

The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) and the
National Center on Secondary Education and Transition, University of Minnesota



present a Capacity Building Institute on



School-Based Strategies **for Supporting Student Development of** **Self-Determination Skills in the Context of** **Leadership and Standards-Based Reform**

April 13, 2004
Hilton New Orleans Riverside
New Orleans, LA

Institute Proceedings

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Background

On April 13, 2004, the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) and the National Center on Secondary Education and Transition (NCSET) co-sponsored a Capacity Building Institute on *School-Based Strategies for Supporting Student Development of Self-Determination Skills in the Context of Leadership and Standards-Based Reform* to present some of the latest developments in the field of secondary education and transition. The day included reflective dialogue around:

- The knowledge base concerning self-determination and its application to students with disabilities;
- Large-scale implementation of self-determination; and
- Assessing student self-determination skills, meaningfully involving students in the IEP process, and developing a self-determination curriculum that is responsive to cultural diversity.

Our intention for the workshop was to provide practical, useful information that had meaningful application in people's daily work.

In the following proceedings you will find the Institute agenda, a summary of the Institute, and the speakers' biographical information.

David R. Johnson, Director
NCSET

Agenda

7:30	Registration and Continental Breakfast	
8:30	Welcome and Agenda Review	David R. Johnson, <i>Director, National Center on Secondary Education and Transition, University of MN, Minneapolis</i> Christine Mason, <i>Educational Consultant; Senior Research Scientist, CESSI, McLean, VA</i>
8:45	Opening Remarks	Bonnie Jones, <i>Education Research Analyst, Office of Special Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education, Washington, DC</i>
9:00	No Content Left Behind: Self-Determination in the Era of Standards-Based Reform	Michael Wehmeyer, <i>Associate Professor, Department of Special Education; Director, KS University Center on Developmental Disabilities, Associate Director, Beach Center on Disability, University of KS, Lawrence</i>
10:00	<i>BREAK</i>	
10:15	Large Scale Implementation of Self-Determination: State of Florida	Sheila Gritz, <i>Coordinator, Florida's Self-Determination Initiative, FL Department of Education, Bureau of Instructional Support and Community Services; Training Specialist, The Transition Center at the University of FL, Department of Special Education, Gainesville</i> Robert Aguis, <i>Principal, Marchman Technical Education Center, New Port Richey</i> Daniel Domogawa, <i>Student</i> Frank Roder, <i>Teacher, Marchman Technical Education Center, New Port Richey</i>
11:15	Questions and Answers	Sharon Field, <i>Moderator</i>
11:30	Large Scale Implementation of Self-Determination: State of New Mexico	James Alarid, <i>Professor of Special Education, New Mexico Highlands University, Las Vegas; Chair, New Mexico Developmental Disabilities Council; Chair, Statewide Transition Coordinators Council</i> Margarita Larrinaga, <i>Vice Principal, Robertson High School, Las Vegas</i> Gloria Pacheco, <i>Teacher, Robertson High School, Las Vegas</i> Darlene Archuleta, <i>Parent</i> Ernie Vigil, <i>Student</i>
12:15	Questions and Answers	James Martin, <i>Moderator</i>
12:30	<i>LUNCH</i>	

1:30	Featured Researchers	<p>Martin Agran, <i>Professor and Associate Department Head, Department of Special Education, University of Northern IA, Cedar Falls</i></p> <p>Bonnie Doren, <i>Assistant Professor, Secondary Special Education Program, University of OR, Eugene</i></p> <p>Sharon Field, <i>Associate Professor, Wayne State University, Detroit, MI</i></p> <p>Teresa Garate-Serafini, <i>Director, Program Development, Innovation, and Transition, Office of Specialized Services, CPS, Chicago, IL</i></p> <p>Laura Huber-Marshall, <i>Project Director, University of CO at Colorado Springs, College of Education; Center for Self-Determination, University of CO at Colorado Springs</i></p> <p>Carolyn Hughes, <i>Associate Professor, Department of Special Education, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN</i></p> <p>David Leake, <i>University of HI at Manoa, Honolulu</i></p> <p>Jean Lehmann, <i>Professor, School of Education, CO State University, Fort Collins</i></p> <p>James Martin, <i>Zarrow Endowed Professor in Special Education, Director of the Zarrow Center, University of OK, Norman</i></p> <p>Christine Mason</p> <p>Jean Ness, <i>Project Director, Institute on Community Integration, University of MN, Minneapolis</i></p> <p>Susan Palmer, <i>Research Assistant Professor, Beach Center on Disability, University of KS, Lawrence</i></p> <p>Laurie Powers, <i>Center for Self-Determination, OR Institute on Disability and Development, OR Health Sciences University, Portland</i></p> <p>Deanna Sands, <i>Professor, University of CO at Denver</i></p> <p>David Test, <i>Graduate Coordinator, Special Education Program, University of NC at Charlotte</i></p> <p>Michael Wehmeyer</p> <p>Dalun Zhang, <i>Assistant Professor of Special Education, Eugene T. Moore School of Education, Clemson University, Clemson, SC</i></p>
3:00	BREAK	
3:15	Featured Researchers (continued)	
4:30	Self-Determination Synthesis: Where Do We Go From Here?	David Test

Summary

Overview

The Capacity Building Institute on *School-Based Strategies for Supporting Student Development of Self-Determination Skills in the Context of Leadership and Standards-Based Reform* brought together researchers, practitioners, policymakers, advocates, youth, and family members to discuss critical issues related to self-determination for students with disabilities. Cosponsored by the National Center on Secondary Education and Transition (NCSET) at the University of Minnesota and the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), the CBI's purpose was to share practical strategies and plans for increasing student self-determination. Leading researchers and practitioners provided insights into how to use self-determination to increase academic achievement and how schools can scale-up implementation of self-directed learning.

The agenda opened with remarks from NCSET Director Dr. David R. Johnson and from Dr. Bonnie Jones, Education Research Analyst in the Office of Special Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education. Dr. Michael Wehmeyer of the University of Kansas then discussed the development and current status of self-determination. Panels from Florida and New Mexico—two states that have implemented large-scale self-determination programs—presented statewide, school, parent, and student views of the programs.

Following the presentations, the CBI participants broke into five small groups to meet with featured presenters, reflect on actions needed at the state and local levels, discuss barriers and facilitators to self-determination, and formulate ideas for promoting self-determination in their local and state system environments.

