisfaction
_____ h. Job acquisition (e.g. by himself/herself, by an adult service agency)
_____ i. Other (describe) _____
_____ j. Other (describe) _____

Postsecondary Education Outcomes
_____ a. Type of education/training (e.g. 2 year college, university, vocational schools)
_____ b. Full- or part-time enrolment
_____ c. Field of study (e.g. Engineering, English, Arts)
_____ d. Other (describe) _____
_____ e. Other (describe) _____

Residential Outcomes
_____ a. Living status (e.g. on own, with family, supervised living)
_____ b. Marital status (e.g. (un)married, with common-law married)
_____ c. Youth's contribution to his/her living expense
_____ d. Other (describe) _____
_____ e. Other (describe) _____

Other Aspects of Life
_____ a. Physical/health condition
_____ b. Personal and social networks (e.g., social/leisure activities)
_____ c. Community living (e.g. transporting, shopping, voting)
_____ d. Life satisfaction, choice-making, and general well-being
_____ e. Other (describe) _____
_____ f. Other (describe) _____

Adult Program/Service Needs (check *every item applicable*)
_____ a. Services received (e.g. vocational, residential, leisure)
_____ b. Services required (e.g. vocational, residential, leisure)
_____ c. Satisfaction with services provided (e.g. vocational, residential, leisure)
_____ d. Other (describe) _____
_____ e. Other (describe) _____

Data-Collector / Agent of Transition Follow-up System

3. Who do you think is the most suitable personnel in a transition follow-up system to collect information of youth with disabilities (e.g. youth's background, school experiences, and adult outcomes)? (please choose *only one item*)

    _____ a. High school personnel (e.g. teacher, Student Services administrator, etc.)
    _____ b. Representative of Education Department (government)
    _____ c. Representative of Family Services and Housing (government)
    _____ d. Trained independent agent
    _____ e. Other: _____

Data-Source for Information about Youth with Disabilities

4. Who do you think is the most suitable in providing postschool information about youth with disabilities (e.g. residential and employment conditions, community involvement, and adult services received)? (please choose *only one item*)

    _____ a. Individual with disabilities
    _____ b. Primary care giver (e.g. parents, guardians, or professional care giver)
    _____ c. Youth or his/her primary care giver depending on the case
    _____ d. Both of a and b above
    _____ e. Other: _____

Timeline of Data-Collection / Timeline of Transition Follow-up

5. When do you think would be the best time to collect information of youth's post-school experiences (e.g., adult outcomes and adult services provided)? (if you think more than one time of data collection is necessary, check *every item applicable*)

    _____ a. 6 months after leaving school
    _____ b. 1 year after leaving school
    _____ c. 2 years after leaving school
    _____ d. 3 years after leaving school
    _____ e. 4 years after leaving school
    _____ f. 5 years after leaving school or later
    _____ g. Other (describe) _____

Data-Collection Method / Method of Transition Follow-up

6. If schools were asked to provide the information about the **school experiences of your students** with special needs, which of the following approaches would you think the most suitable? (please choose *only one item*)
   _____ a. On-line database/survey
   _____ b. Mailed survey
   _____ c. Phone-interview
   _____ d. In-person interview
   _____ e. Other (describe) _____

7. If youth with disabilities or their caregivers were asked to provide the information of youth's post-school experiences, which of the following approaches do you think is the most suitable?
   _____ a. On-line database/survey
   _____ b. Mailed survey
   _____ c. Phone-interview
   _____ d. In-person interview
   _____ f. Other (describe) _____

Results Report of Transition Follow-up

8. At which level do you think the results of the transition follow-up should be reported? (check *every item applicable*)
   _____ a. At the school level
   _____ b. At the school division level
   _____ c. At the city/area level
   _____ d. At the province level
   _____ e. Other (describe) _____

9. How often do you think this follow-up system should report the province-wide results? (choose *only one item*)
   _____ a. Annually
   _____ b. Biannually
   _____ c. Every 3 years
   _____ d. Every 4 years
   _____ e. Other (describe) _____

Suggestions or Concerns

10. Do you have any suggestions or concerns regarding implementing a transition follow-up system of youth with disabilities?

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

Please return the completed survey to the researcher, Youn-Young Park. Thank you.

Appendix W.   Invitation Letter for Final Review Meeting

Research Project Title: A School-To-Adulthood Transition Follow-up System for Youth with Disabilities in Manitoba
Researcher: Youn-Young Park
Sponsor: Education Graduate Research Support Scholarship from University of Manitoba

Dear participants,

I greatly appreciate your participation in this study. With this project, I have developed a transition follow-up system model (referred as the TFS model hereafter) for youth with disabilities in Manitoba. I would like to invite you to the final review meeting. All participation will be on a voluntary basis.

Final review meeting: At the final review meeting, I will report the process and the results of this study and will present the TFS model developed to the participants. Participants will have a chance to review the model in small groups and discuss its strengths and any concerns or potential barriers to implementation, as well as offering suggestions for improvement. The meeting will last 60-90 minutes. The meeting is arranged as follows:

    Time: March 11 (Thursday) 7:00 - 8:30pm
    Location: Room 333, Education Building, University of Manitoba (Fort Garry Campus)

No compensation will be provided, but some refreshments (e.g. sandwiches, drinks, etc.) will be offered at the meeting. Although I will not tape-record any discussions at this meeting, each small discussion groups will be asked to report the summary of their discussions in a simple form.

Data management and confidentiality: For confidentiality, I will keep all the data (e.g., small group discussion forms completed) obtained from this meeting in a secured lock location until end of the project (c. August 2010). I will then destroy them. The data will not identify individual participants. In addition, I will ask all the participants who attend the final review meeting to keep the others' participation in this study in confidence. The results will be published and discussed in my dissertation. The participants will be free to withdraw from the study at any time.

