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ABSTRACT

The report, which is part of a series, provides a summary of a 1985 meeting. The meeting was intended to (1) provide an overview of the Secondary Transition Intervention Effectiveness Institute's programs, (2) discuss how participants could be involved in the Institute's programs, and (3) develop a format for networking the results of federally funded projects to other persons concerned with the transition from school to work of youth with handicaps. Included in the document is the agenda from the meeting, an overview of the Transition Institute, the results of the discussions regarding program evaluation and technical assistance, an evaluation of the meeting, and a list of the participants and advisory members. Several appendixes include the research questionnaire, evaluation questions, technical assistance needs instrument, and the evaluation instrument. (DB)

Project Directors' Annual Meeting 1985

Chadsey-Rusch

TRANSITION INSTITUTE AT ILLINOIS

The following principles guide our research related to the education and employment of youth and adults with specialized education, training, employment, and adjustment needs.

- Individuals have a basic right to be educated and to work in the environment that least restricts their right to learn and interact with other students and persons who are not handicapped.
- Individuals with varied abilities, social backgrounds, aptitudes, and learning styles must have equal access and opportunity to engage in education and work, and life-long learning.
- Educational experiences must be planned, delivered, and evaluated based upon the unique abilities, social backgrounds, and learning styles of the individual.
- Agencies, organizations, and individuals from a broad array of disciplines and professional fields must effectively and systematically coordinate their efforts to meet individual education and employment needs.
- Individuals grow and mature throughout their lives requiring varying levels and types of educational and employment support.
- The capability of an individual to obtain and hold meaningful and productive employment is important to the individual's quality of life.
- Parents, advocates, and friends form a vitally important social network that is an instrumental aspect of education, transition to employment, and continuing employment.

The Secondary Transition Intervention Effectiveness Institute is funded through the Office of Special Education Programs, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, U.S. Department of Education (contract number 300-85-0160).

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Conference Proceedings from:

"The Project Directors' Annual Meeting"

Washington, DC
November 4-6, 1985

Edited by

Janis Chadsey-Rusch

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

This document overviews the proceedings from the first of five meetings sponsored by Special Education Programs, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, U.S. Department of Education (contract number 300-85-0160). These meetings are organized by the Secondary Transition Intervention Effectiveness Institute, College of Education, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. A primary objective of the Transition Institute is to evaluate the effectiveness of model programs that are funded through the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services. Secondary objectives relate to (a) providing program evaluation technical assistance, (b) investigating transition issues through applied research, and (c) providing evaluation research and applied research experiences to graduate students in the area of transition programming.

The meeting was held November 4-6, 1985 at the Lowes L'enfant Plaza Hotel in Washington, D.C. The purpose of the meeting was to (a) provide an overview of the Institute's programs, (b) discuss how participants could be involved in the Institute's programs, and (c) develop a format for networking the results of federally funded projects to other persons concerned with the transition from school to work for youth with handicaps.

This document provides a summary of the proceedings from the meeting. Included in the document is the agenda from the meeting, an overview of the Transition Institute, the results from the discussions concerning program evaluation and technical assistance, an evaluation of the meeting, and a list of the participants and advisory members. In addition, several appendices are presented which include the research questionnaire, evaluation questions, technical assistance needs instrument, and evaluation instrument.

Frank R. Rusch, Ph.D. directs of the Secondary Transition Intervention Effectiveness Institute.

AGENDA

OFFICE OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT FOR SPECIAL POPULATIONS
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

RESEARCH TRIANGLE INSTITUTE
Research Triangle Park, North Carolina

AGENDA

SECONDARY TRANSITION INTERVENTION EFFECTIVENESS INSTITUTE*
presents
The Project Director's Annual Meeting
November 4-6, 1985
Washington, D.C.

Monday, November 4

8:00 - 9:00	REGISTRATION AND COFFEE
9:00 - 9:15	WELCOME
	Patricia Guard, Director of Special Education Programs, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services
9:15 - 9:30	THE HISTORY OF THE FEDERAL INVOLVEMENT IN TRANSITION
	Nancy Safer, Special Education Programs, OSERS
9:30 - 10:30	OVERVIEW OF TRANSITION INSTITUTE ACTIVITIES
	Frank R. Rusch, L. Allen Phelps, John Pyecha, Institute Staff
10:30 - 10:45	BREAK
10:45 - 12:00	INSTITUTE RESEARCH PROGRAM OVERVIEW
	National Research Needs Study Frank R. Rusch
	Social Ecology Research Project Janis Chadsey-Rusch, Institute Staff
12:00 - 1:30	LUNCH (on your own)
1:30 - 2:00	INSTITUTE EVALUATION PROGRAM OVERVIEW
	L. Allen Phelps, Laird Heal, Lizanne DeStefano, Del Harnisch, Bob Stake Institute Staff

2:00 - 2:50	EVALUATION INPUT SESSION #1
	Group 1 - Evaluation Data/Information Base L. Allen Phelps
	Group 2 - Meta-analysis Laird Heal
	Group 3 - Student Assessment Lizanne DeStafano
	Group 4 - Extant and Longitudinal Data Bases Del Harnisch
	Group 5 - Evaluation Research Robert Stake
2:50 - 3:10	BREAK
3:10 - 4:00	EVALUATION INPUT SESSION #2
	The concurrent sessions will be repeated and participants are free to choose the session they wish to attend.
4:00 - 4:30	QUESTION/ANSWER SESSION
	L. Allen Phelps and Institute Evaluation Program Staff
4:30 - 4:45	SUMMARY SESSION
	Frank R. Rusch and L. Allen Phelps
4:45 - 6:30	SOCIAL HOUR CASH BAR

<u>Tuesday, November 5</u>

8:30 - 9:00	COFFEE
9:00 - 10:00	INSTITUTE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM OVERVIEW
	Joe Haenn, Institute Staff
10:00 - 10:30	TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE NEEDS ASSESSMENT
	Anne Hocutt, Institute Staff
10:30 - 10:45	BREAK

10:45 - 12:00	GROUP SESSIONS TO COMPLETE AND DISCUSS NEEDS ASSESSMENT Group 1 - Joe Haenn Group 2 - John Pyecha Group 3 - Anne Hocutt Group 4 - Ronald Wiegerink, Institute Staff
12:00 - 1:30	LUNCH (on your own)
1:30 - 2:00	TRANSITION: THE FEDERAL PERSPECTIVE Joan Standlee, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services
2:00 - 3:30	INFORMATION EXCHANGE SESSION BETWEEN OSERS STAFF AND PROJECT DIRECTORS Mel Appell Betty Baker Judith Fein Patricia Guard William Halloran Carol Inman Robert E. Jones Marty Kaufman Gary P. Lambour Richard P. Melia Joseph Rosenstein Nancy Safer Joan Standlee Paul Thompson Edward Wilson
3:30 - 4:00	EMERGING TRENDS AND ISSUES IN TRANSITION William Halloran, Special Education Programs, OSERS
4:00 - 4:30	SUMMARY SESSION Frank R. Rusch and John Pyecha
4:30 - 6:30	SOCIAL HOUR CASH BAR

Wednesday, November 6

8:00 - 8:15	COFFEE
8:15 - 8:45	OVERVIEW OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE EVALUATION MANUAL John Pyecha

8:45 - 9:45	GROUP SESSIONS TO DISCUSS EVALUATION MANUAL
	Group 1 - Joe Haenn
	Group 2 - John Pyecha
	Group 3 - Anne Hocutt
	Group 4 - Ronald Wiegerink, Institute Staff
9:45 - 10:00	BREAK
10:00 - 10:45	GROUP REPORTS
10:45 - 11:00	CLOSING
	Marty Kaufman, Division Director, Division of Educational Services, Special Education Programs, OSERS.

Overview of Transition Institute

The College of Education at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) has received a federal contract to create an institute that will study and evaluate services delivered to disabled youth who are entering the job market.

The Secondary Transition Intervention Effectiveness Institute, which will be funded for five years by the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS), US Department of Education, will be conducting research and working with federally funded secondary special education projects throughout the country. The Transition Institute is directed by Frank R. Rusch, professor of special education, and co-directed by L. Allen Phelps, associate dean of education and professor of vocational education.

Recently, the United States Commission on Civil Rights (1983) reported that between 50% and 80% of all persons with disabilities are unemployed. These data suggest that a disproportionately large number of disabled persons do not obtain meaningful jobs. Several follow-up studies conducted in Vermont (Hasazi, Preskill, & Gordon, 1985), Virginia (Wehman, Kregel, & Zoller, 1984), and Colorado (Mithaug & Horiuchi, 1983) reflect similar figures. Based on these findings, it appears that--in spite of considerable recent attention on elementary and secondary education--meaningful employment outcomes for graduating students who are disabled have not materialized.

Although several million individuals with disabilities in this country are denied, for various reasons, the opportunity to engage in meaningful employment, these individuals do possess the potential to live and work in the community. These individuals have been the focus of attention by special educators, vocational educators, vocational rehabilitation personnel, adult service agencies, and many other agencies and organizations for the past three decades. Unfortunately, individuals who are mentally retarded, physically disabled, and/or otherwise disabled, have not made a successful transition to the community. Most of them either work in sheltered settings, are underemployed, or are unemployed and live with family, relatives, or friends without much hope of participating in their community in the manner most nondisabled persons participate. There is considerable evidence to suggest that these youth will not make any major gains in the world of work unless there is a concentrated effort to identify and introduce interventions that will lead to their employment.

The Transition Institute is designed to address both the theoretical and practical problems of transition from school to work for youth with handicaps. The Transition Institute grew out of a consensus among legislative, professional, and advocacy organizations that an initiative was needed to establish a more systematic and effective delivery system to assist youth with handicaps in making the transition from school or unemployment to work. The passage of Public Law 98-199 provided the authority to address this need specifically through Section 626, entitled "Secondary Education and Transitional Services for Handicapped Youth." The mission of the Transition Institute is threefold. It will address a series of evaluation, technical assistance, and research activities.