Welcome and Agenda Review

Dr. David R. Johnson, Director, National Center on Secondary Education and Transition, University of Minnesota

Dr. Johnson welcomed the Capacity-Building Institute (CBI) participants on behalf of the National Center on Secondary Education and Transition (NCSET). He explained that the CBI is one of a series of events sponsored or cosponsored by NCSET. Previous events have included the National Leadership Summit on Improving Results for Youth, held in September 2003 in Washington, DC. Attended by 42 teams from across the nation, the National Leadership Summit resulted in a shift in NCSET's focus to more intense support of state improvement efforts and, in turn, local programs as they address the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) and the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). Dr. Johnson announced that NCSET will reconvene the teams in Washington, DC, in June 2005, at a second National Leadership Summit, and he encouraged the CBI participants to contact their state special education directors to get involved.

NCSET and the Office of Special Education Programs also have established Communities of Practice focused on addressing the challenges of implementing IDEA, states' interagency work, and postschool outcomes. The Communities of Practice (www.tacomunities.org) are founded on a peer-to-peer model of learning that involves universities, states, and local communities. NCSET also disseminates publications discussing secondary education and transition issues, and will soon publish a new "Essential Tools" series, with the first release focusing on school dropout (see www.ncset.org). In addition, NCSET has initiated an effort to bring together more than 50 national education, disability, workforce development, advocacy, and other organizations to build a national framework to include standards and indicators for a more holistic model for secondary education and transition that is focused on all youth.

Christine Mason, Educational Consultant and Senior Research Scientist, CESSI, McLean, Virginia

Dr. Mason thanked the CBI planning committee and Donna Johnson of NCSET for their contributions to planning the CBI. She commented that self-determination “has to do with finding something you love to do. In these days of NCLB, we’re trying to make everyone fit into one mold, but we need to bring out the best in people so they can do things they choose for themselves.” She then introduced Dr. Bonnie Jones.

Opening Remarks

Dr. Bonnie Jones, Education Research Analyst, Office of Special Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education, Washington, DC

Dr. Jones discussed the issue of self-determination from the federal perspective, saying that activism has stimulated a re-evaluation of the role of persons with disabilities in the United States, and that legislation has provided greater choice for persons with disabilities. Three laws—the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), NCLB, and IDEA—have increased the value of and need for self-determination among youth today.

The ADA is the most comprehensive civil rights law protecting the rights of persons with disabilities, whereas NCLB is an education law that disaggregates assessment data by poverty, disability, limited English proficiency, and other factors. IDEA’s purpose is to provide special education services to prepare students for employment. A key provision of the law requires that students with disabilities access, participate, and progress in the general education curriculum, meaning that students with disabilities are held to the same standards as other students. OSEP has supported 26 model demonstration projects that have provided curriculum materials, model programs, teaching tools, and other resources to implement legislative provisions.

Data indicate that progress is being made in the academic success of students with disabilities. For example, the number of students with disabilities who passed the rigorous New York State Regents English exam increased from more than 3,400 in 1997 to more than 9,500 in 2000. In addition, in Massachusetts, students with disabilities who retook the state exam were able to increase their scores on the retake.

Dr. Jones said that state policy teams attending the September 2003 National Leadership Summit convened by NCSET identified priorities and needs, in areas including person-centered planning, individual education plans (IEP), and self-determination. She concluded by saying that there are many challenges to self-determination policy and practice, including aligning concepts of common content and performance standards, assessments, and accountability with the legal mandate for individualized education, and aligning special education requirements and practices with standards-driven reform.

No Content Left Behind: Self-Determination in the Era of Standards-Based Reform

Dr. Michael Wehmeyer, Associate Professor, Department of Special Education; Director of KS University Center on Developmental Disabilities; and Associate Director, Beach Center on Disability, University of KS, Lawrence

Dr. Wehmeyer opened his remarks by quoting President John F. Kennedy, who said, “Change is the law of life, and those who look only to the past or the present are certain to miss the future.” Changes such as school reform, enactment of NCLB, IDEA reauthorization, state assessments, and budget crises have left education in a state of almost constant flux. Moreover, the context of self-determination of youth with disabilities has changed dramatically since the early 1990s and it is important to respond to the changes and the challenges they present.

Efforts within special education to promote self-determination began at the National Conference on Self-Determination in 1989, when participants formulated 29 recommendations for the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services, U.S. Department of Education. Dr. Wehmeyer noted that despite more than 15 years of work, the field has not yet adequately defined the construct of self-determination. As used in the disability services arena, the term can mean anything from freedom and the authority to control one's own money, to making a decision, to owning one's own home, or running one's own IEP meeting. Therefore, the term lacks the clarity needed to drive educational policy and practice.

The speaker then presented a history of the construct of self-determination, reviewing definitions dating from 1683. The construct emerged from a centuries-old debate about free will and determinism. Determinism is the philosophic doctrine suggesting that events, in this context human behavior and actions, are effects of preceding causes. Early in the 20th century, psychologists interested in human behavior began to ask whether human behavior is caused by internal or external forces—self- or autonomous-determinism versus forces or factors outside the individual. They also began to identify numerous determinants of human behavior, from genetics to economics.

A theory base that can serve as a foundation for educational practice is emerging, Dr. Wehmeyer suggested. However, it is critical that educators speak with greater clarity and unanimity about what is meant by promoting and enhancing self-determination for youth with disabilities. They need to better articulate that self-determination refers to action based on volition and being self-governed, not other-governed. Educators also must empower students with disabilities by teaching them knowledge and skills and by giving them opportunities to make choices and decisions that enable them to attain their goals. It is also important to ensure that efforts to promote self-determination are culturally appropriate and meaningful to all people. Self-determination issues are relevant to people across cultures, but students and families from other cultures may dismiss self-determination as being irrelevant to them if it is not culturally appropriate.

Dr. Wehmeyer then discussed progress pertaining to recommendations made at the 1989 National Conference on Self-Determination. Recommendation 20 suggested that a series of programs that exemplify self-determination attitudes and practices should be funded. OSEP funding has since resulted in many model programs to promote self-determination, as well as projects to develop assessment procedures, from which existing measures have emerged. These OSEP-funded projects have resulted in students becoming more self-determined. However, a need remains to determine what instruction and content areas are most appropriate at what age and to provide self-determination instruction across the lifespan. In general, efforts to promote self-determination should focus on capacity-building and on ensuring that students have adequate opportunities to practice skills and assume some control over their life decisions. A meta-analysis conducted at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte found that a strong foundation of evidence-based practices is emerging, but there have been too few rigorous studies of the impact of efforts to promote self-determination. One barrier has been the lack of psychometrically validated measures of the impact of self-determination.

