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## Employment of Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities: A Case Study of Time Management and Job Training Skills

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# Walden University

College of Education

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Lynn E. Shoemaker

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,

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the review committee have been made.

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2020

Abstract

Employment of Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities: A Case Study of Time

Management and Job Training Skills

by

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Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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## Abstract

Despite existing legislation and provision of post-secondary transition plans to bridge the gap between secondary school and the workplace for individuals with intellectual disabilities (ID), workplace sites in rural central Ohio have continued to have a hiring rate of individuals with ID that is lower than the national average. The focal point of this qualitative project study was the exploration of time management and job training skills and their incorporation into the workplace and post-secondary transition plans for individuals with ID in rural central Ohio. This qualitative project study was based on the belief that individuals should be part of their community through employment as supported in Becker's human capital theory. The research questions permitted interviews and plan reviews to be centered on how participants incorporate time management and job training skills in the workplace and in post-secondary transition plans. The design was a qualitative project case study with purposeful selective sampling of nine hiring managers and four special education teachers in rural Central Ohio. Interview and plan review data were coded and analyzed for common themes. Results indicated that additional on-going job coaching supports were needed both in and after the transition process to support students with IDs and employers. A broader implication for social change was that additional job coaching supports might increase the employment percentages for individuals with ID in rural central Ohio.

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## Dedication

Life is about the journey not the destination. This process has certainly been a journey of epic proportions. I wish to thank so many who have supported me. First, I thank God for having a seat right beside me each time I opened up my laptop to type. He brought me to it, and He brought me through it. To Him be the Glory. My husband, Rick who flew solo so many days and nights while I worked, attended residencies, or simply stayed late at the office, researching and complaining, and who never doubted I would graduate. Your never-ending support of me made all the difference and held me up so that I could persevere. My children, Lauren, Michael, and Kelly, who were my cheerleaders even when they were not sure what I was doing—they knew I was moving toward a goal I had set and for that they were excited. Michael, my passive voice editor; you are loved. My brother, Lee, who told me so long ago this degree was a good idea. To my Mom, for always believing in me and reminding me how proud my Dad would be of my efforts. To those unable to see my Earthly accomplishment to the end: Mary Lou, Aunt Pattie, Aunt Phyllis, Betsy, Grandma and Grandpa Holle, and Dad; I feel your love. To my best friend, Elaine, for not even entertaining the idea of me quitting this process and whose jokes along the way made the tough days tolerable. To Stephanie, FS and rogue is all I have to say. To my editor, Jamie Lyn: I am blessed to know you. Finally, to my coworkers in the Education Department at MVNU for permitting me to dream of completing a doctorate, and for their patience as I focused on this marathon journey. I am overcome with gratitude and elation that I have had each of you along on this incredibly complicated journey. So, what's next?

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## Section 1: The Problem

### **The Local Problem**

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEiA) of 2004 affords individuals with intellectual disabilities (ID) the right to a postsecondary employment transition plan that includes measurable post-secondary employment goals as part of the student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP; Bouck & Joshi, 2014; U.S. Department of Education [DOE], 2018; Grigal et al., 2011; Henry et al., 2014; McDaniels, 2016; Riesen et al., 2015; Siperstein et al., 2014). In 2012, the State of Ohio signed the Employment First Initiative (EFI, Employment First, n.d.). The EFI mandated that all persons, no matter the disabling condition, have the opportunity for paid employment in their community (Employment First, n.d.). In 2016, the State of Ohio passed The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act to create employment opportunities for individuals with ID in their community. Both the EFI legislation and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act initiatives serve as opportunities for businesses to address the low employment rates of individuals with ID in rural central Ohio (A. Taylor, personal communication, February 19, 2017). Federal and state laws also mandate nondiscriminatory actions regarding employee hiring, yet the labor statistics for individuals with ID reveal that under employment continues at the national, state, and local level (Bouck & Joshi, 2014; McDaniels, 2016; Riesen et al., 2015).

A postsecondary transition plan in high school supports an individual with ID toward employment (DOE, n.d.). Despite existing legislation and provision of a postsecondary transition plan, individuals with ID in rural central Ohio have a hiring rate

of 23.1%, lower than the national average. This percentage is a significantly lower rate than their nondisabled peers (A. Taylor personal communication, February 19, 2017; N. Gregg, personal communication, July 10, 2019). This problem can negatively influence the population's ability to find employment in rural central Ohio and may be due to a lack of focus on time management and job training skills for employment in the postsecondary transition plan and in the workplace.

### **Rationale**

Legislators and advocates recognize that employment is a benefit for individuals with ID, but securing employment remains difficult (Butterworth et al., 2015). Studies have indicated that individuals with ID can succeed in postsecondary employment, yet in 2016 the employment rates for individuals with ID in rural central Ohio was 23.1% as compared to nondisabled individuals at 72% (Employment First, n.d.; Getzel, 2014; Katz et al., 2012; Lysaght et al., 2012; A. Taylor, personal communication, February 19, 2017). Additional local data show employment rates for graduated individuals with ID in 2005, 2010, and 2015 as .11%, 27.2%, and .25% respectfully (N. Gregg, personal communication, July 10, 2019). In rural central Ohio in 2016, according to the developmental disabilities employment specialist there were 160 graduated individuals with ID who had expressed interest in employment, yet only 37 individuals (23%) were actually employed (Kraus, 2016). This employment largely remains in the local sheltered workshop performing vocational work, at sub-minimum wages (Plotner & Dymond, 2016).

Studies have indicated that businesses can benefit from hiring individuals with ID because they tend to be stable, dependable, and proficient employees (Katz et al., 2012; Lysaght et al., 2012). Initiatives exist for local businesses to hire individuals with ID, yet hiring levels remain low. Further, specific employment goals within a transition IEP should empower individuals with ID to secure employment after high school (DOE, n.d.). Studies have indicated that businesses can benefit from hiring individuals with ID because they tend to be stable, dependable, and proficient employees (Katz et al., 2012; Lysaght et al., 2012).

#### Definition of Terms

*Competitive employment:* Competitive employment occurs when an individual is employed within the community where they live and paid a competitive wage at or above the minimum wage for the state where work is completed, at least 20 hours per week for at least a 90-day work period after graduation from high school (Employment First, n.d.; Southward & Kyzar, 2017).

*Intellectual disability:* The term *intellectual disabilities* replaced the previously used term of *mental retardation*. Intellectual disability is a term used by medical and education professionals to indicate a deficit in intellectual functioning in the areas of reasoning, problem-solving, planning, abstract thinking, judgment, academic learning, and learning from prior experiences once confirmed by intelligence testing (Wehmeyer & Thompson, 2016). Intellectual disability is also termed cognitive disability in some fields and defined as having a physical, mental, or emotional disorder that creates significant

difficulty in one's ability to concentrate, remember, or make decisions (Nord et al., 2013).