Evaluation Research Program

The Evaluation Research Program is directed by Dr. L. Allen Phelps. The evaluation program will collect and analyze data related to efforts to prepare students for employment. One of the major activities of the evaluation program will be to collect and summarize information about the model programs funded under the secondary and transition services' initiative. Descriptive data from a variety of sources will be identified and summarized. Data will be collected annually on programs funded in the following categories: (a) service demonstration models, (b) cooperative models, (c) youth employment projects, (d) postsecondary projects, and (e) transition from school/institution to work. From the collected data, program profiles for each model program will be generated by the evaluation group. Following a review by responsible project officers and the Institute Advisory Committee, a Compendium of Program Profiles will be published and disseminated.

As the evaluative information is collected, a series of meta-analyses will be undertaken to look at the comparative data on target audiences, objectives, and project progress to date. The meta-analysis approach, developed by Gene Glass and his colleagues at the University of Colorado-Boulder, involves converting findings of each study to an effect size. The resulting product, a meta-analysis report, will be produced for dissemination to project directors, OSERS staff, and other key persons.

A third major purpose of the evaluation program is to help model project directors select and use appropriate instruments and procedures for assessing the entering and exiting skills of students. Following a survey of model project staff, a taxonomy of instructional objectives/

student competencies and an inventory of assessment procedures will be developed.

Two major products will emerge from this objective. The first is a Compendium Document (to be updated annually) to include the taxonomy, abstracts of project-produced and commercially produced assessment instruments, and examples of promising assessment procedures and instruments. A technical report will be prepared that examines content validity, reliability, and universality of the assessment procedures being used.

The fourth major task of the evaluation program will entail examining the educational, employment, and independent living outcomes attained by handicapped youth as they exit school and enter the work force. Data will be collected to determine the extent to which transition is being successfully achieved by these students at the national, state, and local levels.

A document modeled after the Digest of Data on Persons with Disabilities will be published annually describing the best available information on such variables as the incidence of handicapping conditions, employment and unemployment rates for both handicapped and nonhandicapped youth, minority status among handicapped youth, secondary school completion data, employment status, earnings, and residential arrangements. Two meta-analysis reports examining the follow-up studies on the post-school status of former handicapped and nonhandicapped students will also be included as products from this fourth objective.

The final objective to be undertaken by the evaluation program involves evaluation research. The basic activities include: reviewing the evaluation literature; convening a group of recognized evaluation theorists, project directors, and institute staff to delineate issues on two occasions; commissioning and synthesizing scholarly papers on key issues; and developing an agenda of needed evaluation research in the area of transitional services.

Technical Assistance Program

The Technical Assistance Program, housed at the Research Triangle Institute (RTI) at Research Triangle Park, North Carolina, will be directed by Dr. John Pyecha. This component's overall goal is to provide technical assistance on evaluation methodology to the federally funded secondary and transition model demonstration projects.

In an attempt to develop the mutual trust necessary to encourage full utilization of technical assistance resources, the Transition Institute separated the technical assistance component from the functions of research and evaluation research program housed at the University of Illinois. The Transition Institute's Technical Assistance Center (TAC) is staffed with technical assistance specialists who have access to a comprehensive resource base of information, which includes resources in topical areas specific to the evaluation of secondary and transitional programs.

The technical assistance delivery cycle consists of the following three distinct stages: program planning, program needs assessment, and delivery of technical assistance. During the program planning stage, TAC staff will review the evaluation plans of all of the federally funded secondary and transition model demonstration projects. Each evaluation plan will be analyzed according to a checklist containing such variables as the purpose of the plan, intended audience, questions and criteria, evaluation approach, data collection procedures, analysis, and reporting strategies. In addition, a general purpose evaluation document will be formulated to address many of the same variables included on the checklist.

During the program needs assessment stage, the TAC staff will conduct a needs assessment of each funded demonstration project. The purpose of this assessment is to gather information regarding the types of technical assistance desired by individual projects, likely strategies for meeting these needs, and the anticipated level and types of technical assistance required (e.g., in terms of days, telephone calls, workshops) that match the resources allocated to the TAC staff. Information will also be gathered from the funded projects regarding the topics that should be covered in the general purpose evaluation document and the format that can best convey those selected topics.

The third stage is the delivery of technical assistance. The technical assistance system consists of eight delivery strategies which consist of assistance being delivered at the project director's annual meeting, workshops, and other professional meetings, as well as through the telephone, electronic mail, materials, correspondence, and on-site visits. Type of technical assistance delivered will depend upon matching the needs of the individual projects with the resources allocated TAC.

Applied Research Program

The research program, directed by Dr. Frank R. Rusch, will adopt a systems-oriented approach to direct its activities. This approach contends that problems experienced by handicapped youth are a reflection of broader systems problems. Consequently, the problems require that the

Transition Institute seek solutions that reflect consideration of transition from a systems-analytic perspective, with interventions formulated at varying levels within the broader system. The research program will study and formulate interventions at four levels of analysis: the individual level, the small-group level, the community level, and the society level.

At the individual level, interventions will be person-centered and thus will be directed toward ameliorating problems that handicapped youth may have, e.g., social skill problems and problems with generalization and independence. Problems that occur at the small-group level are seen as emanating from difficulties that occur with primary groups, such as with the family and coworkers, and thus interventions will be aimed at changing the groups' behavior rather than the individual's behavior. At the community level, problems are viewed as the failure of organizations (e.g., the media and unions) to implement socially desirable values and goals, and consequently, the problems that need changing are within the organizations themselves. The fourth and final source of intervention strategies that will be studied will be at the societal level. At this level, interventions will be directed toward changing "institutions" (e.g., governmental organizations) with regard to social policy and economics. Although interventions will be formulated at varying levels of analysis, it is clear that interventions directed toward one level (e.g., individual) will often impact upon other levels (e.g., small group).

Two tasks are presently being conducted by the research program. The first task consists of a two-phase research needs study. During the first phase, researchers at the University of Illinois generated a list of possible questions at all four levels of analysis (e.g., individual, small group, community, and society) that were of interest to them and could be researched at the University of Illinois. These questions were then sent to 25 experts in the fields of special education, vocational education, and vocational rehabilitation for verification of the questions' importance and for question revisions and additions. Based on the input of the 25 experts, the original questions have been reformulated (see Appendix A).

During the second phase of the study, the newly revised questions will be sent to selected local and state leadership personnel in special education, vocational education, and vocational rehabilitation and to employers, parents, and directors of all the federally funded model demonstration transition programs so they can prioritize the questions. The results from this survey will be used in two ways. First, the results will be analyzed and disseminated to all interested persons. Second, researchers at the University of Illinois will be invited to submit research proposals that address the prioritized questions. These proposals will be reviewed by Dr. Rusch and the institute Advisory Committee. Short- and long-term investigation will begin in the summer of 1986.

In addition to the research needs study, the research program is also in the process of beginning a long-term investigation which will span five years of the Transition Institute's existence. This program will study the social ecology of the workplace. During the first year of the program, instrumentation and observation procedures that measure social relationships existing in the workplace will be designed and piloted. During the second and part of the third years, the objective of the program will be to study the social interactions and relationships that exist between coworkers, between nonhandicapped and handicapped employees, and between coworkers with handicaps. The objectives of year 3 and part of year 4 will be to implement intervention studies designed to maximize the social fit between employees with handicaps and their work environment. These results will be disseminated during the fifth year of the program.

Other Activities

In addition to the three major programs of the Transition Institute (i.e., evaluation, technical assistance, and research), the Transition Institute will undertake a series of four other specialized, supportive activities. The first of these is to review and synthesize research related to evaluation methodology, efficacy of secondary and transitional services to handicapped youth, and topics that provide guidance and direction for the Transition Institute's evaluation, technical assistance, and research activities. Despite the present literature on school-to-work transition, much remains unknown about the nature of the transition process. With new literature continually being made available, the Transition Institute will identify and analyze these studies and findings throughout the contract period, prepare an annotated bibliography, and disseminate the results.

The second specialized task involves conducting an annual meeting for project directors associated with model demonstration projects funded by OSERS each year of the five-year funding period. During the first meeting, an emphasis was placed on describing the Transition Institute's activities. During subsequent years, the emphasis will be placed on presenting research and evaluation findings, as well as facilitating information exchange among project directors and invited guests.

Communication between and among the funded projects and organizations related to the Transition Institute is essential. The third specialized task is the establishment and maintenance of ongoing communication mechanisms. Communication activities will occur between (1) OSERS and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) and RTI, (2) UIUC and the model demonstration projects, (3) RTI and the model demonstration projects, and (4) the model demonstration projects themselves. A variety of communication mechanisms will be established to facilitate these interactions, including meetings, a handbook containing information about each project (e.g., project name and telephone number, type of project, goals and components, target population served), SpecialNet, and through the quarterly newsletter, Interchange.

The fourth task to be accomplished by the Transition Institute is that of providing research, evaluation, and technical assistance experiences to graduate students. During the first year, the Transition Institute will provide training experiences for more than 12 graduate students across each of the three primary programs. These students will work under the direction of the principal investigator, the institute co-director, and researchers associated with each program.

Under the direction of the Institute faculty, graduate students will engage in seminars and field experiences focusing upon transitional programming, technical assistance, research, evaluation, and leadership and personnel preparation. These students will also support Transition Institute staff in such activities as: (1) reviewing and summarizing the literature on transitional programs, evaluation, and technical assistance; (2) developing and implementing research studies; (3) actively participating in evaluation and technical assistance activities;

(4) developing packages of materials in response to field requests; (5) participating in reviewing evaluation plans; and (6) making decisions on the most effective means of delivering technical assistance and conducting program evaluations.

"Although the mission of the Transition Institute is to conduct research, evaluation, and technical assistance activities, we must not forget that these activities are designed to benefit all youth with handicaps who are engaged in the transition from school to the workplace. We also must not lose the momentum that was initiated by Madeline Will (Assistant Secretary for the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services) and that has been maintained through the leadership and dedication from her staff. By working in partnership with the federally funded model demonstration projects and by documenting their successes, we will be able to make definitive statements about the transition process which will benefit all handicapped youth of the future" (p. 4) (Rusch, 1985).