Recommendation 17 from the National Conference on Self-Determination suggested that persons with disabilities be involved in their own program planning sessions. Dr. Wehmeyer said that student involvement in general is valued, but too little is known about its impact on postsecondary outcomes or about the teaching of self-determination skills.

Recommendation 11 from the National Conference on Self-Determination suggested that universities reshape their pre-service and in-service training programs to include self-determination as a top priority. Teachers believe that self-determination is important, but do not teach their students needed skills, in part because they feel they do not have sufficient training or authority to provide this type of instruction, and do not feel responsible for teaching such skills. There are reasons to believe that the field is making progress in training teachers in the area of self-determination, however.

Dr. Wehmeyer concluded by saying that some policy leaders fear that if students with disabilities are not included in today's standards-based reform efforts, they will be excluded from accountability systems on which school improvement efforts are based, from efforts to improve student performance, and from the general education curriculum. Education policymakers will increasingly narrow the curriculum at the expense of efforts to focus on self-determination. It is important to teach self-determination skills to all students, not just those with disabilities, and to evaluate the impact of enhanced self-determination on postsecondary education for all youth, but particularly those who are at risk for poor outcomes. Therefore, a critical task will be to communicate what is meant by self-determination and to focus on making *all* students more self-determined.

Large-Scale Implementation of Self-Determination

State of Florida Panel

Sharon Field, Moderator

Sheila Gritz, Coordinator, Self-Determination Initiative, Bureau of Instructional Support and Community Services, FL Department of Education; Training Specialist, The Transition Center, Department of Special Education, University of FL, Gainesville

Ms. Gritz reported that the state of Florida has made great strides in the area of self-determination. The State's self-determination program is an outcome of Florida's systems change projects implemented in the mid-1990s. Research on those projects showed that self-determination efforts were making a difference—that students were more likely than in the past to meet the goals and objectives of their IEPs, to attend IEP meetings, and to select their courses of study. The Florida Department of Education conducted site visits and decided to implement the effort statewide, providing funding for training, materials, and resources, and establishing a transition center at University of Florida. The overall goals of the effort are to increase awareness of self-determination, to initiate instruction, and to improve postschool outcomes. Activities have included statewide and regional training events; district-specific workshops; dissemination of curricula, assessments, and resources; presentations at statewide transition-related conferences; provision of technical assistance to educators and parents; use of products including the "Dare to Dream" program that teaches students to develop their own postschool outcomes statements and the "Standing Up for Me" curriculum targeted at elementary school students; and research.

To gain buy-in and support for the self-determination efforts, the state:

- Gave autonomy to choose models, curriculum, assessments, and activities;
- Established indicators for developing high-quality IEPs;
- Supported course requirements;
- Correlated the effort to Florida's Sunshine State Standards and Sunshine State Standards for Special Diploma;
- Added language to State Board of Education rules stating that instruction or information about self-determination must be given to all students before their 14th birthdays; and
- Integrated self-determination teaching into existing coursework.

Robert Aguis, Principal, Marchman Technical Education Center, New Port Richey, Florida

Mr. Aguis explained that Marchman Technical Education Center encompasses eight buildings on 75 acres and each day serves a diverse student population of 800-1,000 students who range in age from 6 weeks to 70 years old. The Center offers 16 job preparation programs for middle school, high school, and adult students, and offers

GED, certificate, and dropout prevention programs. Pasco County has a philosophy of true inclusion and self-determination for all students, he said.

Outcomes of the Center's self-determination program have included students' improved behavior, increased confidence and self-esteem, and improved communication skills. Advantages of the program have included:

- For teachers—Increased student input regarding interests, preferences, needs, and goals; greater student involvement in IEP meetings and educational decision making; and decreased time spent in IEP meetings because the meetings are now more focused.
- For students—Greater involvement and ownership in educational decision making, improved behavior, and greater likelihood of achieving positive outcomes and attaining goals.
- For parents—Improved student/parent relationships and greater parental involvement and interest in school and their students.
- For administrators—A positive school climate, a reduction in referrals and disruptions at school, increased time on task, and the availability of a tool to cue students using skills learned.

In addition, the program has benefited the school district because 36 staff members, including transitional specialists, teachers, and others, have been trained in the area of self-determination.

Frank Roder, Teacher, Marchman Technical Education Center, New Port Richey, Florida

Mr. Roder noted that the self-determination efforts at Marchman Technical Education Center give students opportunities to make decisions for themselves and to succeed emotionally and academically. Components of the program include "Standing Up for Me," a curriculum designed for the primary, middle school, and high school levels that is divided into three areas: understanding the IEP, self-directed IEP skills, and follow-up to discuss what did and did not work. Through the program, students are encouraged to identify their own strengths and needs and to provide input into their own decision making (e.g., in getting a standard or special diploma). Program elements include weekly and quarterly goal-setting, student evaluation of progress toward reaching goals, development of advocacy and self-determination skills, and development of skills for taking a leadership role in IEP meetings.

Student outcomes have included increased involvement of students in planning their own education and lives, improved self-advocacy skills, and a greater capacity to set goals and develop a plan for accomplishing goals. For example, students advocate for their own interests, invite parents and other adults to IEP meetings, and lead their own IEP meetings.

Daniel Domogawa, Student, Land O' Lakes High School, Land O' Lakes, Florida

Mr. Domogawa said he previously attended Marchman Technical Education Center, where he participated in the "Dare to Dream" program, which encourages students to participate in IEP meetings and choose their own classes. While at Marchman, he learned to negotiate his IEP meetings and to be a self-advocate. He now holds a 3.0 grade point average, enjoys school, and has better friendships because he has learned to cooperate with other students. In addition, he is also able to take Algebra I and classes needed to receive a regular diploma.

Daniel's mother added that the program has benefited her son greatly, although students who move to other school environments may be discouraged and sometimes punished for using the self-determination skills they have learned.

In response to questions from the CBI participants, the panelists commented that:

- No solid research has been conducted on the association between Florida's self-determination program and school dropout and attendance. However, at the district level, baseline data were collected and there is compelling evidence that the program is impacting the dropout rate. For example, the dropout rate for students with learning disabilities has decreased dramatically since the program's implementation. In addition, in schools with strong self-determination programs, students come to class regularly and on time.
- Each of Florida's 67 school districts has a transition contact. Teachers are also trained at statewide training meetings, one-day workshops, and summer institutes, and an effort is underway to build capacity using train-the-trainer modules.
- Self-determination efforts must be tied to state standards, rather than presented as an "add on."