*Job training skills:* Job training skills are transferable and applicable to what an employer needs from an employee to be successful (U.S. Chamber of Commerce, 2015).

*Sheltered workshops:* Sheltered workshops are employment for individuals who need significant support, training, supervision, and direction that would not otherwise be available to them in employment in the community. Individuals are typically paid by the piece finished rather than a per hour rate (Shkurkin, 2019). A nonprofit, private, state or local government institution provides employment opportunities where the individual is typically paid less than minimum wage for work performed to prepare the individual for community employment (SSA-POMS: RS 02101.270-Services for Sheltered workshops, 2017).

*Self-determination:* Individuals have the right to govern their life choices regardless of disability. Self-determination includes a person's right to speak on their own behalf concerning their dreams, wishes, and goals (Burke et al., 2019; Nirje, 1969).

*Time management:* Time management is an individual's ability to self-regulate their life choices regarding scheduling, planning, and executing their day to meet pre-set goals (Nord et al., 1974).

*Transition:* A transition occurs in a young adult's life when they obtain employment, attend post-secondary educational opportunities, secure a home, become involved in their community, and have personal relationships (Hume et al., 2014; Katz et al., 2012; Shogren & Plotner, 2012).

### **Significance of the Study**

There is a need to bring awareness to the desires of individuals with ID in their postsecondary life and to identify the best supports in post-secondary transition plans and workplace skills. Research has shown that despite providing a post-secondary transition plan with measurable employment goals, few students with ID transition into paid employment after high school (Björnsdóttir et al., 2015; Cavendish et al., 2016; Siperstein et al., 2014; Wehman et al., 2014). In 2015, the *Disability Statistics Annual Report* data revealed 34.9% employment among individuals with ID compared to their nondisabled peers who had an employment rate of 76% (Kraus, 2016). Previous research has indicated that individuals with ID wish for involvement in a community, and this includes employment (DOE, n.d.; Nota et al., 2014). They desire to live independently, enjoy entertainment, and have employment to meet life's needs, create an identity, and express their interests; this desire relates directly to the conceptual framework of human capital theory. The human capital theory framework has as its foundation the premise to support employers hiring and training individuals for the employment opportunities available (Becker, 1964; Nota et al., 2014; Spring, 2012).

The need for a diverse and inclusive workforce in the 21st century is a principal element in business (Henry et al., 2014). Company leaders who are willing to hire individuals with ID have experienced success and hold awareness that preconceived apprehensions did not manifest (Chhabra, 2017; Firmin et al., 2012). Individuals with ID and employers can prosper in the employment relationship (Employment First, n.d.; Getzel, 2014; Lysaght et al., 2012). Hiring managers in rural central Ohio may be



overlooking a population of individuals with ID as future employees and may not be aware that individuals with ID can and want to be a part of the community's inclusive workforce (Chhabra, 2017; Employment First, n.d.). Individuals with ID can be stable employees and should be supported by not only legislation, but also by strong post-secondary transition plans and by hiring managers in the local community (Bouck & Joshi, 2014; Burke et al., 2013; Butterworth et al., 2015; DOE, n.d.; Nord et al., 2013). A collaborative approach between hiring managers and special education teachers in goal development for postsecondary transition plans may affect hiring success for individuals with ID in rural central Ohio.

I chose a qualitative project case study based on Walden University expectations for the Doctor of Education, and to complete a project within this work to produce social change in my community. The data has been used to create and implement a professional development workshop for hiring managers and special education teachers in rural central Ohio. It is my goal to facilitate and encourage collaboration between hiring managers and special education teachers to create more results-driven transition plans and employment of individuals with ID. The study has the potential to contribute to more job-specific postsecondary transition goal writing and support of employment of individuals with ID as valuable employees. On a broader scale, this qualitative project case study could possibly improve the employment rate for individuals with ID and postsecondary transition plans in rural central Ohio (Bouck & Joshi, 2014; McDaniels, 2016; Riesen et al., 2015; Siperstein et al., 2014).

## Research Questions

A review of the literature indicates there is a gap between legislative mandates for employment of individuals with ID and the low employment rate in rural central Ohio (Butterworth et al., 2015; Getzel, 2014; Lysaght et al., 2012; A. Taylor, personal communication, February 19, 2017). Further research indicates that federal mandates supporting the belief that post-secondary transition goals in IEP's have failed to raise national employment rates for individuals with ID after high school (Butterworth et al., 2015; DOE, n.d.).

Individuals with ID have demonstrated the ability to perform in the workplace as stable employees who welcome the opportunity to participate in community life and employment after graduating from high school (Stam et al., 2016). The premise of human capital theory framework emphasizes education as a means of bettering the human condition through employment (Spring, 2012). Data, research, and theoretical frameworks support what individuals with ID themselves report: that appropriate employment for individuals with ID enriches their social and economic lives and is an important vehicle for self-determination. Therefore, it is vital that educators prepare individuals with ID for success in the workforce as part of their postsecondary transition plans and after high school in the workplace (Björnsdóttir et al., 2015; Nota et al., 2014; Shogren & Plotner, 2012).

The purpose of this qualitative project case study was to investigate how time management and job training skills are incorporated in the workplace and in

postsecondary transition plans to provide information on improving transition and hiring for individuals with ID. To understand this, the following questions guided my research:

RQ1: How do hiring managers incorporate job training in the workplace for individuals with ID?

RQ2: How do hiring managers incorporate time management training in the workplace for individuals with ID?

RQ3: How do special education teachers incorporate time management training in the workplace for individuals with ID post-secondary transition plans in the IEP?

RQ4: How do special education teachers incorporate job training in the workplace for individuals with ID post-secondary transition plans in the IEP?

### **Review of the Literature**

This section presents an overview of postsecondary transition services and how special education teachers prepare students with ID for employment through post-secondary transition plans, with an emphasis on how teachers integrate time management and job training skills. Databases used in this literature review included SAGE, ProQuest Central, ERIC, Business Source Complete, Science Digest, and the Journal of Management. The key terms used in the search for related articles were *employment and intellectual disabilities*, *disability employment*, *job obtainment for those with intellectual disabilities*, *intellectual disabilities*, *employer intellectual disabilities*, *disability identity*, *employer perceptions of individuals with disabilities*, *post-secondary transition plans and student employment*, *employment support and post-secondary transition plans*, *student post-secondary transition plans and intellectual disabilities*, *intellectual disabilities and*

*employment and job readiness, IEPs and post-secondary transition plans, time management and employment for those with ID, special education teachers and post-secondary transition plans with students with ID, job coaching, job skills and ID population, self-determination, disabilities and hiring individuals with disabilities, and post-secondary transition plans and employment.* Additional resources were obtained through the Ohio Department of Education, the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities, the United States Department of Labor, and the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and specific articles were obtained through the *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*.