References

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EVALUATION PROGRAM DISCUSSION RESULTS

L. Allen Phelps, Ph.D.
Evaluation Program Director

Perspectives on Program Evaluation

This brief paper seeks to provide some initial definitions and perspectives about program evaluation held by the Evaluation Program staff. These definitions and perspectives help to frame a series of issues that are of interest to the planners and users of evaluative information generated by the Secondary Transition Intervention Effectiveness Institute. To some extent the paper will outline concepts to be woven into a philosophy of evaluation for the Institute.

It is important for the reader to recognize the eclectic character of the Institute Evaluation staff. We come to the Institute activity with a highly diverse set of experiences, beliefs, values, and philosophies about education in general and educational evaluation in particular. This diversity in staff selection was and will continue to be intentional, and is viewed as a major strength of our approach to the problems of evaluating secondary special education and transitional programs for handicapped youth.

The following perspectives are offered:

1. Program evaluation, as all evaluation, is a search for good and bad; euphemistically strengths and needs. The search for the former has often overshadowed the search for the latter.

2. Most program evaluation is done informally and intuitively. Some will be done formally, by design, with results made explicit and available for distribution. What makes for sound informal evaluation is not always sensible for formal evaluation, and vice versa.

3. Program people have quite a bit to lose by participating in formal evaluation. The outcomes and criteria specified (even when agreed

upon) often will be quite poor representatives of the complexities of programs and the diverse needs of various stakeholders. It is doubtful that one can "count on the evaluation conveying what the program is <u>all</u> about."

4. Evaluations and evaluation reports should be designed for explicit purposes and selected audiences. It is likely that federal officials, local school officials, parents, and other interested parties will have sufficiently dissimilar interests. Thus, it is not likely that all of their questions can be accommodated in a single report or with a common evaluation method.

5. Research and evaluation are similar but different. Not only is evaluation value-centered, it focuses on a single object, e.g., a project. That object can be an aggregate, such as "transition demonstration projects," funded and unfunded. Research is a search for more general understandings, about general treatments, classes of projects, and populations of participants. The activities of the Evaluation Program will include evaluation, research, and evaluation research undertakings.

6. Evaluation and research efforts put people at risk. Rules for research on the protection of human subjects need to be followed.

7. Evaluation studies serve other purposes than informational purposes. They legitimate. They advocate. They explain. Principally, they help to improve programs and services. It is shortsighted to act as if the purpose was singular in focus or exclusively rational.

8. It is not reasonable to suppose that the best evaluation study of a national program is the sum of the evaluation of its projects, or

that the best evaluative information for local use is what has been designated as needed for addressing national needs or national review.

9. Generally, evaluation efforts in special education and rehabilitation have stressed pre-placement assessment and neglecting efforts to explore and describe the impact of programs upon individuals after placement. Further, it seems that post-placement evaluation has stressed short-term placement success at the expense of long-term success.

10. The needs and interests of individual projects and programs are of primary importance in the Institute's evaluation milieu. Similarly, the rights and welfare of program clients supersede the interests of the agencies who serve them.

11. This major federal commitment to program evaluation can and must be used to strengthen the knowledge base of educational and human service evaluation methodology.

Evaluation Data/Information Base

The pool of responses to the Project Evaluation Information was based on 5 returned forms and the comments of 40 session participants at the Annual Meeting. The purpose of this task is to develop a computerized information and data base for the demonstration projects, develop profiles for individual projects and groups of projects, generate graphic displays of project data and information, and facilitate the use of the data base. This will be accomplished by developing preliminary data collection plans and instruments, pilot testing the instrumentation, making refinements, collecting core information from projects, summarizing the data and information, and developing profiles and displays (see Appendix B, Task 6.1).

Discussion Questions

1. How can the Institute Evaluation Data Base be designed to be of optimal use to project directors? To federal agency personnel? What major concerns do you have about this data base?

Responses and comments focused on the need to ensure that appropriate "hard" data are collected on outcomes for participants, on the types of interventions used in the projects, and on community characteristics. Projects should also be encouraged to share with others their "false starts." Profiles and successful and unsuccessful students/clients might also be developed. It was suggested that the data base contain comprehensive abstracts on each project arranged by competition. Newsletters and the SpecialNet bulletin board should be the means for sharing information from the data base.

2. How do you envision project directors using the Project Profiles developed annually from this task? What kinds of information should appear in these profiles? How do federal officials anticipate using these profiles?

Project directors reported they would most likely use the data base to network with other project directors with similar projects and interests. The profiles could also be used in response to inquiries about the need for such projects. Generally, participants felt sharing the profiles would enable directors to improve and strengthen their projects over time.

3. To what extent is evaluative information being collected by projects different from that which they proposed in their grant proposals to collect? What is different about the current evaluation design from that which appeared in the original proposal (i.e., new purposes for evaluation, different audiences, alternative use of results, refocusing of project objectives)? If changes were made, what is the most efficient means for the Institute staff to determine the nature of these changes?

Respondents here tended to be involved in the first year of their project and felt that: (a) it was too early to tell if changes were needed in their evaluation design, (b) their evaluation design was quite unsophisticated, or (c) they had come to the meeting expecting to be told which evaluation data to collect.

4. If the evaluation section of your proposal was to be re-written at this point in the project, how would it be different?

Respondents and commentors indicated that they would be a bit more specific in their evaluation designs, that they might budget for an evaluator, and that they would emphasize the collection of hard data.

5. If you are a project director/staff person, do you have available IBM or IBM-compatible personal computer? 60% Yes ____No
If yes, does this computer have electronic communications capabilities?
50% Yes ____No
If yes, which communications software is used? SpecialNet was mentioned, but only by a few.

6. What are the major questions that project directors are seeking to answer with the evaluation of their programs? In their view, which data or information best answers these questions?

Among the responses were the following questions: Which interventions are most successful? What are the shortcomings of the field? Where are the gaps in the services? What are the appropriate roles of educators, parents, and others? What services have a long-term impact on students? What are the costs involved? What are the predictors of successful transitions? How effective is the supported work model on job placement and eventual success? How effective is the curriculum? What gains have been made by students? How can generalized outcomes be taught effectively? Can materials from other sources, such as the military, be adopted for use easily? How do programs train and place students in new and emerging occupations?

7. What are the <u>major</u> questions that federal officials are seeking to answer with the evaluation of the demonstration programs? In their view, which data and/or information provides the best answers to these questions?

The most frequent notation here focused on the question of successful interventions to inform the federal government of future funding priorities.

I am: 85% Project director

______ Federal agency official

15% Other, describe: coordinator, evaluator, etc.

Meta-Analyses

The annual meeting was very helpful in establishing some realistic limits on the expectations that could be achieved in a meta-analysis based on the evaluation data from the projects that are to be reviewed by the Transition Institute. Two points are especially pertinent: first, no project had a control group, which is essential for a conventional meta-analysis (e.g., Glass, McGaw, & Smith, 1978); and second, very few projects were designed with the same objectives, making it perilous to aggregate results over projects. The strategy that the meta-analysis "team" will take in addressing these challenges is as follows.

First, we shall compare similar projects that differ on one or only a few critical characteristics, so that projects can serve as controls for one another. For example, if 20 projects involve urban university-special education coalitions, and they differ only in that 10 have a high school workshop and the other 10 do not, then any different between these two groups can reasonably be attributed to the workshops. Second, we shall classify projects as carefully as possible, so that groups of similar projects can be formed for analysis purposes. This classification is crucial if comparisons are to be credible.

Discussion Questions

Five discussion questions were presented to two small group sessions at the annual meeting (see Appendix B, Task 6.2). The groups contained about 20 members each. The first group was assigned, and the second chose the meta-analysis session from the five that were available. The five questions will be shown here with a summary of the discussion stimulated by each.

1. What broad analyses of the procedures and outcomes of transition education demonstration projects would produce useful information for others in the field?

2. What comparisons among projects would likely produce misleading information?

While the interaction was generally positive, the responses to questions 1 and 2 were largely negative. Participants were concerned that it would be very difficult to group projects because each one was unique unto itself. No two projects had the same procedures, and it would be unfair to compare their outcomes.

The remainder of this report must be interpreted in terms of this initial reservation.

The first issue raised under this topic was completely unexpected. The participants keyed on the term "useful information" in the question, and launched into a discussion of their greatest need: to determine a way to cement inter-agency agreements so that students are served by a cohesive service system rather than one that is splintered into guarded fiefdoms. Questions raised were: How can we work out agreements where it is clear who is responsible for what service and who is responsible for what payment?

It is clear that this class of concern is beyond the preview of the meta-analysis, but it seems reasonable for project directors to ask for information that will help them function more effectively. The Institute should probably develop an objective to deal with these issues in its renewal application.

3. How can projects best communicate their actual program procedures and results?

- Original project grant proposals.
- Director interviews
- Front line staff interviews
- Copies of progress reports
- Surveys of staff
- Others

In their written responses especially, the respondents were most confident of director interviews, somewhat confident of staff surveys and interviews, and least confident of grant proposals and progress reports. Respondents stated that grant proposals and progress reports are necessarily distortions of true activities and accomplishments, since any weakness is a threat to funding.

4. What are the best ways to define subgroups or projects?

- Project objectives
- Student types
- Program (e.g., profile regarding: assess, train, place, maintain)
- Organization and management systems
- Evaluation methods
- Others

Consistent with their response to question 1, participants were reluctant to agree that projects could be grouped. Nevertheless, they agreed that these were all reasonable ways to attempt the impossible. Other subgroup divisions were also suggested. As a refinement of organization and management systems, respondents suggested that communities could be typed by size and history of supporting handicapped citizens. Furthermore, differences among service agencies must be considered in any classification of projects.

5. What are the goals, objectives, and intended outcomes of the projects?

Perhaps the greatest shock to the meta-analysis function of the evaluation section of the institute was the realization of the heterogeneity of the goals, objectives, and intended outcomes of these projects. In addition to the classification of projects who are actually engaged in the placement of students in out-of-school jobs, a major classification problem must be solved before information can be aggregated about those projects that have no such activity. Some of these have been established to develop a coalition to facilitate transition from school to adult living. Others address training but have no placement function.

6. How are these intended outcomes assessed? Are the measures standard for each particular outcome? How can they be made more standardized?