No compensation will be provided for the participants: yet, there are no risks involved in this study. I will share an executive summary of the research results by email or mail with you and with all individuals who are involved in this study and are interested in receiving the summary. By participating in this study, you will have an opportunity to contribute to the development of a TFS model, which I hope will be a valuable measure to improve the current transition support system for youth with disabilities. I hope that through this research I can develop a TFS model that is socially valid in Manitoba and reflects the perspectives of various stakeholders. Your assistance will be greatly appreciated.

If you are interested in attending the final review meeting, please confirm your attendance at your earliest convenience by responding by email or phone. Thank you very much!

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or my program advisor:
Researcher: Youn-Young Park;   Tel: xxx-xxx-xxxx;   xxx@xxxx
                     170 Cavell Dr. Winnipeg,   Manitoba R3J 1P1
Program Advisor: Dr. Zana Lutfiyya;   Tel: xxx-xxx-xxxx;   xxx@xxxx

Thank you,

Youn-Young Park

This research has been approved by the Education and Nursing Research and Ethics Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons   or   the   Human   Ethics   Secretariat   at   474-7122,   or   e-mail margaret_bowman@umanitoba.ca. A copy of this letter has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

PART II. Consent form

In no way does signing this form waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and /or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. If you wish to withdraw from the study, please contact me or my program advisor (Dr. Lutfiyya).

I _____ understand the information on this research project and agree to participate.

_____   _____
        (Participant's signature)   (Date)

_____   _____
        (Researcher's signature)   (Date)

Please provide an email (or mailing) address below if you wish to receive an executive summary of the research results:

_____

Appendix X.   Small-Group Discussion Form for Final Review Meeting

Research Project Title: A School-To-Adulthood Transition Follow-up System for Youth with Disabilities in Manitoba
Researcher: Youn-Young Park
Sponsor: Education Graduate Research Support Scholarship from University of Manitoba

Please make notes on your group's discussion in the boxes below and submit the complete form to the researcher.

Strengths of the TFS Model Developed

Concerns and Barriers of the TFS Model Developed

Suggestions for improving or implementing the TFS Model Developed

Please return the completed form to the researcher, Youn-Young Park. Thank you.

Appendix Y. Follow-up Studies Referred to Determine

the Timeline of Data Collection

Baer, R. M., Flexer, R. W., Beck, S., Amstutz, N., Hoffman, L., Brothers, J., et al. (2003).

A collaborative followup study on transition service utilization and post-school

outcomes. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals, 26(1),* 7-25.

Benz, M.R., Doren, B., & Yovanoff, P. (1998). Crossing the great divide: Predicting

productive engagement for young women with disabilities. *Career Development*

for Exceptional Individuals, 21(1), 3-16.

Benz, M. R., Lindstrom, L., & Yovanoff, P. (2000). Improving graduation and

employment outcomes of students with disabilities: Predictive factors and student

perspectives. *Exceptional Children, 66(4),* 509-529.

Benz, M. R., Yovanoff, P., & Doren, B. (1997). School-to-work components that predict

postschool success for students with and without disabilities. *Exceptional children,*

63(2), 151-165.

Blackorby, J., & Wagner, M. (1996). Longitudinal postschool outcomes of youth with

disabilities: Findings from the national longitudinal transition study. *Exceptional*

children, 62(5), 399-413.

Botuck, S., Levy, J.M., Rimmerman, A., Murphy, B.S., Levy, P.H., & Kramer, M.E.

(1993). Urban young adults with mental retardation: Job training, job placement

and job retention. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals, 16(2),* 213-

224.

Brown, P. (2000). Linking transition services to student outcomes for students with moderate/severe mental retardation. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals, 23(1),* 39-55.

Colley, D. A., & Jamison, D. (1998). Post school results for youth with disabilities: Key indicators and policy implications. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals, 21(2),* 145-160.

Frank, A. R., & Sitlington, P. L. (1993). Graduates with mental disabilities: The story three years later. *Education and Training in Mental Retardation, 28(1),* 30-37.

Frank, A. R., & Sitlington, P. L. (2000). Young adults with mental disabilities--does transition planning make a difference? *Education and Training in Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, 35(2),* 119-134.

Harvey, M. W. (2002). Comparison of postsecondary transitional outcomes between students with and without disabilities by secondary vocational education participation: Findings from the national education longitudinal study. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals, 25(2),* 99-122.

Levine, P., & Edgar, E. (1994). An analysis by gender of long-term postschool outcomes for youth with and without disabilities. *Exceptional Children*, *61(3),* 282-300.

Lichtenstein, S. & Michaelides, N. (1993). Transition from school to young adulthood: four case studies of young adults labeled mentally retarded. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals, 16(2),* 183-195.

Page, B., & Chadsey-Rusch, J. (1995). The community college experience for students with and without disabilities: A viable transition outcome? *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals, 18(2),* 85-96.

Rabren, K., Dunn, C., & Chambers, D. (2002). Predictors of post-high school

employment among young adults with disabilities. *Career Development for

Exceptional Individuals, 25(1),* 25-40.

Sitlington, P. L., & Frank, A. R. (1993). Success as an adult--does gender make a

difference for graduates with mental disabilities? *Career Development for

Exceptional Individuals, 16(2),* 171-182.

Sitlington, P. L., Frank, A.R., & Carson, R. (1993). Adult adjustment among high school

graduates with mild disabilities. *Exceptional Children, 59(3),* 221-233.

Wehmeyer, M. L., & Palmer, S. B. (2003). Adult outcomes for students with cognitive

disabilities three-years after high school: The impact of self-determination.

Education and Training in Developmental Disabilities, 38(2), 131-144.