### **Conceptual Framework**

The premise of human capital theory is that employees in any company have inherent value. Horace Mann applied human capital theory to defend public education a century ago. Mann believed that the training obtained by students helped the strength of a community (Spring, 2012). Becker (1975) extended the premise of human capital theory framework to include the education and training of the employee. Individuals with ID who seek employment in their community are motivated to be stable, reliable, dependable employees. They possess the same basic need as their nondisabled peers who wish to demonstrate their talents and investigate their interests through employment (Nota et al., 2014).

The primary principle of human capital theory framework is the training of employees to be job-ready and employable upon completion of their secondary education (Becker, 1975; Spring, 2012). Previous research indicated a correlation between high

school postsecondary transition plans that emphasize workforce development and job-readiness, and successful post-graduation employment among individuals with ID (Cavendish et al., 2016; Mazzotti et al., 2013; National Disability Rights Network, 2012). Previous research also revealed that an individual with ID can successfully transition out of sheltered workshop environments and find employment in the community (Christensen & Richardson, 2017; National Disability Rights Network, 2012). Human capital theory emerged as a corroboration of the vision that when a company hires the best employee, the company will improve economically. An individual with ID can be workforce-ready with targeted, postsecondary employment transition goals aligned to meet the needs of local businesses. When employers bring focus to workplace training, individuals with ID can prosper. Human capital theory principles push for training and education that may lead to successful job placement and to individual well-being (Becker, 1964).

The reauthorization of IDEiA (DOE, n.d.) requires a postsecondary transition section to be an IEP document beginning at the age of 14. The IEP must contain a postsecondary transition component that addresses needs, strengths, preferences, and interests regarding postsecondary education, independent living, community involvement, and competitive employment (Cavendish et al., 2016). Job-related targets that could apply to individuals with ID and employment and post-secondary transition plans that lead to employability align with human capital theory.

Training contributes to the success of the employee and of the business as it relates to human capital theory. Spring (2012) pointed out three aspects of human capital theory as it relates to employment and education. First, schools should produce

individuals who can compete in a global economy. Second, money spent on education and job-training skills should help the economic growth, reduce poverty levels, and improve graduation rates in a community. Third, the primary goal of an individual's education and citizenship is to better their community through employment (Spring, 2012).

Heckman, a human capital economist, stated that noncognitive abilities are a bigger determinate of employment success than cognitive ability (Heckman & Krueger, 2005). Heckman and Krueger (2005) proposed skills that included motivation, self-discipline, optimism, dependability, time management, perseverance, and future orientation. Non cognitive social skills such as manners, eye contact, and time management can be factors in employees' individual success (Heckman & Krueger, 2005). The human capital theory framework relates to the overall ability of the student during their education, especially regarding their motivation and learned job skills (Spring, 2012). Support for individuals with ID in high school through postsecondary transition plans that incorporate the goals of postsecondary education, independent living skills and community employability skills is a framework echoed in the foundations of human capital theory (Becker, 1964; DOE, n.d.).

The State of Ohio has implemented a pre-employment transition service through Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD). This service integrates human capital theory, emphasizes the role of special education, and recognizes the need to provide time management and job training skills to individuals with ID. Pre-employment transition services include job exploration, work-based learning experiences, workplace readiness

training, vocational counseling, and self-advocacy for individuals with ID in an attempt to improve employment opportunities (OOD, 2017). Students may begin to participate in the OOD transition program at the age of 14, and support continues through the individual's 22nd birthday. Students who participate in the OOD programming receive pre-employment services during school hours, in after-school programs, and in summer programs (OOD, 2017).

Research supports rigorous advocacy and research-based curricula to transition students with severe disabilities into the workplace (Plotner & Dymond, 2016). Additional agencies assist in preparing the individuals with ID for the workplace environment. Methods employed by this program align with human capital theory, which supports training that prepares individuals for employment that matches their interests and job skills. However, despite this program, students are far below expected employment levels (Becker, 1975). Job training and skills integration contribute to successful hiring within a business environment in the post-secondary transition plans of young people with disabilities in high school settings and is the premise of human capital theory (Becker, 1975; DOE, n.d.). Human capital theory, student postsecondary transition plans, and employment have positive potential to work together for the good of a community when the individual with ID has a strong post-secondary transition plan and coordinated goals for post-secondary employment success (Davis et al., 2016).

### **Review of the Broader Problem**

Employment of individuals with ID is a longstanding and complex social concern (DOE, n.d.; Grossman, 1978; Heyman et al., 2016). President Roosevelt issued an

Executive Order in 1934 that provided employment for individuals with disabilities, but paid wages below any minimum state standard (National Disability Rights Network, 2012). The 1934 Presidential Executive Order was in support of veterans who were disabled and seeking employment in the manufacturing industry. The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), passed in 1938 offered a minimum wage of 25 cents per hour within a 44-hour week (Grossman, 1978). The FLSA provided an exemption to hiring managers who hired those with disabilities and permitted subminimum wage payment (Grossman, 1978). Under the FLSA, a person with a disability included those with blindness, mental illness, mental retardation, cerebral palsy, alcoholism, and drug addiction (Grossman, 1978). When disabilities such as blindness, mental illness, mental retardation, cerebral palsy, alcoholism, and drug addiction presented themselves, the employer had the right to offer employment below minimum pay scales (Grossman, 1978).

By 21st century standards, to discriminate based on employer applicants and employees with disabilities seems cruel, unfair, and absurd. At the time of the FLSA, passed in 1938, this sort of discrimination due to a disabling condition was legal (Grossman, 1978). Public Law 89-601 attempted to broaden the employment of individuals with disabilities under the FLSA by permitting an increase in the number of employees who received less than minimum wage and thereby increasing the number of persons with disabilities serving companies at subminimum wages (National Disability Rights Network, 2012). The laws supported disparities in pay between individuals with disabilities and their nondisabled peers, and federal laws created subminimum wage pay



(Grossman, 1978). Thus, competitive employment for individuals with disabilities was essentially nonexistent from the 1930s through the 1960s.

Promising employment legislation was on the horizon in the 1970s, with the passage of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which made provisions for those with disabilities to receive competitive pay for work completed, with the hope of seeing an end to subminimum wage employment for those with ID (U.S. Federal Government, 1973). The passage of Public Law 93-112 bolstered employment rights of individuals with disabilities (§2(8)) which included individuals with ID in promotion and expansion of employment opportunities separate from sub-minimum wage employment (U.S. Federal Government, 1973).