This question received very little discussion. The participants indicated that they expected the Institute to help them in this regard, since their knowledge of assessment and measurement of program outcomes was limited.

Student Assessment

This summary was compiled using seven written responses to the questions by conference participants and the comments of forty session participants at the annual meeting (see Appendix B, Task 6.3). The purpose of the student assessment task is to analyze and recommend instruments for measuring student characteristics, achievement, and adjustment. This will be accomplished by reviewing proposals, developing taxonomy of student skills taught and measures used, preparing a compendium of skills and assessment measures, producing a technical report analyzing validity, reliability, and universality of the measures, and disseminating a compendium/technical report. A synthesis of the questions is presented below.

1. What are the measurement priorities for projects?

Most projects cited the use of student assessment as an aid in vocational training and transition planning. A secondary use is in the measurement of program outcomes as a measure of student progress and program effectiveness.

2. To what extent can these priorities be met by commercial instruments?

While the majority of the projects used commercial instruments as part of their assessment system, most supplemented it with questionnaires/checklists/surveys which have been developed specifically for the project.

3. What is the relative importance of assessment for the following purposes: (a) initial assessment for placement, (b) assessment for program

planning, (c) assessment during the training program, and (d) assessment for evaluation/outcome measures?

Essentially all of the projects involved with direct service to students use assessment information to determine eligibility for the program. After that, the most common use of assessment is for program planning, i.e., assessment of vocational skills, social skills, adaptive behavior. Very few programs include on-going assessment during training; in those that do, it consists mostly of informal observation at the job site. Several projects assess consumer satisfaction or post-training skill levels as part of their evaluation plan.

4. What are the major dissatisfactions with available measurement procedures for the purposes listed above?

A number of projects commented upon the lack of standardized social skills instruments and career interest inventories for handicapped students. There was also a wide spread interest in the development of handicapped norms for some popular vocational assessment instruments.

5. What employee/student information do employers/educators find most useful?

In addition to information on vocational skills levels, projects also found information on work habits, social skills, learning styles level of support needed to function, academic skills, previous employment, and vocational strengths and needs useful.

6. Is there a need to obtain summary information on measurement procedures being developed by other projects? What mechanisms are most

useful in accomplishing this task? What role should the Institute play in this process?

Projects expressed an overwhelming need for some networking between projects regarding assessment procedures. It was generally felt that the Institute should take major responsibility for organizing and disseminating the information. A loose-leaf document, to be updated periodically, was the favored mechanism of dissemination. Possible items to include in the document were a description of each instrument, standardization information, and availability. The document should be organized by skill measured.

7. Have there been major changes in the plans for and uses of student assessment information since the proposal was written? What are they? Why were these changes made?

It was difficult to compile responses to this question. The group discussion format did not allow many projects to report and only a small number of short answer forms were returned. It is hoped that more information will be obtained from the inclusion of this form sent to individual projects.

8. How can the Institute be of greatest use to you in dealing with questions of student assessment? What changes in the proposed activities would you suggest?

Summarizing and disseminating assessment information from various projects was seen as the most useful task of the Institute. Some need for assistance in selecting, developing, and standardizing instruments was also requested. No specific changes were suggested.

Extant and Longitudinal Databases

The purpose of this task is to examine the educational, employment, and independent living outcomes attained by youth with handicaps as they exit school and enter the workforce. This will be accomplished by conducting secondary analyses of primary longitudinal data sources and developing a plan for synthesizing follow-up studies examining the post-school status of special education students (see Appendix B, Task 6.4). The analysis to the questions below is based on eight responses.

1. What is the nature and extent of education and employment outcomes achieved by youth with handicaps?

Although the group had a good idea of employment/education conditions in their local geographic area, they were less aware of state or national figures, other than those commonly seen in OSERS releases.

2. What selected demographic, educational, and vocational experiences are related to employment following graduation or exit from high school?

A variety of experiences and characteristics were mentioned as contributing to employment. These included: (a) urban vs. rural, (b) type of handicapping condition, (c) type and extent of secondary and post-secondary training available, (d) extent of interagency coordination, and (e) community employment characteristics.

3. What data sources and information resources are appropriate for describing youth with handicaps and examining some of the relationships between educational and employment factors?

Three sources were described to answer this question: (a) agency and state DOE files and data banks, (b) Bureau of Employment Statistics, and (c) studies conducted by special interest and advocacy groups, such as the Association for Retarded Citizens.

4. To what extent are local, state, and national data sources useful, valid, and reliable in their estimates of educational, employment, and independent living status attainment?

While the issue of validity and reliability was not specifically addressed, participants indicated that an easy to use digest of these statistics would be valuable.

5. What factors should be commonly examined in statewide and local follow-up studies of our special education students?

Factors that should be examined include: (a) services available to students after graduation, (b) the types of students that use these services (e.g., by handicapping condition), and (c) employment outcomes.

6. What information from transition studies would be most useful to educators and employers?

Information listed by participants included: (a) type of client, (b) job characteristics, (c) instructional and maintenance strategies used, (d) support services required, (e) job duration, and (f) wages/benefits earned.

7. What role should the Institute take in identifying the gaps in the information available with respect to secondary education and transitional services and activities?

The Institute should serve as a data bank for data on all of the projects.

8. What procedures and summary displays are most helpful in describing youth with handicaps?

A document with tables, charts, and graphs.

Evaluation Research

A task of the Transition Institute evaluation group is to conduct a program of research on the design and practice of formal program evaluation of secondary and transition projects (see Appendix B, Task 6.5).

1. Local evaluation information needs (mostly pursued informally) do not aggregate to constitute the national/professional needs for evaluative information. What are effective means for maintaining an awareness of this fact both locally and nationally?

Concerning the issue of local evaluation information needs versus national information needs, the responses indicate a sensitivity to the idea that evaluation studies richly describe and analyze projects in such fashion that evaluation provides a service to projects by way of facilitating improved practices. While there was a sensitivity displayed in responses to the benefits of evaluation which are designed to seek maximum generalizability, it was nonetheless believed that such evaluation designs do not contribute very much to our understanding of a project's idiosyncracies and processes of development. Evaluators would be prudent to be sensitive to both and to consider both levels in their planning.

2. What is to be gained and lost by organizing our evaluation studies so as to conceptualize the local project as the "treatment having certain effects?"

To perceive the evaluation studies as something which conceptualizes the local project as "the treatment having a certain effect," was felt to display an insensitivity to the distinctive aspects of transition programs. In particular, the aspect of how such projects link schools with other agencies: e.g., community care institutions and local employment agencies. The question of linkage between various agencies which these projects effect was felt to be a desirable focus for evaluation studies.

3. Given there is not enough brainpower to do the jobs that need to be done, how can we identify the higher priority evaluation tasks, avoiding front loading, being realistic about the burden associates and subordinates will accept, being realistic about how and how much evaluation data get used?

In response to the issue of identifying the higher priority evaluation tasks, respondents showed a willingness to participate in such a task either by means of participating in a survey of evaluation needs from which priorities would be established and compared with evaluation plans of each project. An interest was expressed in meeting with interested project directors and evaluation personnel to discuss and share project evaluation methodologies.

It was felt that Special Education/Transition programs were distinctive in the multiplicity of agencies and audiences which they address: school personnel, family, community agencies, and employers. It was felt that case studies would be very useful in treating some of the issues which surround attempts to have linkage between these agencies. In addition, it was felt that longitudinal studies focusing on handicapped people in employment should be considered in evaluation study.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE DISCUSSION RESULTS

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Synthesis of Responses to the Needs Assessment Instrument

A total of 79 Needs Assessment Instruments were completed and returned to the Technical Assistance (TA) staff of the Transitions Institute by the December 1 cut-off date (see Appendix G for Needs Assessment Instrument). This represents a response rate of over 70 percent of the transition projects funded by OSERS. It can be assumed, based upon an analysis of non-respondents, that most of the nonresponse occurred from projects which already have been completed or are almost completed. Therefore, the responses on which the subsequent analyses have been performed are fairly indicative of present needs for technical assistance.

Project Requests for TA

There were 38 separate items on the Needs Assessment Instrument (including the "other" category for each of the six areas of evaluation) for which respondents could request technical assistance in the evaluation of their Transition Demonstration projects. The number of requests for TA ranged from a high of 29 for one project to a low of 0 requests for 20 projects. In general, university-based projects and the more established (older) projects requested less technical assistance than the smaller and newer projects.

Areas of TA Requested

Six of the 10 items for which TA was most requested are in the area of data collection. These items include determining methods for analyzing data; methods for organizing/storing/and reducing data; methods for insuring data accuracy and reliability; methods of data collection;

developing or identifying instruments or forms to be used in collecting data, and consideration about interpretation of results given design constraints. Other top items include selection of an evaluation approach or model determination of audiences' information needs, identification of resources and constraints regarding conduct of the evaluation, and determination of formats for reports to different audiences.

Types of TA Delivery Desired

Telephone and written correspondence are the types of technical assistance most requested for all areas (i.e., Basis of Evaluation Plan, Project Documentation, Design of Evaluation, Evaluation Management, Data Collection, and Reporting Evaluation Results) of evaluation. Telephone was rated as most helpful for Basis of the Evaluation, while written correspondence was rated most helpful for Evaluation Reporting. Workshops were rated as most helpful in the areas of Evaluation Design and Data Collection. It is in these two areas plus Evaluation Management where site visits were indicated to be most helpful.

Timing for TA

Requests regarding the Basis of the Evaluation will occur primarily over the next two months. While requests concerning Project Documentation and Evaluation Design will occur over the next five months. Requests about Data Collection and Evaluation Management will occur over the next eight months, with a peak between February and April. Requests about Evaluation Reporting will occur primarily during the summer, but will continue into 1987.

SpecialNet Utilization

Based on the results, the use of SpecialNet for electronic mail purposes does not appear to be a high priority item. However, the electronic mail capabilities should be pursued for those projects which have expressed an interest. Approximately one-third of the respondents currently access SpecialNet. Further, 28 respondents would access a transition evaluation Bulletin Board Service if one were available, with another eleven projects undecided.

