

*Collecting Postschool Outcome Data on Youth with Disabilities
Community of Practice (CoP) Teleconference Call*

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Title: "University-State Partnerships in Collecting Postschool Outcome Data"

NEXT TELECONFERENCE CALL: TUESDAY, JULY 26, 2005

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NOTE: *Lawrence Dennis and Bob Baer included a powerpoint along with their presentation; the content of the powerpoint appears below with notes included within.*

Slide 1

THE OHIO LONGITUDINAL TRANSITION STUDY (OLTS)

Lawrence Dennis, Office for Exceptional Children, Ohio Department of Education
& Dr. Robert Baer, Center for Innovation in Transition and Employment, Kent State University

Slide 2

Why is collection of postschool data important?

- State Superintendent's Work Plan requires development of longitudinal tracking system
- Legal guidelines of the IDEA to assess outcomes
- Maintaining contact with students
- Validating services that are not measured by academic testing
- Developing capacity for postschool interventions
- Promoting program improvement

NOTES: The system, at this point, is for maintaining contact with students with disabilities following graduation. Another reason for data collection is for continuous improvement in local school districts.

Slide 3

A Brief History

- Ohio's "Ohio Speaks" forum proposed collecting followup data to monitor transition outcomes

NOTES: This was a "futures forum"

- Ohio's systems change project for transition (Project LIFE) developed initial survey for postschool followup **NOTES:** This was piloted in local interagency transition teams.

- The Cuyahoga and Miami Valley Special Education Regional Centers refine survey in two pilot projects
- The Office for Exceptional Children required to develop a plan to collection post graduation status of Students with Disabilities

NOTES: There was 10-15 years of work to set activities in motion to get postschool information on kids. The pilot sites provide a foundation to show that postschool data was useful (e.g., to their superintendents). 3 years ago the regional centers in OH were piloting and working with Bob Baer, this was expanded into a partnership with Kent State (in the form of a contract). With the partnership, the University can analyze the data more quickly than the state can, given the other responsibilities of the states data people.

Slide 4

What is the difference between followup and follow-along research?

- Followup research looks at students at a point in time
- Longitudinal research looks at students at several points in time
 - Exit interview
 - 1 year from graduation
 - 3 years from graduation
 - 5 years from graduation

NOTES: The system runs on a 3-year cycle through partnership with Ohio's 16 Special Education Regional Resource Centers (SERRCs) and local education agencies (LEAs). The Ohio SERRCs are available to local districts to provide support; they are now a key agent in carrying out the OLTs (13 of the 16 regions participate). Ohio has moved to a longitudinal tracking design to track students for 5 years-- 1, 3, 5 year after graduation.

Slide 5

How is survey data collected?

- Random sampling of students
- Record review
- In-school exit interview during final IEP
- Followup postschool phone interviews at 1, 3, and 5 years

NOTES: Schools volunteer. They try to make the groupings look like the states (with urban, suburban, and rural sites). The biggest problem is getting approval to collect data from the large, urban schools. Generally, the volunteer school district contacts all of the students (or they pick every 2nd kid). They have also allowed the career/tech centers to participate, but this has caused a problem in possibly double-counting kids. It would be helpful if students had a state ID # that they could use for this system, but they do not have approval for that yet. The kinds of data that are collected include record reviews (demographic data, which saves times in the interview), postschool outcomes, and types of services received (while in school). An exit interview is conducted with the student at which time permission to contact them at 1, 3, and 5 years postschool is obtained, as well as contact information (get as many phone numbers as possible).

Slide 6

What type of data is collected?

- What were the student's postschool goals
- What were the student's postschool outcomes
- What high school services did the student use
- How satisfied was the student with services and outcomes

NOTES: This will provide information on what services were over- or under-utilized. The purpose of the data is to find out how students are doing. We're trying to get the districts to use the data for continuous improvement. Ohio is trying to show how data is useful and helpful for schools to improve the performance of all students.

Slide 7

How is data analyzed?

- Descriptive statistics - who, what, where, when
- Bivariate correlations - student characteristics and services, student services and outcomes, student characteristics and outcomes
- Regression analysis – when controlling for other factors what: (a) student services predicted positive postschool outcomes such as work, education, independent living, and community participation.
- Focus groups and discussions of data and analyses at SERRC meetings

Slide 8

How is this research used?