President H. W. Bush passed the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in 1990 and supported the nondiscrimination of individuals with disabilities in the workplace (National Disability Rights Network, 2012). With the passage of the ADA, Congress made it illegal to discriminate against an individual and to deny the person with a disability their right to be a part of a free society, including employment (U.S. Code, 1990). In the amendments to the Rehabilitation Act of 1998 (P.L. 105-220), Congress stated that the purpose of the Rehabilitation Act was to “empower individuals with disabilities to maximize employment, economic self-sufficiency, independence, and inclusion and integration into society” (Americans with Disabilities Act, 1990 p. 125). As a further part of the Rehabilitation Act of 1998 (P.L. 105-220), Congress found that

Millions of Americans have one or more physical or mental disabilities and, the number of Americans with such disabilities is increasing: individuals with

disabilities constitute one of the most disadvantaged groups in society; disability is a natural part of the human experience and in no way diminish the right of individuals to—live independently; enjoy self-determination; make choices; contribute to society; pursue meaningful careers; and enjoy full inclusion and integration in the economic, political, social, cultural, and educational mainstream of American Society. (Americans with Disabilities Act, 1990, 2011, p. 125)

Employment opportunities including transitioning into the workforce for students with disabilities were mandated with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1990 and the signing of the act into law by President Clinton (Petcu et al., 2014). While still in high school, students had the right to skills assessment and job training regardless of their disabling condition because of IDEA.

In 2001, President G. W. Bush signed the New Freedom Initiative, a nationwide attempt to allow individuals with disabilities to live in their communities rather than institutions and group homes, and to seek employment (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services [DHHS], 2001). At the time of the ADA's passage, Getzel (2014) cited an employment rate between 18-23% for individuals with disabilities. Katz et al. (2012) reported that the employment rate for individuals with disabilities was consistently lower than their nondisabled peers, even as the 2000 Department of Labor report revealed that the United States was experiencing the lowest unemployment in 30 years. In this booming economy, individuals with disabilities were unable to find jobs, or bypassed by hiring managers due to fear and stigma (Katz et al., 2012).

Employment opportunity and training for individuals with ID entered the school setting when the Federal Government and the Ohio Department of Education created, passed, and mandated regulations (IDEA, 1997) to ensure that young adult, pre-employment, students were prepared to transition from high school into adulthood in 3 areas: postsecondary education, community involvement, and paid community employment. The IDEiA (DOE, n.d.) mandated a team discussion and a formal transition plan for high school graduates in the areas of postsecondary education placement, independent living arrangements, and the opportunity for paid employment in the community. IDEiA (DOE, n.d.) afforded students the necessary training and work experience to graduate from high school with a diploma and employable work skills. The United States began an admirable national initiative that pushed for competitive employment of persons with disabilities, including ID (United States Department of Labor, 2014). Unfortunately, the employment rate of individuals with ID continues to remain low (Butterworth et al. 2015; Henry et al., 2014).

### **School Transition Plans and Employment Links**

The post-secondary transition services portion of individuals with ID's IEP involves planning for the individual's post-secondary independent living, education, and employment (DOE, n.d.). Research has shown that despite a post-secondary transition plan with measurable employment goals, few students with ID transition into paid employment after high school (Plotner & Dymond, 2016). Subsequently, many graduates with ID continue to live in the family home and are either unemployed or underemployed in a sheltered workshop environment earning less than minimum wage (Ross et al.,

2013). Post-secondary transition plans are a fundamental part of a student's IEP document beginning at the age of 14.

The 2004 reauthorization of IDEiA (DOE, n.d.) requires a post-secondary transition plan to be included in every student's IEP document, beginning at the age of 14. However, IDEiA does not formally define what constitutes post-secondary transition services. Individuals with ID receive specific job-training skills for future employment through the application and implementation of post-secondary transition goals. IDEiA mandated that schools assist students with the transition from high school to independent living, post-secondary education, and paid employment regardless of disability (Plotner & Dymond, 2016).

However, it has been stated that in practice, post-secondary transition services can be defined as “a coordinated set of activities for a child with a disability that is designed within a results-oriented process, focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the child to facilitate movement from school to post-secondary activities” (Shogren & Plotner, 2012, pp. 16). With the passage of IDEiA (DOE, n.d.), the student became an integral part of the post-secondary transition planning in the IEP. From this point forward, students were active participants with a voice in all IEP meetings, when appropriate (Cavendish et al., 2016). A student's post-secondary employment transition plan is alignment with Becker's (1975) assertion that a person's training leads to employment based on the individual's skill set and interests. Including students as part of the IEP postsecondary transition plan is a step in the right direction, as evidenced by is support in theoretical framework, federal and state law, and educational best practices.

The IEP must contain a post-secondary transition plan that addresses the student's preferences and interests in post-secondary education, independent living, community involvement, and competitive employment (Cavendish et al., 2016). Transition from high school to adulthood for individuals with ID can be a difficult time for parents, special education teachers, and the individuals themselves. Many parents fear the risk involved with the child and the transition, while there is anxiety among teachers and the care providers when individuals with ID gain independence in the community, and enter into employment (Björnsdóttir et al., 2015). Individuals with ID, parents, and teachers participating collaboratively in the IEP and post-secondary transition plan allay many fears. Mazzotti et al. (2013) noted collaboration as a key component and the link to successful post-secondary transition planning. Results of a Simonsen and Neubert study (2012) suggested intense family involvement, paid work experience, and paid internships as a means of scaffolding workforce experiences and prepare individuals with ID to transition from high school to the workplace.

Work experience and paid internships are the norm for nondisabled high school students in the United States, and nondisabled students have fewer barriers to finding work after graduation. In data obtained from the National Longitudinal Transition Study ([NLTS-2]) youth aged 16 and older with ID are about half as likely as their nondisabled peers to obtain competitive employment, 22-23% compared to 40%. The NLTS-2 further indicated that parents of individuals with ID are less likely to expect their child with ID to live independently and obtain competitive employment (Lipscomb et al., 2017). Previous research indicated that individuals with ID are often quite capable of developing self-

sufficiency through employment in their communities, and yet, individuals with ID remain far less successful in securing employment post-graduation than their nondisabled peers (Björnsdóttir et al., 2015; Siperstein et al., 2014; Wehman et al., 2014). IDEiA (DOE, n.d.) mandated improved communication between the schools and community resources to secure employment for individuals with ID (Mazzotti et al., 2013).

Previous research indicates a strong correlation between having paid employment while in high school and being able to secure continued paid employment past graduation for individuals with ID (Carter et al., 2011). Carter et al. (2011) opined that one's ability to initiate independent living skills past high school contributes to successful paid employment for individuals with ID. A successful post-secondary transition plan is a collaborative effort between parents, student, community advisors, and support personnel.

Twenty-first-century schools have become data-driven, research-based institutions of accountability (Cavendish et al., 2016). Cavendish et al. (2016) discussed the humanizing approach to the IEP and post-secondary transition services. The IEP meetings can be intimidating and bureaucratic affairs unless the teacher places the student and the student's desires as the focal point of the discussion. The post-secondary transition IEP meeting permits students to express their concerns and desires and work collaboratively with a team of experts who can lead them to employment.