Evaluation Workshop Topics

The degree of interest expressed in each of 21 potential workshop topics was calculated based on different weights for different responses (e.g., a weight of 3 for "Of Much Interest," 2 for "Of Some Interest," etc.). The topics in which the most interested was expressed are: "Identifying potential evaluation areas for transition topics," "Evaluation for program improvement," "Evaluating change in handicapped populations," and "Measuring cost effectiveness."

Discussions in the small groups about what professionals have found helpful in other workshops brought out a number of similar experiences and positions. In general, the project directors/staff attending the Transitions Conference thought that successful workshops on evaluations for transitions projects should:

1. Focus on topics/subtopics of interest/applicability to groups or clusters of projects. Examples of groups/clusters could be different project types or projects serving specific populations of students.

2. Offer some combination of small group sessions on a specific topic/subtopic and opportunity for one-to-one help (TA staff with project staff), and balancing structured sessions with open sessions.

3. Provide an opportunity for projects to share and discuss data.

4. Use participants as experts.

5. Provide advance agenda and materials and have defined outcomes/ products of the workshops.

Sites for Workshops

Of the 79 persons completing the Needs Assessment instrument, 58 stated that they would be able to attend a workshop, 13 stated that they would not, 6 were undecided, and 2 did not respond to this question.

Sites receiving the most checks indicating that project staff would/ could travel there were: Raleigh (N=30), San Francisco (N=25), Champaign-Urbana (N=23), New York (N=14), and Washington, D.C. (N=10).

Analysis of the Responses to the Needs Assessment Instrument

A total of 79 Needs Assessment Instruments (NAI) were completed either during the Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C. in early November or were received by mail through a mailout following the Annual Meeting. The number and percent of instruments received from projects is summarized below by authorization number.

Funding Authority	Instruments Number	Completed Percent
84.023D	8	66.7%
84.023G	12	80.0%
84.078B	11	73.3%
84.078C	13	92.9%
84.128A	3	60.0%
84.158A	7	43.8%
84.158B	7	63.6%
84.158C	2	28.6%
85.158C	16	94.1%
Total	79	70.5%

Thus, the response rate was over 70%. It can be assumed, based upon an analysis of non-respondents, that most of the nonresponse occurred from projects which have already been completed or are almost completed. Therefore, the responses on which the subsequent analyses have been performed are fairly indicative of present needs for technical assistance.

Project Requests for TA

There are 38 separate items on the Needs Assessment Instrument (including the "other" category for each of the six areas of evaluation) for which respondents could request technical assistance in the evaluation of their Transition Demonstration projects. The number of requests for TA ranged form a high of 29 for one project to a low of 0 requests for 20 projects. The number of requests was distributed as follows:

Number of Requests	Number of Projects
29	1
27	1
22	1
20	2
18	3
15	2
14	2
13	2
12	4
11	3
9	5
8	3
7	5
6	4
5	2
4	4
3	5
2	5
1	5
0	20

These requests for TA can be divided into the four levels of TA as follows:

Level of TA	Range of Number of Requests	Number of Projects
High (site visit)	15+	10
Mid (extended services)	8-14	19
Low (limited services)	1-7	30
None (telephone & BBS access)	0 (or no response)	53

By funding authorization, these projects break out as follows:

Level of TA	High	Mid	Low	None (0)	No Response
84.023D	1 (8.3)	0 (0.0)	3 (25.0)	4 (33.3)	4 (33.3)
84.023G	1 (6.7)	2 (13.3)	3 (20.0)	6 (40.0)	3 (20.0)
84.078B	0 (0.0)	2 (13.3)	8 (53.3)	1 (6.7)	4 (26.7)
84.078C	1 (7.1)	3 (21.4)	4 (28.6)	5 (35.7)	1 (7.1)
84.128A	1 (20.0)	1 (20.0)	1 (20.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (40.0)
84.158A	2 (12.5)	2 (12.5)	3 (18.8)	0 (0.0)	9 (56.2)
84.158B	1 (9.1)	2 (18.2)	3 (27.3)	1 (9.1)	4 (36.4)
84.158C	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (28.6)	5 (71.4)
85.158C	3 (17.6)	7 (41.2)	5 (29.4)	1 (5.0)	1 (5.9)

The above analysis confirms that university-based projects and the more established (older) projects are less in need of technical assistance than the smaller and newer projects. Even so, there appears to be a good distribution of projects by authorization across the proposed levels of TA.

Types of TA Requested

The top 15 types of technical assistance requested is demonstrated below:

Area	Item Number	Number of Requests	Rank
Data Collection	4 (Data analysis)	34	1
Evaluation Design	3	31	2
Data Collection	3	30	3
Data Collection	2	29	4
Data Collection	5	26	5
Evaluation Basis	4	22	6
Evaluation Management	4	22	7
Data Collection	6	22	8
Reporting	4	22	9
Reporting	2	20	10
Evaluation Design	5	20	11
Evaluation Basis	5	18	12
Data Collection	1	18	13
Reporting	6	18	14
Evaluation Management	1	17	15

Obviously, the greatest need is in the area of Data Collection, with all items except item 7 (ethical problems) and item 8 (other). Other items of interest are evaluation design (item 3 of Evaluation Design), audience information needs (item 4 of Evaluation Basis), evaluation resources/constraints (item 4 of Evaluation Management), using evaluation results (item 4 of Reporting), targeting reports (item 2 of Reporting) and evaluation criteria (item 5 of Evaluation Design).

Types of TA Delivery Desired

The requests for types of technical assistance breaks down as indicated below:

	Telephone	Electronic Mail	Written Corre- spondence	Regional Workshop	Site Visit
Evaluation Basis	(0.6) [1.3/34]	(0.2) [1.0/14]	(0.4) [1.2/25]	(0.2) [1.4/9]	(0.0) [1.0/2]
Project Docu- mentation	(0.4) [1.4/25]	(0.2) [1.1/15]	(0.4) [1.4/23]	(0.0) [1.0/2]	(0.1) [1.5/4]
Evaluation Management	(0.5) [1.3/27]	(0.2) [1.0/12]	(0.4) [1.2/25]	[1.3/11]	(0.2) [1.6/8]
Evaluation Design	(0.5) [1.3/30]	(0.2) [1.1/14]	(0.4) [1.2/28]	(0.3) [1.4/17]	(0.3) [1.6/13]
Data Collection	(0.5) [1.3/30]	(0.2) [1.1/14]	(0.3) [1.3/28]	(0.5) [1.3/16]	(0.2) [1.7/10]
Evaluation Reporting	(0.5) [1.3/28]	(0.2) [1.1/16]	(0.5) [1.3/32]	(0.3) [1.5/13]	(0.1) [1.8/5]

*Scores are mean scores where 0 = no need and 2 = most helpful;
( ) = mean score for all respondents
[/] = mean score/number of respondents, for respondents indicating a "1" (helpful) or "2" (very helpful)

Telephone and written correspondence are the types of technical assistance most requested for all areas of evaluation. Telephone is most helpful for Basis of the Evaluation, while written correspondence is most helpful for Evaluation Reporting. Regional workshops would be most helpful in the areas of Evaluation Design and Data Collection. It is in these two areas plus Evaluation Management where site visits are most helpful.

Summary of Data for Evaluation Workshop

Topics

Seventy-nine persons responded to the twenty-one possible workshop topics listed in the Needs Assessment Instrument. A frequency count of 79 means that all respondents checked one of the three response categories: "Of No Interest," "Of Some Interest," and "Of Much Interest." Frequencies of 78 and below mean that at least one respondent did not check any of the response categories.

Data on the average response for each possible topic were calculated using _0_ for nonresponse, _1_ for the response "Of No Interest," _2_ for "Of Some Interest, and _3_ for "Of Much Interest." Thus, the higher the average response, the more interest expressed in a given topic.

The number of persons responding to and the average response for each item are listed below:

	Possible Topics	N	Average Response
1.	Determine audiences for an evaluation (Stake holder Analysis)	75	1.7
2.	Determining what can/should be evaluated (Evaluability Assessment)	79	2.2
3.	Describing the evaluation context	78	1.9
4.	How to develop an Evaluation Management Plan	78	2.2
5.	Identifying evaluation constraints	79	1.9
6.	Identifying potential evaluation areas for transition projects	79	2.4

	Possible Topics	N	Average Response
7.	Identifying appropriate standardized instruments	78	2.1
8.	Developing questionnaires and survey instruments	79	2.2
9.	Choosing an evaluation design	78	2.2
10.	Ensuring accurate data collection	78	2.1
11.	Methods of data reduction/analysis	78	2.0
12.	Using the microcomputer for program evaluation	79	2.2
13.	Targeting evaluation reports	78	1.9
14.	How to write an evaluation report	79	2.2
15.	Utilization of evaluation results	79	2.1
16.	Presenting evaluation results to the public	78	2.1
17.	Evaluation for program improvement	77	2.3
18.	Evaluating change in handicapped populations	78	2.3
19.	Measuring cost effectiveness	78	2.3
20.	Types of test scores	78	1.5
21.	Sources of invalidity	78	1.6

Discussions in the small groups about what professionals have found helpful in other workshops brought out a number of similar experiences and positions. In general, the project directors/staff attending the Transitions Conference thought that successful workshops on evaluations for transitions projects should:

1. Focus on topics/subtopics of interest/applicability to groups or clusters of projects. Examples of groups/clusters could be different project types or projects serving specific populations of students.

2. Offer some combination of small group sessions on a specific topic/subtopic and opportunity for one-to-one help (TA staff with project staff), and balancing structured sessions with open sessions.

3. Provide an opportunity for projects to share and discuss data.

4. Use participants as experts.

5. Provide advance agenda and materials and have defined outcomes/ products of the workshops.

Site

Of the 79 persons completing the Needs Assessment Instrument, 58 stated that they would be able to attend a workshop, 13 stated that they would not, 6 were undecided, and 2 did not respond to this question.

Seventeen persons did not indicate any city as being a site where they could/would attend a workshop. The remaining participants often checked more than one site where they would/could attend. Sites receiving the most checks indicating that project staff would/could travel there were: Raleigh (N=30), San Francisco (N=25), Champaign-Urbana (N=23), New York (N=14), and Washington, D.C. (N=10). Thirteen persons wrote on their instruments that they had no money to attend a workshop.