State of New Mexico Panel

James Martin, Moderator

James Alarid, Professor of Special Education, NM Highlands University, Las Vegas, NM; Chair, NM Developmental Disabilities Council; and Chair, Statewide Transition Coordinators Council

Dr. Alarid said that over the years, many partners have been involved in the transition process in New Mexico, and the state has worked to introduce transition concepts and build capacity. New Mexico has a small population and therefore few financial resources. For the past three years, the state Developmental Disabilities Planning Council has funded resource centers to get people throughout the state involved in creating self-directed IEPs.

Dr. Alarid put the other panelists' remarks in context by reviewing the history of Las Vegas, NM, which was founded in 1835. Cattle ranching is one of the county's economic mainstays, and the county has a population of diverse cultures.

Gloria Pacheco, Teacher, Robertson High School, Las Vegas, NM

Ms. Pacheco said that researchers define self-determination in different ways, but she believes that the common thread is a focus on personal control and personal choice without coercion. Student-focused planning is necessary to facilitate transition, and self-determination skills are fundamental to successful planning. Her school follows Dr. James Martin's 11 steps of self-directed IEPs, and teachers have infused the self-determination model in regular education government, English, and biology classes.

The State IEP form, which includes an ITP (individual transition plan), is used as a tool for planning. To initiate the planning process, teachers review the student's previous IEP privately with the student, ensure that the student understands his or her disability and can talk to others about it, and encourage the student to become comfortable stating what is and is not needed. Parents are also encouraged to discuss the IEP with their children.

Ms. Pacheco stressed that teachers should know that they are an important part of the self-directed IEP, should feel comfortable with the IEP/ITP process, and must know that the student is in charge of the process. Each student reviews the IEP/ITP, updates the demographic information, and develops or adjusts the vision statement, which sets the tone for the rest of the IEP/ITP. The student profile identifies strengths and concerns in many domains. The student collaborates with the teacher to gather information from parents, teachers, service providers, and other team members, and then develops a course of study that meets his or her needs and life goals. The student also indicates what accommodations or modifications he or she will or will not need. As a result of this effort, students feel good about themselves and their new-found voices, and have a greater sense of accomplishment, ownership, and confidence.

Ernie Vigil, Student, Robertson High School, Las Vegas, New Mexico

Mr. Vigil, an 18-year-old high school student in Las Vegas, New Mexico, presented his perspective on New Mexico's transition and self-determination efforts. He explained that he moved to Las Vegas in 1998 after his parents divorced. At the time, he was very angry and felt that no one wanted to listen to what he felt or needed. At his IEP meetings, everyone talked about him and for him, and no one let him present his ideas. "It was probably the worst time of my life," he reflected.

He recalls that at the end of 9th grade, for the first time, someone asked him what he really wanted, which is to become involved in law enforcement. While in 10th grade, he participated in an Upward Bound program and moved from his mother's house into an apartment. Since the beginning of 10th grade has been developing his own IEP/ITP and has worked at a hotel restaurant. He said the self-directed IEP/ITP process has given him a chance in life and has helped him learn to accept responsibility for his actions and life.

Darlene Archuleta, Mother of Ernie Vigil

Ms. Archuleta said she and her son, Ernie, have participated in IEP meetings for the past six years. Her divorce was tragic for Ernie, and this spilled over from home to school. Ernie, who is labeled as emotionally disturbed, initiated his self-directed IEP in his sophomore year and has since matured and is working on goals he set for himself. He will graduate from high school in 2004 and will continue his education at a community college.

Margarita Larrinaga, Vice Principal, Robertson High School, Las Vegas, New Mexico

Ms. Larrinaga said she was introduced to the concept of self-determination when she attended a state workshop on self-directed IEPs. She shared the components with her school's leadership team and asked for input on how the components could be applied schoolwide. An analysis showed that school counselors and others chose the courses students would take, and students felt they had no say in what they were learning or how they were learning. The teachers also reported having problems teaching because of behavior problems.

The school leadership team members said they wanted to create perpetual learners who would succeed in society, and decided to give more ownership to the students. A student/teacher advisory was created, allowing teachers to get to know the child and allowing an opportunity to teach skills for problem solving, negotiation, and goal setting. Parent orientation by grade level is used to disseminate information to parents. In addition, registration is being revised to become face-to-face, rather than by computer only. Ms. Larrinaga concluded by suggesting that school reform cannot be accomplished without the involvement of students, staff, and the larger community.



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Responses to Discussion Questions

The CBI participants met in five small groups, each of which included diverse perspectives, to discuss six questions pertaining to self-determination. Each small group then reported its thoughts and responses to the larger group.

1. Please share any thoughts that the information presented may have stimulated about either teaching/ learning in schools or about additional research that might be needed.

The participants expressed the need to:

- Conduct research on how self-determination results in achievement (in the context of No Child Left Behind)
- Understand self-predictors of success
- Understand how one learns—inclusive classes
- Interweave self-determination into existing curricula
- Teach younger students/curricula—research on the impact is needed
- Connect character education and other related fields in general education
- Seek and incorporate input from youth
- Find ways to influence teachers and parents to use self-determination and get support for self-determination efforts
- Connect self-efficacy and self-determination
- Define the relationship between teacher, self, and self-determination
- Link self-determination to standards and postschool outcomes for all students
- Establish a developmental framework or continuum for self-determination
- Know more about valid and reliable instruments
- Recognize that teachers themselves need to become empowered and learn self-determination skills because they are overwhelmed by the requirements of NCLB, state assessments, and other pressures
- Help teachers understand that they will benefit from self-determination programs for their students
- Find ways to use different strategies for different populations (e.g., racial/ethnic minorities and those in poverty) to ensure that self-determination is meaningful to them
- Conduct pre-service training for all teachers, not just special education teachers

2. By the end of next year, what outcomes related to self-determination would you like students in your class, school, or community to achieve?