The goal of a successful post-secondary transition plan in the IEP document is to engage all stakeholders, including the student with ID, in decision making for the student's future success as an active, independent, employed community member

(Cavendish et al., 2016; Mazzotti et al., 2013). It is the goal of the post-secondary transition section of an IEP that the student can graduate with skills, confidence, and support to be an independent and employed community member. The qualitative project case study will address time management and job training skills necessary for employment that should be included in a student's IEP as specific goals and objectives so that individuals with ID graduate from high school are as well prepared for school appropriate placement in the workforce as their nondisabled peers.

Several studies have shown a correlation between high school post-secondary transition plans that specifically address the employment readiness skills of individuals with ID, and successful employment post-graduation. Additional studies demonstrate that individuals with ID can successfully transition out of sheltered workshop environments and be gainfully employed when afforded job skills training. Both areas of research support the human capital theory framework of lifelong learning, and the importance of education that leads to successful job placement (Becker, 1964). Hence, there is a well-documented link between effective post-secondary transition plans and collaborative training with prospective employers to prepare individual with ID for successful employment.

### **Ohio: Employment First**

The State of Ohio, as a part of the EFI, pieced together an Ohio Employment First Transition Framework (Employment First, n.d.). The EFI framework presented evidence-based predictors for future successful employment of individuals with disabilities (Employment & Training Administration [ETA], 2016). The EFI report indicated eight

evidence-based predictors for employment success and adult outcome success in students with disabilities engaged in the following activities: (ETA, 2016).

- The eight evidence-based predictors for success are
- Predictor 1: Collaborative network for student support.
- Predictor 2: Individualized career development.
- Predictor 3: Authentic community-based work experience.;
- Predictor 4: Social and social-emotional instruction and skills, such as time management.
- Predictor 5: Academic, vocational, occupational education and preparation.
- Predictor 6: Supportive parental involvement and expectations.
- Predictor 7: Self-determination of the individual, independent living skills instruction, and skill building.
- Predictor 8: Inclusive practices and programs. (ETA, 2016)

These eight evidence-based predictors, combined with the IEP's postsecondary transition plan, result in solid preparation of the student with ID as a trained, employment-ready individual upon graduation from high school. However, the data indicate that youth with ID remain unemployed and underemployment remains persistent in the population of individuals with ID across all age demographics.

In a study conducted by the Virginia Commonwealth University, researchers interviewed 250 supervisors in 43 different businesses that employed individuals with ID in inclusion settings (Christensen & Richardson, 2017). The results indicated overall supervisor satisfaction with the work of individuals with disabilities; even going so far as



to rate the job performance of individuals with disabilities as comparably satisfactory as the work of their nondisabled peers. This study further supports research asserting the potential of individuals with ID to contribute to businesses willing to hire persons with ID, and the potential for more community employment opportunities in inclusion settings.

One strategy for successfully integrating individuals with ID into community employment is customized employment. Customized employment is one approach that permits some businesses to hire individuals with ID (Riesen et al., 2015). Customized employment creates a system where the job assignment is negotiated rather than competitive. Through customized employment, a reviewer in an outside agency examines the strengths of the individual with a disability and matches appropriate employment opportunities to the individual with ID and provides job coaching and other workforce skill support to the individual at no cost to the business (Riesen et al., 2015). Customized employment counselors work with the individual with ID to develop a job plan, create a representational portfolio, and design a customized job description based on the individual's strengths and interests. This process benefits the individual with ID, meets the needs of hiring managers, and results in successful employment opportunities for individuals with ID in a framework that carries very little financial investment for the employer.

### **New York and the Partnership in Employment Project**

The state of New York has created a Partnership in Employment Project. It was a state-funded project from 2011-2016 and concentrated on systems and supports for

successful employment of individuals with ID (Christensen & Richardson, 2017). This project was the work of the New York State Office for People with Developmental Disabilities. The project (see Appendix A) pushed reform during the time of the study (2011-2016) to halt all new admissions to sheltered workshops and the implementation of a multiple year plan in the hopes of moving the sheltered workshop employees to competitive employment.

### **Project SEARCH**

The Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center modeled Project SEARCH in the New York State Partnership in Employment transition project. Project SEARCH was a multi-faceted approach to preparing individuals with ID for employment that includes workplace immersion, classroom instruction, career exploration, and on-the-job support and training for the individual with ID. The end objective is for the individual with ID to secure paid employment. The priorities in IDEiA (DOE, n.d.) legislation align with Project SEARCH, which emphasized preparing individuals with ID to successfully transition to independent living and employment. Christensen et al. (2015) conducted a longitudinal study of Project SEARCH and its long-term impact on work outcomes for the participants with ID.

Project SEARCH, initially conceived as a sheltered-workshop-to-work initiative, has potential to inform best practices in transition from high school to work settings. Christensen and Richardson (2017) selected 10 individuals to participate in the sheltered workshop. Participants were 60% men and 40% women. All participants were Caucasian

and had a primary diagnosis of intellectual disability. A Project SEARCH expectation was that all participants would actively seek paid community employment upon completion of the study.

The workshop to work initiative for Project SEARCH ran from June 2015 through June 2016 in the State of New York. In the initial study, each individual with ID participated in at least 4 internships during the 1-year trial. The results of the study of interviewed individuals with ID reported on participants' feedback and satisfaction with the training and internship process. Of the eight individuals who completed the program, 63% were ultimately successful in obtaining paid community employment. The average workweek consisted of 17.6 hours of paid employment, and the average pay rate aligned with NYS minimum wage at \$9.25 per hour. The success of the Project SEARCH study clearly demonstrates that internships, job training, and job training skills support have a positive impact on employment outcomes for individuals with ID. The Project SEARCH study also revealed that individuals with ID can envision themselves as valuable employees with career options when provided with job training skills and support assisting them in the transition to community employment (Christensen & Richardson, 2017).

### **Let's Get to Work: Wisconsin**

The State of Wisconsin initiated partnerships in employment involving a federally funded program offering paid employment opportunities to high-school age individuals with ID that aligned with the post-secondary transition plans in each students' IEP (Molfenter et al., 2017). The Wisconsin federally funded school to work program was

entitled Let's Get to Work Wisconsin (LGTW). A study conducted by Carter et al. (2011) reported a 16% employment rate for Wisconsin individuals with ID, a number well below the average for nondisabled peers. The U.S. Department of Labor (2014) indicated still more troubling statistics for Wisconsin, reporting that 10,000 individuals with ID worked for sub-minimum wages in sheltered workshops, where they paid less than \$2.00 per hour.