SpecialNet

Fifty of the 79 respondents did not have access to SpecialNet, 21 did have access, 3 gave no answer, and 5 were undecided. When asked if they would access a SpecialNet bulletin board denoted to evaluation of transitions projects, 31 did not respond, 28 said yes, 9 said no, and 11 were undecided. The 31 respondents likely included the 21 persons who stated that they already had access to SpecialNet since only those who stated that they did not have access to SpecialNet were to answer the question about accessing a bulletin board on transitions. Of note is that 5 persons wrote in that they had no money to access SpecialNet.

Summary and Recommendations

Seventy-nine persons completed the Needs Assessment questionnaire. Of these, it is possible that 64 persons (around 81%) may attend a workshop on evaluation of the transitions projects. Of these 64, 6 (around 9%) were undecided, and it is reasonable to assume that their participation is a function of the content and format of the workshops and perhaps of available dollars.

It was clear that if the workshops were held in Champaign/Urbana, Raleigh, and San Francisco, many, if not most, of the respondents could attend. Collectively, these sites received 78 checks from an unknown number of persons. The only other sites receiving 10 or more checks were New York (N=14) and Washington, D.C. (N=10). Given these results, it makes sense to conduct the workshops in Champaign/Urbana, Raleigh, and San Francisco.

There was also some interest in SpecialNet. Assuming no overlap between the group of 21 who said they already had access to SpecialNet and the 28 who said that they currently do not have access but would be interested in accessing a bulletin board on evaluation for transitions topics, these 49 persons constitute 62% of the respondents. Addition of the 11 "undecided" respondents to this group brings the percentage of possible bulletin board users up to 76% of the respondents. On the other hand, the "certain" users--those who already have SpecialNet--constitute only around 26% of the respondents. The cost of setting up the bulletin board must be balanced against a guestimate of around 50-60% of the respondents who have or will get access to SpecialNet in the future.

Based on the qualitative and quantitative data/information obtained at the Transitions Conference, there are a number of possibilities regarding the content and format of the workshops. It is certain that the workshops should address the most popular (and a frequently checked) topic: identifying potential evaluation areas for transition projects. Given the feedback about the importance of targeting/focusing evaluation materials/efforts on transitions projects, it is likely that targeting this topic for these projects enhanced its appeal. Perhaps part of the content for this topic is likely to be different for different clusters/ groups of projects (e.g., the evaluation areas for postsecondary projects might/might not overlap with those by cooperative projects) and thus satisfy project staff requests for focused small group sessions.

Any additional content areas considered for the workshops should focus on the other three high scoring topics: "evaluation for program improvement," "evaluating change in handicapped populations," and "measuring cost effectiveness." Again, these topics are amenable to differentiation in content based on differences among projects in terms of type of project or handicapped population served and thus would be appropriate for small group sessions.

The format of the workshops should take into account the Conference participants wishes for a balance between open and structured, and large and small group sessions. Additionally, there should be opportunity for participants to discuss results and data among themselves and for short, one-on-one discussions with TA staff.

Given this information, it is likely that three one and a half day workshops can be held in March, perhaps the first week of March (March 3-7) and the other two during the third week (March 17-21). The second week would be devoted to analyzing feedback from the first workshop and to refining and improving the workshop based on this feedback. A "typical" workshop might include (1) a one hour, 45 minute session on general strategies for identifying evaluation areas in transition projects; (2) one hour small group sessions on three other topics of interest; (3) one hour 45 minute small group sessions on the main topic, with the groups composing different project types; (4) a repeat of the one hour small group session.

Technical Assistance Plan and Schedule

This plan summarizes the planned technical assistance activity for the project year by level of involvement. Input for the plan is drawn from discussions at the Annual Meeting, the administration and analysis of the Needs Assessment Instrument (see also "Analysis of the Responses to the Needs Assessment Instrument"), and interactions with projects through the provision of technical assistance. As per the Institute proposal, there will be four levels of activity.

Level 4: Site Visit

Ten projects will be eligible for this level of TA activity. Based on the Needs Assessment Instrument, those sites most in need of on-site TA are as follows:

CFDR No.	Project Location
84.158A	Los Alamos, NM
84.158C	Bowie, MD
84.158B	Dallas, TX
84.078C	Paoli, PA
84.158A	New York, NY
84.158B	Bismarck, ND
84.158A	Seattle, WA
84.023D	Moscow, ID

These eight sites clearly requested the most assistance in terms of the number of requests for on-site TA by projects. These sites differ from the sites listed in the "Analysis" document because the earlier document did not cross-tabulate requests by type of TA (i.e., the above list includes those sites specifically requesting on-site TA for a substantial number (at least six) of specific areas of need). Since most of these projects are established projects in operation about a year, the requests were not in the area of establishing the basis for evaluation or in project documentation. Rather, requests were most often for assistance in data collection, followed by assistance in design and management of the evaluation process. The timing for delivery of these services ranges from December 1985/January 1986 through August/November 1986, although most requests are for the periods of February/April 1986 and May/July 1986. There is also a need for on-site TA assistance in reporting evaluation results, but this is generally during the period of August/November 1986 or sometime in 1987.

These 8 projects will be given the first opportunity at receiving an on-site visit. An additional two projects and replacement projects (for those declining an on-site visit) will be selected based on those projects next in need according to their Needs Assessment responses and/or telephone requests for TA. Five of these projects requested assistance on at least 18 items on the Needs Assessment Instrument.

<u>Level 3: Telephone and Written Assistance</u>

Approximately 20 sites will be eligible for up to this level of technical assistance. This level includes extensive telephone and written assistance, including the development of project-specific documents, but does not include an on-site visit.

Based on the Needs Assessment Instrument, there are about 21 projects who could use this type of assistance. These projects requested assistance on from 8 to 14 of the items on the Needs Assessment Instrument.

Level 2: Limited Correspondence

This level of assistance includes limited correspondence and up to two telephone responses for technical assistance. This includes all projects who requested assistance on one or more items of the Needs Assessment Instrument (about 30 projects in addition to those eligible for Level 3 or Level 4 services).

Level 1: General Services

Projects basically have self selected into this mode. These projects generally have sufficient evaluation resources available on-staff or locally with little need for assistance from the TA component. These projects will be eligible for all of the general services below. Based on responses to the Needs Assessment Instrument, there are approximately 50 projects at this level during this first year of assistance. This category includes projects which already have terminated (12 month projects) or will be terminating soon.

General Services

There will be five types of general services available to all projects. However, based on the Needs Assessment Instrument, it is anticipated that responses to the availability of these services will be distributed roughly according to the distribution of projects as defined by the four levels above.

1. Annual Meeting: All projects are eligible to attend the annual meeting and participate in all of the sessions which are offered by the TA component.

2. Workshops: There will be a series of workshops offered each year. All projects will be eligible to attend and participate in these workshops.

3. Telephone Hotline: A direct telephone line for TA assistance has been established at RTI only. TA component staff will accept collect telephone calls on this line (919/541-5900). An answering machine monitors this line at all times so that all calls will be received. All projects are eligible to use this hotline to request telephone assistance, although the level of assistance will be provided according to the four levels of service above.

4. SpecialNet Bulletin Board: A bulletin board service (BBS) will be established on SpecialNet by the TA component. This bulletin board will provide an informational message which will be changed on a weekly basis and will be accessible by all projects who subscribe to SpecialNet for only the cost of the telephone call and access charges. SpecialNet also will be used for the exchange of messages between projects and between the projects and the TA component. One item on the BBS will be a listing of the SpecialNet user names which can be used to access Transition Demonstration Project personnel.

5. Materials: As general materials are developed by the TA component they will be mailed to all projects. These materials include the general purpose evaluation document and all supplementary materials to that document.

EVALUATION OF THE ANNUAL MEETING

Synthesis of Evaluation Results

Scope of the Annual Meeting

The Project Directors' Annual Meeting, sponsored by the Secondary Transition Intervention Effectiveness Institute, was held November 4-6, 1985 at the Lowes L'enfant Plaza Hotel in Washington, D.C. The purpose of the meeting was to (a) provide an overview of the Institute's programs, (b) discuss how participants could be involved in the Institute's programs, and (c) develop a format for networking the results of federally funded projects to other persons concerned with the transition from school to work for youth with handicaps.

Invitations to attend the meeting were sent to all 112 project directors who had received federally-funded model demonstration transition grants, 29 persons who had federally-funded transition personnel preparation projects, and 15 OSERS personnel. Preregistration commitments were received from 175 persons; in some cases, more than one person from each project elected to come to the meeting.

Evaluation forms were included in a packet of materials that were distributed to all participants on the first day of the meeting. Of the 195 persons attending the annual meeting, only 42 or 22% of the participants turned in their evaluation forms. This report presents the data from those evaluation forms and draws some recommendations for future annual meetings (see Appendix D).

Participant Demographics

The primary audience for which the annual meeting was intended was all the project directors who had received federally-funded model demonstration transition grants. Of the 42 persons who turned in their evaluations, 16 (38%) described themselves as project directors. The remaining persons were university personnel (38%)*, project coordinators (21%), local administrators (10%), researchers (7%), state administrators (2%), and program evaluators (2%).

Over half of the participants had their doctoral degrees (56%) and 57% of the participants were special educators. The remaining participants were in the fields of rehabilitation (20%), vocational education (6%), and other (15%). Of those responding, 28% had 6-10 years of working experience, 23% had 3-5 years of working experience, 16% had either 0-2 years or over 16 years of experience, and 14% had 11-15 years of working experience.

The majority of the participants were White (81%) and the remaining participants were Black (5%), Hispanic (5%), American Indian (2%), and other (7%). Half of the participants were female and half were male. Seven percent of the persons attending the meeting had a handicapping condition.

Evaluation Results

In addition to determining the demographic information from the individual participants, the evaluation instrument was designed to probe participants' reactions to the organization of the meeting, the content of the meeting, and directions that future meetings should take. The items on the instrument were rated on a seven point Likert-scale format (range

*Percentages that do not add up to 100% are due to people marking more than one category.

of responses were from 1-7), with additional space provided for comments. Quantitative and qualitative responses to individual items are reported and discussed below.