- Increase involvement of parents and other community stakeholders (e.g., through meetings convened at times convenient to parents who work)
- Hold forums and share resources, including through a new NCSET Community of Practice on self-determination
- Collect and use data in multiple ways
- Increase knowledge about disability culture
- Share information among the small group members
- Find ways to convince school administrators that self-determination is important, useful, and beneficial to achievement
- Better understand the regulations pertaining to self-determination standards
- Address on multiple levels the importance of self-advocacy (e.g., convince principals that self-advocacy is important)

- Find ways to measure self-determination outcomes (e.g., compare schools with and without self-determination programs and compare their results)
- Increase mentorship and the “hope component” and explain why they are important
- Deliver the message of hope to parents and students
- Encourage youth with disabilities to read about the self-determination successes of adults with disabilities
- Develop a mentoring program for middle school or high school students, with mentors being adults with disabilities
- Expand self-determination efforts to benefit younger students
- Have students at the elementary school level articulate their strengths and needs
- At the beginning of the process, inform students about why self-determination is important
- Use effective instruction
- Encourage student choice
- Ensure that personnel are trained in self-determination
- Link self-determination to academic standards
- Teach the language of self-advocacy
- Replicate the successful self-determination programs implemented in Florida and New Mexico
- Include self-determination in summer training for both general education and special education teachers
- Write and disseminate case studies

3. Based upon the research and school-based strategies presented here today, what actions for supporting student development of self-determination would you like to see taken at the state and local levels?

- Integrate self-determination into high-stakes testing
- Include self-determination as a competency standard (e.g., in Florida)
- Develop local interagency initiatives
- Develop models for flexible spending
- Have a state IEP form that assesses self-determination skills
- Develop a federal regulation that infuses self-determination into the PLP section
- Develop a “next step plan” that requires a meaningful discussion of the future
- Increase teacher training in self-determination
- Cultivate cross-training teams that include teachers, parents, students, and community stakeholders
- Use self-determination principles with all youth, with and without disabilities
- Disseminate self-determination research results and, through the popular media, success stories that are authentic and not deficit-based
- Develop a mechanism for states to share information with one another
- Better incorporate self-determination concepts into pre-service education

4. What do you perceive to be the barriers or obstacles to the development of self-determination of students?

- High-stakes testing
- Insufficient time
- Contradictions between what tests measure and teaching self-determination
- Matching self-determination skills to learning standards
- Fears and attitudes of stakeholders
- Lack of mentoring
- Limited rigorous research
- Limited funding/resources

- Changes in roles and paradigm shifts
- The lack of acceptance and understanding of cultural and linguistic differences
- The structure of school, including lack of choice, pressure on teachers, narrow standards of achievement, not making sure that students learn problem-solving skills that they need to pass the test
- Lack of teacher patience with students with disabilities
- The language of self-determination
- Administrators' vision for self-determination
- Education systems' reluctance to coordinate with other sectors
- Difficulty aligning all efforts toward the same goal
- Viewing disabilities from a deficit perspective

5. What do you perceive as facilitators or conditions that lend themselves to self-determination for your students?

- The No Child Left Behind Act
- Students being in a setting that has a sense of trust
- Teamwork and participation toward a common goal for the student
- Clean and open communication
- Shared, clear language of goals and outcomes
- Collaboration
- Wraparound services for students
- Systems change activities
- Striking a balance between support and opportunities for self-determination
- Mentoring
- Staff training
- Using proven models
- Self-awareness
- Inclusive educational practices
- Forums that can be replicated among states and school districts
- Research evidence of effective practice that can be used to “sell” self-determination to states and school districts

6. What would be helpful to you or your organization to receive on an ongoing basis to promote your students' self-determination?

- Sharing of success stories by former students about how they used their school activities to be successful
- Ongoing training and staff development (e.g., hands-on training on how to teach self-determination in the classroom, ongoing evaluation of teaching, and ongoing technical assistance appropriate for the setting)
- Increased awareness of self-determination
- The connection between self-determination and system values
- Research funding
- Enhanced communication among stakeholders
- Research-to-practice linkages
- National conferences
- Training to help teachers understand the value of data collection and what are important data for best practice and funding purposes
- Creation of a model for sustainability individualized to the place/situation

Presenter Biographies

Martin Agran

Dr. Martin Agran is Professor and Interim Department Head of the Department of Special Education at the University of Northern Iowa. He is nationally recognized as a researcher in the areas of self-determination and the education of students with severe disabilities. He is the Associate Editor of *Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities* (formerly JASH), and is the co-recipient of the Thomas Haring Research Award (2002) and the JASH Distinguished Reviewer Award (1999). With Drs. Dennis Mithaug and James Martin, he co-developed the Adaptability Instruction Model, which was, arguably, the first self-determination program for transition-age youth with extensive support needs. Dr. Agran has directed or co-directed several federally funded projects on the effects of various student-directed learning strategies in promoting inclusive education and successful transition outcomes. He has been published widely in professional journals, has written or co-written 10 books, and has frequently served as a consultant, both nationally and in Russia and Korea.

Robert Aguis

Mr. Robert Aguis is the Principal of Marchman Technical Education Center in Pasco County, Florida. He has been a principal for the past five years and an educator since 1987. As principal, his job responsibilities include the supervision of sixteen job preparatory programs, two drop-out prevention and retrieval programs, basic education programs, ESE programs, and a full compliment of Adult Education programs. The ESE programs include Pre-K VE, Trainable Mentally Handicapped, Therapeutic Severely Emotionally Disturbed, FAPE 22, and Adults with Disabilities. Mr. Aguis is a very active leader in Pasco County. He believes all students have the capacity to learn and uses hands-on learning strategies and working closely with students and staff to improve teaching and learning. He serves on the district's ESE Task Force Committee and High School Design Team. Mr. Aguis has also served as the president of the Pasco County Association for School Administrators, and is currently the liaison for the Tampa Bay Coalition. In the community, Mr. Aguis is an officer in Rotary Club, liaison for the High School's Interact Club, and co-chairman of Leadership Pasco's Education Day and the West Pasco Chamber of Commerce's Education Committee. Mr. Aguis was elected by his peers as Pasco County's Administrator of the Year for the 2003-2004 school year.

James Alarid

Dr. Jim Alarid has worked in the field of education for over thirty years, first in public schools and later in higher education. He has taught at the University of New Mexico, the University of Connecticut, the University of Arizona, and New Mexico Highlands University, and worked for the New Mexico State Department of Education. Since returning to New Mexico Highlands University in 1984, he has held various administrative positions, including Director of Education, Assistant to the Provost, and Vice-President of Academic Affairs. Currently, he is Special Education Program Chair, teaches courses in Special Education, and directs a CARF-accredited program, "Vistas Sin Limites", the state's first supported employment program. He also is Chair of the NM Governor's Developmental Disabilities Planning Council and the Statewide Transition Coordinating Council.