Modeled on New York State's SEARCH program (Christensen & Richardson, 2017), the State of Wisconsin adopted a targeted approach to employment of individuals with ID that began in high school. The 3 goals of the LGTW initiative were to (a) affect public policy change for students in Wisconsin by increasing integrated employment of individuals with ID, (b) to raise hiring managers' expectations and awareness of practices and policies affect individual with ID seeking employment, and (c) to analyze program outcomes and replicate project successes (Molfenter et al., 2017). The LGTW was a multi-faceted study that included numerous strategies: meeting with stakeholders, obtaining funding from high school sites, coaching special education teachers in program implementation, and facilitating a team to strategize, develop, and implement public policy recommendations arising from successes achieved by the LGTW project (Molfenter et al., 2017).

LGTW project intervention strategies were developed based on experiences, LGTW project intervention strategies were developed opportunities, and relationships that participating students needed to develop to prepare them for post-secondary employment and independent living options. The project intervention strategies

developed in collaboration with the 5 C's of post-secondary transition framework were (a) coordination of services, (b) increasing students' inclusion in classes and extracurricular events, (c) developing individual career goals, (d) finding paid community employment while the individual with ID is in high school, and (e) engaging the collaborative efforts of all involved partners in the project (Molfenter et al., 2017). The LGTW (Molfenter et al., 2017) project was able to affect the outcomes of high school students transitioning into adulthood in the areas of academic inclusion, job coaching, work experience, setting career goals, and coordinating services to improve the employment outcomes for individuals with ID. The LGTW project propelled the perception of individuals with ID into the workforce as a norm and provided data to support a positive outlook for the future of individuals with ID securing paid community employment (Molfenter et al., 2017).

### **Predictors to Employment**

Typically, transitioning to adulthood includes graduation from high school and successful employment. A study by Southward and Kyzar (2017) pinpointed predictors to successful employment for individuals with ID transitioning from high school to community employment. This work focused on the National Post-School Outcomes. These outcomes indicate that an individual with ID can benefit socially and economically, and achieve self-determination when working in competitive, paid, community employment. Competitive employment assures that an individual with ID be paid at least minimum wage in a competitive business setting, rather than being placed in a sheltered workshop environment for subminimum wages or paid by piecework, as

during the FLSA era (Barry, 2014; Citera, 2011). Butterworth et al. (2015) were concerned with the gap between federal regulations mandating nondiscrimination of individuals with ID in the workplace laws that intended to increase employment opportunities for individuals with ID and persistently low employment rates for individuals with ID.

Employment in one's community offers the individual the opportunity to participate reciprocally in the economic development of the community and to achieve social norms of expected employment for adults (Stam et al., 2016). Employment allows an individual with ID to supplement social security income, a vital lifeline for individuals with ID who rely on government support as their primary fixed income. The Disability Statistics Report indicated that 21.2% of individuals with disabilities between the ages of 21 and 64 lived in poverty in 2015 (Cornell University, 2016). Furthermore, the federal poverty level falls far below the cost of living in the majority of states, and it is likely that this measure alone does not reveal the full scope of economic need in the community of individuals with ID. Federal and state agencies have worked to improve employment outcomes for individuals with ID. However, the data remain dismal and reveal the need to engage prospective employers who could hire individuals with ID and provide a panacea to the problem of poverty in the community.

Several states have attempted to address the gap between legislative mandates and persistently low employment rates for individuals with ID. The states of Massachusetts and Ohio have attempted to address this gap in employment and remove the stigma of discrimination to facilitate hiring individuals with ID. In 2007, newly elected

Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick initiated a task force on Employment for People with Disabilities. Governor Duval charged the task force with forming a deliberate plan to make the Commonwealth of Massachusetts a model state for the employment of individual with disabilities (Henry et al., 2014; Massachusetts Disability Task Force on Employment, 2009). Henry et al. (2014) conducted roundtable discussions at the state level to address concerns, barriers, and potential solutions for under-employment of persons with disabilities, including individuals with ID, in the Commonwealth. In May of 2008, in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, 68% of the businesses contacted sent representatives to a series of roundtable discussions to address the lack of business initiative in the hiring individuals with disabilities (Henry et al., 2014). The roundtable discussions consisted of 36 men and 38 women from 30 companies, with representatives from senior level executive leadership, executive vice presidents, hiring managers, individuals from disability and accessibility agencies and staffing and recruiting agencies together with individuals with disabilities (Henry et al., 2014). Four broad questions guided the roundtable discussions: What challenges and obstacles exist to hiring people with disabilities? What is the business case for hiring people with disabilities? What can state government do to support businesses to hire people with disabilities?

Henry et al. (2014) asked what businesses can do to hire more people with disabilities. They gathered, coded, and thematically organized data from each roundtable discussion and placed the data into categories for later discussion and presentation. The results revealed the constraints and possible discrimination in the hiring process for individuals with disabilities (Henry et al., 2014).

The Massachusetts Taskforce on Employment for People with Disabilities discovered that many of the business constraints found in the roundtable discussions duplicated results from other studies (Butterworth et al., 2015; Gormley, 2015; Henry et al., 2014; Kaye et al., 2011). The participants in the roundtable study acknowledged hiring managers' stigma and discrimination against hiring persons with disabilities. Some managers acknowledged an immediate, fearful reaction when encountering an individual with a disability, admitting that this fear caused some managers to focus on what the individual seeking employment cannot do, rather than focusing on strengths of the candidate.

An additional issue uncovered by the participating businesses was hiring managers' fear of using inappropriate disability language that might lead to litigation and cost the company both profits and damage to its reputation. Business leaders also expressed concern about navigating bureaucratic disability service systems and hiring managers' concern that training the individual with disabilities would place a burden of additional work on nondisabled co-workers, further compromising the businesses' profit margin (Henry et al., 2014). Business leaders' final concern was frustration with mandates in the ADA legislation, which they felt was yet another barrier to individuals with disabilities (Job Accommodation Network, 2012).

While much of the Henry et al. (2014) study uncovered bias, discrimination, and dialogue that was not new information to experts, the study also revealed business leaders' sense of responsibility to address the unemployment issue as a business problem. The Massachusetts Taskforce on Employment for People with Disabilities addressed the



fact that hiring managers' access to and interactions with individuals with disabilities is often limited. Discussion included whether businesses might be more willing to address the non-employment of persons with disabilities and businesses diversity policies if businesses had the opportunity to work with persons with disabilities through mentorships, job shadowing, and inclusive internships (Henry et al., 2014). The Massachusetts Task Force participants agreed that business leaders have a responsibility to recruit individuals with a variety of disabilities to achieve diverse, inclusive 21st century workplace, and that inclusion strategies have potential to bring a new perspective to employees (Henry et al., 2014).