Planning and organization of the meeting. On a seven point scale, participants rated the planning and organization of the meeting as a 4.6. Overall, participants believed that the meeting was well organized, particularly in light of the fact that the Institute had only been in operation approximately two months. Many participants mentioned that they would have liked more advance notice of the meeting which would have saved them money on airfares and accommodations (three persons commented that they thought the hotel was too expensive). In addition, one person mentioned that the meeting was probably held too early in the life of the Project. Participants also would have liked a more detailed agenda sent prior to the meeting.

Participant expectations. In regard to the extent that the meeting format and agenda met their expectations, participants rated this item a 2.9. Participants overwhelmingly believed that there was not enough time allocated to information sharing and networking among other participants; too much time was spent with the Institute staff talking. In addition, participants did not believe that the purpose of the meeting was clearly articulated. Several participants came to the meeting hoping to get "practical" ideas, but these expectations were not fulfilled (but this was not the purpose of the meeting, which again points to the need to clearly explain the purpose and agenda of the meeting). One participant was also disappointed that Madeleine Will cancelled.

Institute research program overview. Participants rated the research program overview as a 4.0. Comments received regarding the research program ranged from "very interesting" to "too much," "too technical," and "too boring." Participants did not like the lecture format presentation and felt that much of the material should have been communicated via written materials. Several participants also commented that they did not understand how the research program would benefit them.

Institute evaluation program overview. The evaluation program overview was rated a 3.8 by participants. While two persons commented that they believed the overview was clear, three persons felt the overview was unclear. Participants also commented that they thought the evaluation documents needed further clarification and that the presentations were not very interesting. In addition, participants believed that the roles they were to play and the roles the Institute was to play in regard to the evaluation of their project were unclear.

Technical assistance program overview. The technical assistance overview was rated a 4.7. Participants believed that the overview was presented clearly, would be useful, and was a highlight of the meeting.

Alternative evaluation perspectives. This question was designed to probe whether or not the participants were provided with information regarding alternative evaluation perspectives; the item was rated 2.8. Most participants believed that this issue was not addressed.

Technical assistance needs. This item was rated a 3.9. Participants believed that the needs assessment was very good, but that they were going to take a "wait and see" perspective on whether or not it would provide useful information to them. Two participants mentioned that because their projects had just gotten funded, it was too early to tell what their needs were.

Small group discussions. The small group discussions were rated a 4.6. Participants particularly liked the student assessment session, needs assessment session, and meta-analysis session. Four of the participants liked the session with the project officers, while two participants did not. Two participants believed that the sessions were too large which prohibited interaction.

Amount of information presented. Participants rated this item as a 3.6. Eight persons believed that the time and type of information presented could have been better. People commented that there was too much dead time, that the information was not relevant, and there needed to be more time for small group discussion. Three persons believed that the amount of information presented was just right and well worth it.

Information exchange. This item was rated a 3.6. Again, participants believed that not enough time was devoted to information exchange between participants and that most small group sessions were too large to be useful. In addition, participants wanted to be broken up into homogeneous groups according to populations served or content objectives. Participants want more information exchange in the future.

Overall rating of the meeting. The overall rating of the meeting was a 3.6. While some participants had negative comments (e.g., "should have had two days or 1 1/2 days max" and "would have liked smaller groups with practical useful directions"), some participants had favorable comments (e.g., "made me realize how much more our agency needs to do in assessment and evaluation," and "if what is assessed is delivered, it will be a great success; I think the commitment is there").

Negative features of the meeting. The negative features mentioned most frequently were: (1) presentations were too lengthy and too general;

did not like the general overview of the Institute; (2) not enough time to interact with other participants; (3) Madeleine Will's cancellation; (4) being talked "down" to; and (5) timing.

Future directions. Participants overwhelmingly wanted more time for exchange/dissemination type of sessions where they could share projects and discuss common problems and strategies. They also wanted project updates at the second meeting.

Conclusion

From the ratings and comments above, it is obvious that participants want specific information presented via a small group format. In addition, participants want more opportunities to exchange information with persons who have similar projects. The intent of the first meeting was to give an overview of the Institute and to get feedback from participants regarding their projects and their needs. This goal was accomplished; although relevant to the operation of the Institute, it was not relevant to the participants. The format for the second meeting will be to provide participants with more opportunities to exchange information, as well as opportunities to hear the results of updated Institute findings. This different format and information should be useful and relevant to second meeting participants.

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APPENDIX A

RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

Research Questionnaire

Please circle one number for each of the following

1. What strategies do family and friends use to help youth with handicaps adjust to their jobs? Can the effective components of these strategies be isolated and combined to yield one strategy that can be taught to advocates/significant others in the work setting?

Absolutely Essential			Moderately Important						Not at all Important	Don't Know
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	98

2. What rules can be formulated to guide teachers' systematic withdrawal of their instructional programs to facilitate students' independence?

Absolutely Essential			Moderately Important						Not at all Important	Don't Know
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	98

3. What job conditions and/or incentives are most effective for increasing the likelihood that coworkers will (a) act as advocates, (b) participate in data collection, and/or (c) participate in training?

Absolutely Essential			Moderately Important						Not at all Important	Don't Know
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	98

4. What interest/interaction patterns exist among potential coworkers and how can this information be used to facilitate employment for youth with handicaps?

Absolutely Essential	Moderately Important	Not at all Important	Don't Know

5. Can transitional strategies that result in meaningful employment for the individual be used to facilitate recreational and residential adjustment?

Absolutely Essential			Moderately Important						Not at all Important	Don't Know
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	98

6. What behaviors evidenced in social interactions are viewed as most negative by coworkers, supervisors, customers, or equally significant others within the work environment? What social behaviors are viewed as most positive by this group?

Absolutely Essential			Moderately Important						Not at all Important	Don't Know
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	98

7. In what ways have recently revised social security regulations (e.g., eligibility) produced significant changes in the number of persons participating in income maintenance programs (e.g., Supplemental Security Income)?

Absolutely Essential			Moderately Important						Not at all Important	Don't Know
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	98

8. If students/youths are taught to evaluate social situations, what impact will this have on improving their social performance on the job?

Absolutely Essential			Moderately Important						Not at all Important	Don't Know
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	98

9. What are the most appropriate roles and responsibilities for families, teachers, rehabilitation counselors, and vocational educators in the transition planning process? When should this process start?

Absolutely Essential			Moderately Important						Not at all Important	Don't Know
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	98

10. What intervention and collaborative strategies are most efficient for facilitating interagency cooperation, and how can these strategies be implemented at the local educational agency level?

Absolutely Essential			Moderately Important						Not at all Important	Don't Know
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	98

11. What type of self-instructional package can students use to develop their independence on the job? What components of this package contribute most in accounting for students becoming independent?

Absolutely Essential			Moderately Important						Not at all Important	Don't Know
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	98

12. What naturally occurring social behaviors prompt other social skills in the workplace and how can we teach students/youth to respond appropriately to these cues?

Absolutely Essential			Moderately Important						Not at all Important	Don't Know
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	98

13. What social skills are necessary across work settings? If students do not possess these skills, how should these skills be taught or otherwise compensated for in the work environment?

Absolutely Essential			Moderately Important					Not at all Important		Don't Know
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	98

14. What alternative work patterns (e.g., flextime, permanent part-time employment, and voluntary work) facilitate successful employment for persons with mild to severe handicaps, physical disabilities, etc.?

Absolutely Essential			Moderately Important					Not at all Important		Don't Know
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	98

15. If general-case programming is used to teach vocational skills/behaviors outside the work setting, how effectively will these target skills/behaviors carry over to actual work settings?

Absolutely Essential			Moderately Important					Not at all Important		Don't Know
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	98

16. What social skill teaching strategies introduced in one setting result in generalized performance in a second setting (e.g., simulated vs. natural, residential vs. employment, instructional vs. noninstructional)?

Absolutely Essential			Moderately Important					Not at all Important		Don't Know
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	98

17. What are employers' and coworkers' attitudes regarding working with employees with handicaps, and vice versa? Do these attitudes vary across handicapping condition/severity, job type, and prior exposure to the other group?

Absolutely Essential			Moderately Important					Not at all Important		Don't Know
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	98

18. How has the "state of the economy" influenced the nature of employment training programs offered to persons with handicaps?

Absolutely Essential			Moderately Important					Not at all Important		Don't Know
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	98

19. Who develops income maintenance program policies for individuals with handicaps? Upon what information base do they develop these policies? Which group or key individuals influence these policy makers? What interventions can be developed to influence these policy makers to formulate new guidelines that support independence?

Absolutely Essential			Moderately Important						Not at all Important	Don't Know
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	98

20. What teaching strategies can be developed that change negative attitudes of coworkers and employers toward persons with handicaps? Do these changes affect overall community employment trends?

Absolutely Essential			Moderately Important						Not at all Important	Don't Know
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	98

21. How can coworkers be taught to assist in the training and evaluation of behaviors related to work?

Absolutely Essential			Moderately Important						Not at all Important	Don't Know
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	98

22. Can social skill training conducted in an employment setting increase positive interactions with coworkers and decrease negative interactions/ inappropriate behaviors, and if so, how?

Absolutely Essential			Moderately Important						Not at all Important	Don't Know
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	98

23. What strategies are most effective for enlisting parents' support for transition planning that focuses upon paid employment?

Absolutely Essential			Moderately Important						Not at all Important	Don't Know
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	98

24. How can employees with handicaps be integrated into social events, activities, and networks associated with work settings (e.g., off-site parties, athletic teams, spectator sports)?

Absolutely Essential			Moderately Important						Not at all Important	Don't Know
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	98

25. What attitudes are portrayed by key individuals in the local media regarding persons with disabilities? What effect do these attitudes have on employment? What strategies should educational/ rehabilitation agencies use to promote positive portrayal?

Absolutely Essential			Moderately Important						Not at all Important	Don't Know
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	98

Please supply us with questions you would like to see our research group address:

1.

2.

3.

APPENDIX B

EVALUATION DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Task 6.1 Project Evaluation Information Base

Overview of the Task: To develop a computerized information and data base for the demonstration projects; Develop profiles for individual projects and groups of projects; Generate graphic displays of project data and information; Facilitate the use of the data base.