Darlean Archuleta

Ms. Darlean Archuleta graduated from Espanola High School in 1980, Northern New Mexico Community College in 1982, and Anderson Baptist School in 1989. She has been a teaching assistant with the special programs at Robertson High School. Currently she is employed by the Las Vegas City Schools Central Office. She is the proud mother of Ernie Vigil.

Daniel Domogawa

Daniel Domogawa is a fifteen-year-old student attending Land O' Lakes High School in Land O' Lakes, Florida. Daniel is a Florida native who previously attended Schrader Elementary School, Hudson Middle School, and Marchman Technical Education Center. He enjoys walking, riding bikes, hanging out at the mall, and attending church. His strengths include great negotiating skills, self-assurance, and good people skills. While Daniel hasn't firmly determined his postschool career path, he has expressed interest in becoming a lawyer. He is currently working toward a standard diploma.

Bonnie Doren

Dr. Bonnie Doren is an Assistant Professor in the College of Education, Secondary Special Education and Transition Programs at the University of Oregon. She has directed several research, model demonstration, and outreach projects aimed at:

- (a) developing self-directed transition planning curriculum and practices,
- (b) developing strategies and practices to facilitate the meaningful integration of self-directed transition planning into the general education curriculum,
- (c) training teachers and other service providers across the country in delivering self-directed transition planning to all students, and
- (d) research to understand the sustainability of the use of practices built to improve self-direction and self-determination, as research dollars are no longer available to directly assist teachers and schools.

As an outcome of these activities, Dr. Doren and her colleagues have developed a curriculum on self-directed transition planning, conducted hundreds of trainings across the country, presented at national conferences, developed a Web site highlighting outcomes and strategies on infusing self-directed instruction in the general education curriculum (<http://interact.uoregon.edu/nextstep/nextstepintroduction.html>), and been published in peer-reviewed and nationally distributed journals.

Sharon Field

Dr. Sharon Field is Professor in the College of Education at Wayne State University. Dr. Field served as director of two Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) self-determination projects through which she developed, with Dr. Alan Hoffman, a model of self-determination and the *Steps to Self-Determination* curriculum. Also, with Drs. Hoffman and Shlomo Sawilowsky, she has developed a self-determination assessment approach. Dr. Field has directed several additional federal projects focused on application of these materials in a variety of settings. She served as lead author of *A Practical Guide to Teaching Self-determination* and is past president of the Council for Exceptional Children, Division on Career Development and Transition. She has directed service in both teaching and administrative capacities.

Teresa Garate-Serafini

Ms. Teresa Garate-Serafini is Director of Program Development, Innovation, and Transition in the Office of Specialized Services for the Chicago Public Schools (CPS). CPS is the third largest school district in the nation and its Office of Specialized Services serves over 57,000 students with disabilities. In the past, Ms. Garate was the program director of the Advocacy and Empowerment for Minorities with Disabilities Program, Institute on Disability and Human Development, Department of Disability and Human Development, University of Illinois at Chicago, responsible for administering grants that promote the implementation of innovative strategies for empowering and supporting youth and young adults with disabilities. She is a special educator by training that has worked in the schools as special education teacher, case manager and advocate for ethnic minority youth and their families. Her practical teaching experience and research experience make her a resource on matters of educational access specializing in the areas of youth transition from school-to-adulthood and student self-determination. She currently serves as the leader of the youth group for the Chicago Mayoral Taskforce on the Employment of People with Disabilities. She is also the secretary for the Illinois TASH Board and a doctoral candidate in Special Education at the University of Illinois. Ms. Garate is seen as an expert in the field of transition locally, nationally, and internationally, giving presentations in the United Kingdom and South America on youth transition and self-advocacy.

Sheila Gritz

Ms. Sheila Gritz, Senior Training Specialist/Self-Determination Initiative Coordinator with The Transition Center at the University of Florida since 1998, has 17 years of experience in the field of transition. From 1987-2000, she was employed by the Florida Diagnostic Learning Resources System/Gateway Associate Center where she worked on various demonstration projects related to improving transition services and post-school outcomes for students with disabilities. Sheila has provided direct services to students, both as a job coach and facilitator of self-determination. She has coordinated training events, provided technical assistance, and facilitated product development through multiple demonstration projects for the Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Instructional Support and Community Services, and the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council, Inc., impacting thousands of educators, students, families, and providers. Her work in the area of self-

determination has been recognized by national experts and featured in numerous newsletters and publications, including *Research Connections in Special Education* (2000) and *Promising Practices and Programs of the National Transition Alliance* (1999).

Laura Huber Marshall

Ms. Laura Huber Marshall, M.A., is a research faculty member at the Center for Self-Determination and an instructor in the Special Education Department, College of Education, University of Colorado at Colorado Springs. Laura has coordinated or directed four federally-funded self-determination projects. She is a co-author of the ChoiceMaker Self-Determination Transition Curriculum, the Choose and Take Action Transition Software and Lessons for students with more significant support needs, and the Choice Making for Elementary Students Curriculum - lessons embedding self-determination skills in standards-based instruction. She has conducted numerous training workshops and presentations on self-determination. Prior to her university appointment, Laura taught in public and private schools and adult service agencies.

Carolyn Hughes

Dr. Carolyn Hughes is Associate Professor in the Department of Special Education at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, TN and a research investigator at the John F. Kennedy Center at Vanderbilt. Prior to joining the faculty at Vanderbilt, Dr. Hughes taught at Arizona State University. At Vanderbilt, Dr. Hughes teaches classes in secondary transition and classroom management. Her research interests are in the areas of transition to adult life for high-poverty youth, self-determination and support strategies for at-risk students and students with disabilities, and social interaction among general education high school students and their peers with disabilities. She has managed several secondary transition federally-funded projects, including the Metropolitan Nashville Peer Buddy Program, Promoting Inclusion through Self-Directed Learning, and Project OUTCOME, a program for high school students with disabilities from high-poverty backgrounds. *The Transition Handbook*, co-authored by Dr. Hughes and published by Paul H. Brookes, provides over 300 strategies high school teachers can use to support students in the transition to adulthood. In addition, Dr. Hughes has published numerous studies designed to promote the self-directed learning skills of high school students. Finally, she taught elementary and secondary public school for ten years before joining higher education as a faculty member, and she returned to the classroom during the 2001-2002 academic year to teach inner-city youth with emotional disturbance in New York City.