The dialogue from the Massachusetts Task Force offered some hope for the employment of individuals with disabilities upon its completion. In 2008, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts reported an employment rate of 81.6% for all individuals ages 21-64 without a disability who were working at least 15 hours per week. In the same year (2008) and the year of the Task Force's work, individuals with ID were employed at a rate of 28.1% (Cornell University, 2016). In 2009, a year after the Massachusetts Governor's Task Force on Employment for those with ID the numbers, showed no improvement; reporting an employment rate of only 25.7% for individuals with ID and reflecting a very disappointing reduction of 2.4% from the previous year's statistics (Cornell University, 2016). The intent of the Governor's Task Force on Employment was respectable, and the people of Massachusetts attempted to address the underemployment of individuals with disabilities. However, the statistics indicated a

decline in the number of individuals with ID employed in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

The state of Ohio was in the disability employment spotlight with the signing of the EFI (Employment First, n.d.) by Governor Kasich in March of 2012. With the signing of the EFI, Ohio became the 26<sup>th</sup> state with official legislation that set the State of Ohio onto a path of expected improvement employment outcomes for those individuals with ID. In 2011, the Department of Developmental Disabilities worked with the Ohio Developmental Disability Council and the State Employment Leadership Network (Employment First, n.d.; State of Ohio, 2016). In 2011, the State Employment Leadership Network published findings summarizing the results of a comprehensive report involving many stakeholders involved with the EFI. The results indicated that Employment First initiatives Governor Kasich for approved were necessary for the State of Ohio.

The multi-agency approach for the EFI combined efforts in the departments of Education, Medicaid, Job and Family Services, Mental Health and Addiction Services, Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities Agency and the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities. EFI's multi-agency approach created a strategic plan that identified best practices, located federal funds, and developed effective partnerships to improve the employment outcomes for individuals with ID in the State of Ohio (Employment First, n.d.; State of Ohio, 2016). The initiative was person-centered, engaged caregivers and families, and leveraged interagency support from local departments of developmental disabilities to improve employment results for individuals with ID (Employment First, n.d.; State of Ohio, 2016).

The EFI plan was comprehensive. Its scope included (a) funding re-design; (b) taskforce planning teams to address barriers to employment for individuals with ID; (c) designing an interactive toolkit for prospective employees and their families; (d) community planning teams engaging input from prospective employers; and (e) agency provider support to assist the individuals with ID once hired. The EFI website was interactive and person-centered, providing resources and planning tools to assist professionals and advocates training the individual in job securement (Employment First, n.d.).

With the collaborative vastness of the EFI legislation in the State of Ohio in 2012, the hiring environment should have shifted. Individuals with ID need support and training. hiring managers should be seeking individuals with ID for employment. Unfortunately, statistics in the State of Ohio do not indicate that EFI met its 2012 legislative targets. In 2011, prior to EFI legislation the employment rate for individuals without disabilities in the State of Ohio was 79.5%, while the employment rate for individuals with ID was 24.2% in that same year (Cornell University, 2016). The employment statistics for individuals with ID in 2012 stayed stagnant at 24.2%. In 2013, after passage and implementation of the EFI, the employment rate for individuals with ID in the State of Ohio inched up only .2 of a percent, to 24.4%. The statistics remained small and gains were incremental in 2014, at 25.5%, and in 2015, increased slightly to 28.8% (Cornell University, 2016).

The EFI legislation offered a collaborative approach to counter the low employment rate of individuals with ID in Ohio. The goal of EFI was to improve

employment opportunities for individuals with ID. Examining the statistics from 2011 - 2015, Ohio only marginally increased the employment rate of individuals with ID by 4.6% (Kraus, 2016; State of Ohio, 2012). Likewise, the Massachusetts Taskforce attempted to identify constraints to employment of individuals with ID in a collaborative approach and to improve employment rates, with little success. It is clear from surveying the research that while legislative mandates and task forces have created thoughtful, well-intentioned laws in laudable attempts to address the problem, success remains elusive and there are additional barriers to employment to overcome to improve employment rates for individuals with ID. The purpose of this qualitative study is to raise awareness of the employment gaps for individuals with ID in rural central Ohio and to provide some strategies that engage prospective employers and special education teachers in preparing individuals with ID for success in the workforce (Henry et al., 2014).

While many federal laws attempted to support paid employment for individuals with ID, individuals with ID have not been afforded the minimum right to obtaining a job with the community in which they live (Duvdevany et al., 2016) to the same degree as their nondisabled peers. The national employment statistics do not reflect adherence to the federal laws protecting the disabled from discrimination. According to the Disability Statistics Report (Cornell University, 2016) in 2015, only 34.9% of people with a disability between the ages of 18-64 obtained employment, compared to their nondisabled peers, who enjoy a 76% employment rate. Further studies by Duvdevany et al. (2016), support this conclusion, citing employment rates of between 9% and 28% for individuals with ID while their nondisabled peers found employment at a rate of 75-90%.

Legislation enacted to hire individuals with ID and protect them from employment discrimination; the fact remains based on research in the second decade of the 21st century, hiring managers are not employing individuals with ID in the workforce (Butterworth et al., 2015; Katz et al., 2012). Special education teachers continue to implement post-secondary education employment goals for individuals with ID; yet the hiring of these individuals is statistically lower than their nondisabled peers. There is consensus on recognizing the need for employment for individuals with ID from legislators, hiring managers, and agency providers (Katz et al., 2012; Lysaght et al., 2012). In addition to employment and educational legislative mandates, numerous studies indicate widespread support for hiring individuals with ID, yet unemployment statistics for individuals with ID remain high at the national, state, and local level (Dalgin & Bellini, 2008; Katz et al., 2012; Lysaght et al., 2012; National Disability Rights Network, 2012; Stam et al., 2016).

The employment gap between those with a disability and their nondisabled peers has grown over the past 8 years nationally from 38.8 to 41.1 percentage points (Cornell University, 2016). Policymakers may take necessary steps to address constraints to employment for individuals with ID (Heyman et al., 2016). While not a part of this project study, it is important to note that individuals with disabilities are constrained from earning a living wage to comply with income restrictions and comply with Supplemental Security Income (SSI) regulations. For individuals with ID, SSI provides minimal economic security, and so individuals with ID are often eager to support themselves via community employment. Many individuals with ID also suffer social isolation due to

underemployment and employer fears related to hiring individuals with ID. A lack of community employment leaves the individual limited options to experience socialization (Heyman et al., 2016), while also miring the individual with ID in poverty. D. Nord et al. (2013) discussed economic self-sufficiency and the potential for individuals with ID to make a living wage through community employment, which relieves them of relying on monthly SSI checks and subminimum wage income eked out in sheltered workshops.

When an individual with ID lacks self-sufficiency in employment, economic independence is unattainable. Employment of individuals with ID does not have a simple solution; it is a complex, nuanced problem that must be engaged on an individual basis, with support from schools, service agencies, prospective employers, families, and community members (Nord et al., 2013). The laws are in place for the employment of individuals with ID, yet companies are still reluctant to hire this underserved population because of fear, stigma, and discrimination. Making the employment of individuals with ID a social norm and raising awareness about the workplace potential of that individuals with ID through coordinated efforts between educators and businesses will send the resounding message that employment of individuals with ID is the work of the future.