Plan of Operation: Develop preliminary data collection plans and instruments; Pilot test the instrumentation; Make refinements; Collect core information from projects; Summarize data and information; Develop profiles and displays.

Discussion Questions

1. How can the Institute Evaluation Data Base be designed to be of optimal use to project directors? To federal agency personnel? What major concerns do you have about this data base?

2. How do you envision project directors using the Project Profiles developed annually from Task 6.1? What kinds of information should appear in these profiles? How do federal officials anticipate using these profiles?

3. To what extent is evaluative information being collected by projects different from that which they proposed in their grant proposals to collect? What is different about the current evaluation design from that which appeared in the original proposal (i.e., new purposes for evaluation, different audiences, alternative use of results, refocusing of project objectives)? If changes were made, what is the most efficient means for the Institute staff to determine the nature of these changes?

4. If the evaluation section of your proposal was to be re-written at this point in the project, how would it be different?

5. If you are a project director/staff person, do you have available IBM or IBM-compatible personal computer? _____Yes _____No
If yes, does this computer have electronic communications capabilities? _____Yes _____No
If yes, which communications software is used?

____

6. What are the major questions that project directors are seeking to answer with the evaluation of their programs? In their view, which data or information best answers these questions? (Refer to the lengthy list of variables and outcomes.)

7. What are the major questions that federal officials are seeking to answer with the evaluation of the demonstration programs? In their view, which data and/or information provides the best answers to these questions?

I am: ______ Project director

______ Federal agency official

______ Other, describe: ______________________________

Task 6.2 - Meta Analysis

Nature of the Task: The purpose of this task is to aggregate information from similar projects in order to attribute certain outcomes to certain interventions. In the early stages it is necessary to describe interventions as completely as possible and standardize outcome measures so that the results of similar projects can be combined and compared with others. However, more important than these technical necessities is establishing which questions are likely to be most useful to program practices in secondary and transition education and services.

Discussion Questions

1. What broad analyses of the procedures and outcomes of transition education demonstration projects would produce useful information for others in the field?

    a. comparison within "RFP competitions"

    b. comparisons drawn from subgroups of transition education projects (see item 4)

    c. others

2. What comparisons among projects would likely produce misleading information?

3. How can projects best communicate their actual program procedures and results?

    a. original project grant proposals.

    b. director interviews

    c. front line staff interviews

    d. copies of progress reports

    e. surveys of staff

    f. others

4. What are the best ways to define subgroups or projects?

   a. project objectives

   b. student types

   c. program (e.g., profile regarding: assess, train, place, maintain)

   d. organization and management systems

   e. evaluation methods

   f. others.

5. What are the goals, objectives, and intended outcomes of the projects?

6. How are these intended outcomes assessed? Are the measures standard for each particular outcome? How can they be made more standardized?

Task 6.3 - Assessment of Student Characteristics

Overview of the Task:

a. Development of a taxonomy of competencies and instructional objectives.
b. Review of commercial and project developed instruments.
c. Production of a technical report analyzing the universality of assessment procedures used in the model projects, including recommendations for improving assessment procedures and instrumentation.
d. Dissemination of taxonomy/compendium/technical report document to project staff and interested others.

Discussion Questions

1. What are the measurement priorities for projects?

2. To what extent can these priorities be met by commercial instruments?

3. What is the relative importance of assessment for the following purposes?

    a) initial assessment for placement

    b) assessment for program planning

    c) assessment during the training program

    d) assessment for evaluation/outcome measures

4. What are the major dissatisfactions with available measurement procedures for the purposes listed above?

5. What employee/student information do employers/educators find most useful?

6. Is there a need to obtain summary information on measurement procedures being developed by other projects? What mechanisms are most useful in accomplishing this task? What role should the Institute play in this process?

7. Have there been major changes in the plans for and uses of student assessment information since the proposal was written? What are they? Why were these changes made?

8. How can the Institute be of greatest use to you in dealing with questions of student assessment? What changes in the 6.3 activities would you suggest?

Task 6.4 - Secondary Analysis of Educational and Employment Outcomes Data

Nature of the Task: Examine the educational, employment, and independent living outcomes attained by youth with handicaps as they exit school and enter the workforce; prepare summary tables/figures describing the reporting sources with data on youth with handicaps.

Plan of Operation: Identify the data sources, the topical needs, and develop tables/figures accompanied by explanatory notes. Conduct secondary analyses of primary longitudinal data sources and develop a plan for synthesizing follow-up studies examining the post-school status of special education students.

Discussion Questions

1. What is the nature and extent of education and employment outcomes achieved by youth with handicaps?

2. What selected demographic, educational, and vocational experiences are related to employment following graduation or exit from high school?

3. What data sources and information resources are appropriate for describing youth with handicaps and examining some of the relationships between educational and employment factors?

4. To what extent are local, state, and national data sources useful, valid, and reliable in their estimates of educational, employment, and independent living status attainment?

5. What factors should be commonly examined in statewide and local follow-up studies of our special education students?

6. What information from transition studies would be most useful to educators and employers?

7. What role should the Institute take in identifying the gaps in the information available with respect to secondary education and transitional services and activities?

8. What procedures and summary displays are most helpful in describing youth with handicaps?

Task 6.5 - Evaluation Research

Nature of the Task: Study philosophy, design, and practice of formal program evaluation of secondary and transition projects; prepare and conduct program of research on that evaluation.

Plan of Operation: Expand task force with consultants and correspondents; prepare issue papers; promote discussions; undertake and encourage research activities.

Discussion Questions

1. Local evaluation information needs (mostly pursued informally) do not aggregate to constitute the national/professional needs for evaluative information. What are effective means for maintaining an awareness of this fact both locally and nationally?

2. What is to be gained and lost by organizing our evaluation studies so as to conceptualize the local project as the "treatment having certain effects?"

3. Given that there is not enough brainpower to do the jobs that need to be done, how can we identify the higher priority evaluation tasks, avoiding front loading, being realistic about the burden associates and subordinates will accept, being realistic about how and how much evaluation data get used?

4. What is different about special education, and transition services particularly, that calls for pause in direct application of general program evaluation techniques?

5. What key ideas about program evaluation are currently underutilized and should at least be tried out?

APPENDIX C

NEEDS ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT

NEEDS ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT (A)

A. Specific

NAME____________________

TITLE____________________

ADDRESS____________________

____

TELEPHONE NO.________________

The purpose of this self-administered need assessment instrument is to obtain your perceptions about needs for technical assistance (TA) to help refine the plan and/or implementation of your project evaluation component. "Needs" is defined as a discrepancy between what is and what is desired; thus, the Institute's TA staff are asking you to assess any discrepancies between your evaluation plan as it currently exists and as you would like to see it refined and/or implemented. Additionally, should you desire TA, this instrument assesses the type(s) of assistance you might want (telephone, regional workshops, etc.) and when you would want it. Please remember that the information obtained through this instrument is completely confidential and will not be shared with anyone outside the TA component of the Institute.

The information obtained will be used to tailor TA to your individual needs. It also will be aggregated with data from other projects to help TA staff plan to deliver technical assistance in the most effective and efficient way possible. The TA staff thank you for providing us with this information.

INSTRUCTIONS

This needs assessment instrument has been divided into six different areas pertaining to program evaluation; each area has a number of specific items that might be considered during the planning/implementation of your project evaluation plan. In this instrument, you will be asked to assess the status of each and every item, your satisfaction with each item (including your desire to refine the item and, if you so desire, whether the revision will be done internally or by external TA staff), the type of technical assistance (TA) that you desire should you decide the external revision is best, and the time you think the TA should be delivered. Since it is unlikely that every item of your evaluation plan has been listed, there is space within each general evaluation area for you to write in any item(s) in your plan for which you need technical assistance. Respond to your written-in items exactly as to those already in the instrument. The specific rating process is discussed below.

1. STATUS OF ITEM

   A check ( ) should be placed in the appropriate status level for each item.

   Not Applicable means that this particular item is not applicable to your project's evaluation plan.

   Does Not Exist means that this particular item may be applicable/relevant to your evaluation plan, but that it is neither written down anywhere nor has it been discussed/specifically considered in the development of your project's evaluation plan.

Exists-Not Written means that this particular item is applicable/relevant and has been discussed or considered, but that nothing about it has been written down.

Exists in Evaluation Plan means that this item is specifically addressed in the evaluation plan of your project's funding proposal.

Exists Elsewhere means that this item is addressed in writing some place other than in the evaluation plan of your project's funding proposal.

2. SATISFACTION

A check should be placed in the appropriate assessment of satisfaction for each item.

All Right As Is means that this particular item in your project's evaluation plan does not need to be changed/refined/modified.

Revisions Done Internally means that this particular item does need changing/refinement, but that any changes can be done by project staff.

Obtain Technical Assistance means that refinement of this item can best be accomplished with the help of technical assistance staff skilled in project evaluation.

3. TYPE OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE DESIRED

If you have determined that a given item should be improved with technical assistance, place a check ( ) under the type(s) of technical assistance that you believe is/are important to use in addressing your need. More than one type of assistance can be checked or double checked for each item. Please note that due to financial restraints, only ten site visits can be made to projects during the coming year and that only three regional workshops can be held. However, if you believe that either of these types of assistance will be required, do not hesitate to indicate this.

<u>Telephone</u> means that your TA needs for this item can be adequately addressed through telephone conversations with TA staff.

<u>Written Correspondence</u> means that your TA needs for a given item require a more complicated/formal/structured response than can be accomplished through telephone conversations.

<u>Electronic Mail</u> means that you have access to SpecialNet and that your TA needs for a given item may be met relatively quickly but on a more formal/ structured basis than a telephone call.

<u>Regional Workshop</u> means that your TA needs for a given item/area are likely to be common to many projects and addressing your need; place two checks ( ) under the type(s) of technical assistance that you believe is/are very important or are complicated enough to warrant a workshop for groups of projects.

<u>Site Visit</u> means that your TA needs for a given item are applicable to many members of your staff, are likely to need a comprehensive/in-depth approach, and cannot