David R. Johnson

Dr. David R. Johnson is Director of the Institute on Community Integration (UCEDD) and Associate Professor in the Department of Educational Policy and Administration, College of Education and Human Development, University of Minnesota. Dr. Johnson is also Director of the National Center on Secondary Education and Transition. His research interests include investigations of the postschool outcomes and status of young adults with disabilities, evaluations concerning access to and participation of young adults with disabilities in postsecondary education programs, studies on systems change, cost-benefit analyses, and other policy-related research. Dr. Johnson has also served as a consultant to several national, regional, and state organizations including NIDRR, the National School-to-Work Office, the Rehabilitation Services Administration, the National Alliance of Business, the Council for Exceptional Children, and several Congressional Committees. Dr. Johnson has published numerous journal articles, book chapters, research monographs, technical reports, and other products on secondary education, special education, rehabilitation, transition, school-to-work, and other themes related to the priorities of this research effort.

Bonnie Jones

Dr. Bonnie Jones is an Education Research Analyst at the Office of Special Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education. She has extensive experience with secondary transition programs and has developed multi-agency employment projects that have received national recognition from the U.S. Department of Labor. Working for the Kansas Department of Education, she conducted extensive statewide training on transition services and directed federal grants that created interagency data collection of post-school outcomes. Prior to coming to the federal government, Dr. Jones served on the DCDDT Board as treasurer, membership chair, and western regional representative. At OSEP, Dr. Jones is on the Secondary Transition Team where she is project officer for discretionary grants and serves as an expert on high school reform issues. Bonnie earned her doctorate at Teachers College, Columbia University and teaches as an adjunct faculty member in the Graduate School of Education at George Mason University.

Margarita Larrinaga

Ms. Margarita Larrinaga is a graduate of New Mexico Highlands University with a BA in Elementary/Special Education, MA degrees in Special Education and Guidance & Counseling, and Licensure in Educational Administration. Her career encompasses over 25 years as an educator in K-12 and postsecondary settings in the fields of special, general, and bilingual education; counseling; and educational administration.

David Leake

Dr. David Leake is Director of Research and Evaluation for the Center on Disability Studies (UCEDD) at the University of Hawaii at Manoa, where he earned his Ph.D. in anthropology and MPH in international health. For the past 14 years he has been a researcher, evaluator, project director, and principal investigator for a range of federally-funded research and demonstration projects at the Center on Disability Studies, most of which have included a focus on issues of cultural and linguistic diversity. Areas addressed have included transition to adulthood, child and adolescent mental health, reform of systems serving children with disabilities, and development of culturally appropriate curricula for students of Native Hawaiian descent. Most recently he was the lead author of several briefs and articles on transition and cultural and linguistic diversity.

Jean P. Lehmann

Dr. Jean P. Lehmann is Professor and Associate Director of Graduate Programs in the School of Education at Colorado State University. Her professional interests include working on behalf of adolescents and adults with disabilities to better understand the areas of transition, self-determination, and educational reform. Her focus is to support the creation of competent environments that help students to become successful adults and contributing members of their communities. Dr. Lehmann has been the principal investigator on federally-funded projects addressing self-determination, transition-related educator preparation, and models for increasing the postsecondary success of students with disabilities. Currently she is engaged in a project to create an interdisciplinary Professional Development School model of field-based preparation for related services (SW, OT, counseling, and administration). She is also working on a regional project involving five states to increase access and retention of students with disabilities into postsecondary education. Most recently, Dr. Lehmann is a team leader on the "What Works" research project. The purpose of this project is to summarize what was written from 1985-2000, focusing on what works in secondary school programming for youth with disabilities. Dr. Lehmann holds a Bachelor's degree in Special Education from Peabody College for Teachers at Vanderbilt University, a Master's degree in Vocational Rehabilitation from the University of Wisconsin-Stout, and a Ph.D. in Educational Psychology from the University of Northern Colorado.

James Martin

Dr. James Martin is the Zarrow Endowed Professor of Special Education and the Director of the Zarrow Center for Learning Enrichment in the College of Education, Department of Educational Psychology, University of Oklahoma. He has authored eight books, about 25 chapters for edited books, numerous journal articles, and several curriculum lesson packages, which include video and multi-media applications. Funding sources have provided him more than \$6,000,000 to conduct his research and writing activities. He has conducted dozens of presentations and training workshops in the U.S., Canada, and Europe. His professional interests focus on the transition of youth with disabilities from high school to postsecondary education and the workforce and what must be done to facilitate success in high school and postsecondary environments. In particular, he is interested in the application of self-determination methodology to educational and workplace settings.

Christine Mason

Dr. Christine Mason is a Senior Research Scientist at Cessi, Inc. and an Educational Consultant in McLean, VA, where she is conducting research on cross-agency federal disability priorities. Prior to joining CESSI, Dr. Mason was Senior Associate for Research and Program Development at the Council for Exceptional Children and Acting Director of the Yes I Can! Foundation for Exceptional Children. Dr. Mason has conducted and published research on student-led IEPs, effective secondary schools, universal design for learning, mentoring new teachers, and IDEA implementation. Her publications include articles, monographs, and books on a range of special education and rehabilitation topics, including strategic planning for staff development, multicultural empowerment and consumer choice, educational leadership, supported employment, and a comparison of priorities of general and special education associations.

Jean E. Ness

Dr. Jean E. Ness is Principal Investigator and Project Director at the Institute on Community Integration at the University of Minnesota. The focus of her work is developing programs for and with American Indian high school and tribal college students to support the retention and completion of their goals. To that end, Dr. Ness has directed several federally-funded projects that address both the high school and college needs of American Indians. Most recently Dr. Ness, along with her colleague Jennifer Huisken, developed a transition curriculum for American Indians that addresses key skill areas to prepare these students for higher education and work. The curriculum, published in 2003, is currently being implemented in BIA schools, school districts, and tribal and community colleges throughout the country. Dr. Ness is a frequent speaker at state and national conferences on issues regarding the transition process for American Indians.

Gloria L. Pacheco

Ms. Gloria Pacheco has worked in educational settings for over 25 years, including 7 years with New Mexico Highlands University as peer tutor/counselor coordinator and 18 years with Las Vegas City Schools as a special education teacher. She is also the work-study coordinator for Robertson High School and is involved with the NM Transition Specialist Cadre and the state's Least Restrictive Environment Initiative.