- To provide guidance to students and families regarding effective services
- To provide information on over utilization or under utilization of services
- To identify secondary programs effective for given students in a given school setting

Slide 9

What are the costs to schools?

- Exit interviews will require about 15 minutes per student (25 hrs per 100)
- Phone interviews will require about 30 minutes per student (25 hrs per 50).
 - For schools with hard to reach students this may take up to an hour
- Four meetings at the SERRC
 - Training in February-March
 - Technical Assistance in May
 - Focus groups in the Fall
 - Planning meeting in January-February

Slide 10

What are the benefits to schools?

- Good public relations with graduates
- Good feedback and validation for teachers
- Good data for IEP/transition planning
- Good data for school's program improvement efforts
- Training and networking opportunities related to transition

NOTES: Ohio uses educators to collect the data, which puts awareness and guidance (and the data) back into the school. The system provides information on how services are being used, and helps to identify secondary programs. Data received are integrated into teacher training, and is used in IEP planning meetings. Teachers are excited about the positive feedback from the exit interview. Teachers valued the opportunity to talk to the kids. The regional centers are using the data in training and TA.

Slide 11

Emerging Issues

- Alignment of Transition Services to Standards Based Reform including Access to the General Curriculum
- Adequate Instructional Support for Students in Transition Options
- Increasing Post Secondary Enrollment and Outcomes for SWD
- Formulate Transition Delivery Model

NOTES: Data help align services for youth with disabilities, such as behavioral management, assurance in providing adequate support, and increasing postschool outcomes.

QUESTION/ANSWER SESSION

R. Tobin: Which students are being interviewed?
Ohio: Students with disabilities, but plan on interviewing general education students. Once OLTS is up and running to full capacity, we will have data on 1500-2000 students annually. We did a pilot at one school with regular ed kids; they were similar except special ed seemed to go to 2 year colleges more.
Shepard: New York is interviewing special ed and general ed students. New York wondered whether using school staff to collect data skews the data; thus, is it best to use “independent” interviewers?
Ohio: I am aware of this issue. We’re trying to do “research” but also make it usable in the school, so using educators is the trade-off.
Shepard: On the other hand, using staff to conduct interviews created positive feedback from teachers, saying that it was the best staff development they received.
Ohio: This could move more into a compliance mode with the new APR (the focused monitoring question). Does anyone know whether any other states are using it this way?

J. Falls: What about students who drop out?
Baer: Because schools aren’t always clear on who has dropped out, we have thought about starting exit interviews in 9th grade and tracking through 12th grade, but we’re not doing that at this point.
R. Tobin: Are teachers compensated?
Dennis: Initially (about 8-9 years ago), we planned to directly reimburse them for their time, because we were told we wouldn’t get cooperation otherwise. However, because data are more valued today, it’s not as critical to buy people’s time, so we’re giving the Regional Centers money. They are using this pot of money to pay people for the extra time to collect the data.
Baer: This is still pretty much a volunteer effort. Each team is a group of “movers and shakers” who are rewarded and they bring in more and more people. The development of regional teams is critical. The money flows through Kent State and then back to the regional centers.
Dennis: The money is a supplement. Some districts give up their funds to a district in need.
Baer: People are more willing to be a part of this because the data collected is not being used against them.

J. Fields: What data analysis do you give to schools?
Baer: We give descriptive analysis to most. We can do bivariate correlations for schools with samples of 30 and logistic regressions for schools with samples of 120.
Dennis: Districts are becoming more sophisticated in data analysis.
R. Tobin: How do you use random sampling?
Baer: Schools are not sampled, they volunteer. The urban schools pose the most trouble. It takes them 2 years to complete the interviews where it would take a suburban school 1 year.

B. Shepard: I will send our Quality Assurance document, Transqual to the listserv.

J Falls: Florida’s data collection information is posted on psocenter.org under “State Profiles in Florida.”

SOME FINDINGS: Ohio did a cluster analysis for what kids want to do postschool and special ed kids want to do what general ed kids want to do. LD kids need transition services into the general ed curriculum, because they’re not even being seen by the special educators. In New York, we’re finding that what supports special ed kids to be successful also helps general ed kids.