Susan Palmer

Dr. Susan Palmer is Research Assistant Professor at the University of Kansas, Principal Investigator of a grant on curriculum at the Life Span Institute at KU, and project manager of several research studies at the Beach Center on Disability and the Kansas University Center on Developmental Disabilities. Dr. Palmer's research interests include the development of self-determination skills in students and youth with intellectual disabilities. She holds degrees from Pennsylvania State University, the College of New Rochelle, and the University of Texas at Dallas. She has written a number of articles, contributed to book chapters, and made presentations throughout the U.S. on self-determination and inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education curriculum.

Laurie Powers

Dr. Laurie Powers is Associate Professor of Pediatrics, Public Health, and Psychiatry and co-director of the Center on Self-Determination, Oregon Institute on Disability and Development, Oregon Health and Science University. Dr. Powers has been a Principal Investigator of many research, demonstration, and training projects funded by federal and state agencies and private foundations, and she has edited and authored numerous books, journal articles, curricula, and consumer briefs on self-determination. Dr. Powers focuses her work on identifying and putting into practice opportunities for people of all ages with disabilities to express self-determination and for systems to support them. Currently, she is Principal Investigator of the National Youth Leadership Network and several other initiatives focused on identifying, developing, and validating practices to promote the self-directed transition of young people with diverse disabilities from diverse cultures and life circumstances. She is committed to building cross-disability partnerships among educators and other professionals and leaders with disabilities that promote the capacities of people with disabilities to control and fully access all of life's opportunities.

Frank Roder

Mr. Frank Roder has been a teacher in the state of Florida for the past 29 years, primarily in Exceptional Student Education. He has been employed in Pasco County since 1980 as an EH/SED teacher and Behavior Specialist. As an advocate for students and educators in exceptional student education, Mr. Roder has served on local and state-level committees in the field, and he currently co-chairs the Florida Education Association's ESE Committee and ESE Caucus. In addition to his teaching responsibilities, Mr. Roder has been a trainer for the district in the areas of verbal diffusion, crisis management, disability awareness, self-determination, and IEP development. He is especially proud of his role as one of the developers of the *Standing Up for Me* self-determination curriculum, which helps ESE students take a more active role in determining educational decisions. The curriculum was developed on behalf of the Florida Department of Education and many Florida school districts are expected to begin implementation of it during 2004. His current assignment at Marchman Technical Center allows him to work with middle school students who have been classified as severely emotionally disturbed (SED) and have not been successful in other settings. This Center serves as a "last stop" for many of these students. Mr. Roder has been instrumental in the design of the Therapeutic Severely Emotional Disturbed (TSED) program, which provides students opportunities for success in that it operates from a premise that these are "students who made bad choices" rather than "bad students."

Deanna Iceman Sands

Dr. Deanna Iceman Sands is Professor in the Graduate School of Education at the University of Colorado at Denver. Dr. Sands teaches in the Initial Professional Teacher Education (IPTE) program and the Educational Leadership doctoral program. She serves as a Site Professor for Adams County School District 14 where she mentors and coaches Teacher Candidates and Clinical Teachers in Professional Development Schools. Dr. Sands was instrumental in the design of a dual general/special education teacher preparation program wherein Teacher Candidates in general and special education take twenty-two credit hours of common courses. She helped to design those courses in a manner that effectively integrates issues related to special education, technology, and English Language Learners. Dr. Sands' research interests are in the areas of student voice, self-determination, and differentiated instruction and curriculum. She has directed numerous federally-funded research, teacher preparation, and model demonstration projects.

David W. Test

Dr. David W. Test is Professor and Special Education Graduate Coordinator in the Special Education Program at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. Dr. Test teaches courses in single subject research, transition, secondary methods, classroom management, and professional writing. Trained as a behavior analyst at Ohio State University, Dr. Test's interests lie in applying these strategies to promote student acquisition of daily living, self-determination, and self-advocacy skills. The majority of Dr. Test's publications have focused on self-determination, transition, community-based training, and supported employment. Dr. Test's experience includes the administration and supervision of both federally- and state-funded personnel preparation and research and demonstration grants. Dr. Test currently serves as Co-Director on the Self-Advocacy Synthesis Project (with Dr. Wendy Wood) and the UNC-Charlotte Doctoral Leadership Personnel Preparation Program (with Dr. Diane Browder). Dr. Test and Dr. Bob Algozzine currently serve as co-editors of *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals*.

Ernie Vigil

Mr. Ernie Vigil is a senior at Robertson High School. After graduation, he plans to attend Luna Community College to pursue his dream of law enforcement. He is also the proud father of Este`ban.

Michael L. Wehmeyer

Dr. Michael L. Wehmeyer is Associate Professor, Department of Special Education, and Associate Director, Beach Center on Disability, University of Kansas. Prior to joining the KU faculty, Dr. Wehmeyer was Director of the Bill Sackter Center on Self-Determination at the Arc of the United States and Assistant Director of that association's Research and Program Services department. Dr. Wehmeyer is engaged in teacher preparation in the area of severe multiple disabilities and directs multiple federally-funded projects to conduct research in and develop methods and materials to promote the causal agency and self-determination of children, youth, and adults with cognitive and developmental disabilities. He is the author of more than 80 articles or book chapters on self-determination, student involvement, transition, and assistive technology; has authored, co-authored, or co-edited 10 books on topics including self-determination, student involvement, gender equity, and mental retardation; and is a frequent conference speaker. Dr. Wehmeyer serves on numerous editorial boards and is co-editor of the American Association on Mental Retardation's research-to-practice publication, *Innovations*. In 1999, he was the inaugural recipient of the Distinguished Early Career Research Award from the Council for Exceptional Children's Division for Research.

Dalun Zhang

Dr. Dalun Zhang is Assistant Professor of Special Education in the Eugene T. Moore School of Education at Clemson University. His areas of focus for research and teaching include transition, self-determination, and mental retardation. He has published extensively on these topics in book chapters, journal articles in refereed journals, monographs, and non-refereed journal articles. He has presented papers in numerous conferences at various levels. Because of his contributions to the field, he has been nationally recognized and invited to serve on several international/national committees, including an American Association on Mental Retardation Ad Hoc Committee to develop a new adaptive behavior scale. He has served on the editorial board of the journal of *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals* since 2001. Dr. Zhang has been Principal Investigator on several grant projects. The total amount of these funded grants reaches \$6,581,679 at both federal and state levels. His current grants include Self-Determination to Action: An After-School Youth Empowerment Program, funded by the Department of Health and Human Services through the South Carolina DD Council; and National Dropout Prevention Center for Students with Disabilities (co-investigator).