### **Employees Needed**

While the employment statistics and application of federal and state anti-discrimination laws appear to offer a grim outlook for individuals with ID seeking employment, there are some businesses in the United States that report success employing individuals with ID (Chhabra, 2017; Duvdevany et al., 2016; Lengnick-Hall, 2007). There is a body of research that informs the reason for the successful employment

of an individual with ID and the value it brings to the individual's life separate from a paycheck (Kober & Eggleton, 2005), in addition to reporting success with employing individuals with ID in their company's workforce (Duvdevany et al., 2016; Lengnick-Hall, 2007). Businesses who employ individuals with ID are viewed very positively by the public (Burge et al., 2007). There is room for individuals with ID at the employment table, as jobs previously filled by individuals born from 1945-1965 (Baby Boomers) are opening up due to retirement, creating a need for new employees (Katz et al., 2012; Lengnick-Hall, 2007). Individuals with ID are uniquely poised, if properly prepared for the workforce through job skill training and time management, to fill pressing personnel need for businesses willing to employ them and offer benefits to employers' public reputations.

### **Successful Employment Outcomes**

Positive employment outcomes depend on several factors, such as workforce transition support, committed and empathetic hiring managers, and a positive peer's orientation of value toward the individual with disabilities. Other factors include appropriate employment opportunities, necessary ADA accommodations, and training in job skills and time management (Duvdevany et al., 2016; Lengnick-Hall, 2007). An earlier study by Siperstein et al. (2014), revealed that employed individuals with ID demonstrate success based on early work experience, high levels of adaptive behavior, and the absence of emotional and behavioral issues. These three factors allow the individual with ID to focus on the work and maintain employment. In a study on employment, Heyman et al. (2016) surveyed 1,055 adults with ID, age 21 to 55 years.

Communities employed 153 individuals with ID. Of the 153 employed individuals, 6% were men, and 35% were women. In conclusion, Heckman and Krueger (2005) indicated that successful employment comes from the individual's education, job-training skills, and motivation for employment that led to their ability to be hired.

### **Outcomes of Hiring Employees with ID**

The Heyman et al. (2016) study examined job quality and stability of individuals with ID and found job are not all created equal. While most study participants remained employed up to 3 years, not all obtained health benefits. The authors of the study encouraged a further examination into inclusive, high quality paid employment for individuals with ID. The authors stated policymakers must take necessary steps to concentrate on the constraints to employment for individuals with ID (Heyman et al., 2016). There are many examples of individuals with ID who remain employed, and yet the data for employment of this underserved population continue to show widespread unemployment. Numerous studies have shown that individuals with ID are willing to work, want to be included in their community's workforce, and can learn the skills necessary to maintain employment (Heyman et al., 2016).

For every employed individual with ID, there remain 3 more individuals with ID doing piecework and other menial, sub-minimum wage labor in a sheltered workshop (Plotner & Dymond, 2016). In 1976, Dr. Marc Gold was able to teach refined woodworking skills to individuals with intellectual disabilities in a sheltered workshop (National Disability Rights Network, 2012). The individuals with ID transferred those woodworking skills into community employment, constructing cedar boards for a local



fencing company. Because it was not cost effective to complete the necessary wood working job from the sheltered workshop environment instead of the local job site, the trained individuals with ID worked with and thrived in an inclusion setting alongside their nondisabled peers. The individuals with ID reported that they enjoyed working in the community, appreciated being a part of the community, and enjoyed the respect from their peers for the work completed. Furthermore, the individuals with ID did not want to return to the sheltered workshop environment (National Disability Rights Network, 2012). Other individuals with ID from the same sheltered workshop setting were later trained in specific skills and able maintain successful employment (with some necessary accommodations) in restaurants, hospitals, and various businesses in the community.

Another study from National Disability Rights Network (2012) involved Eleanor, a young woman with Down syndrome who found employment making subminimum wage at a sheltered workshop. Eleanor became her own self-advocate and stated, “Sheltered Workshops are a waste of time, and they don’t pay minimum wage. If you’re in a sheltered workshop you can’t interact with people who don’t have a disability” (National Disability Rights Network, 2012, p. 58). Eleanor obtained a job as a courtesy clerk at a local store where hiring managers were willing to work with her and learned to use her strong interpersonal skills for her inclusive community employment (National Disability Rights Network, 2012).

### **Companies that Hire Individuals with ID**

Walgreens has a diversity initiative policy that centers on disability integration (National Disability Rights Network, 2012). At Walgreens, an employee with a disability

must work beside a nondisabled peer earning the same amount of money per hour, to learn job skills and expectations (National Disability Rights Network, 2012). The Walgreens senior vice president of distribution and logistics stated that the accommodations offered to persons with disabilities has benefitted all distribution center employees by encouraging collaboration, removing fear and stigma of individuals with intellectual disabilities, and improved overall work productivity (National Disability Rights Network, 2012). Hiring managers might be concerned about the cost of hiring, training, and providing accommodations to individuals with intellectual disabilities but need look no farther than the data from Walgreens to have these fears assuaged. Walgreens reported that adaptations made to assist the workers with disabilities in the distribution center typically cost less than \$500 per individual, and many accommodations cost nothing at all (Job Accommodation Network, 2012; Lengnick-Hall, 2007).

### **Soft Skills Needed**

Lindsay and DePape (2015) stressed that when employing individuals with ID, it is vital to cultivate the individual's soft skills and market those skills to prospective employers. Lindsay and DePape purposively sampled two groups, completing a mock interview in which questions focused on three criteria: job skills, areas for individual improvement, and problem-solving scenarios. They discovered similar levels of competency in persons with disabilities and their nondisabled peers. Both groups had a comparable ability to provide appropriate examples related to employment and explain their soft skills strengths.

Individuals with ID differed from their nondisabled peers only in describing their disabling condition, giving fewer examples of teamwork ability, and some difficulty explaining the problem-solving scenarios to the prospective employer (Lindsay & DePape, 2015). Heckman and Krueger (2005) also supported the application of an individual's soft skill set in applying human capital theory to employment. It was vital to Heckman and Krueger that employers search for individuals with strong self-discipline, dependability, and perseverance for job success. The results indicated that others must be involved with individuals with ID to market the individual's soft skills and assist the individual in preparing for the interview process (Lindsay & DePape, 2015). The soft skills described by both sets of research studies are teachable, and therefore within reach of individuals with ID if given the opportunity to acquire and master them.

Jans et al. (2011) suggested it made a difference in the timing of when an individual disclosed their disabling condition to a prospective employer if the disabling condition was not visible. In the Jans et al. qualitative study, 41 individuals with disabilities who were employed for at least 5 years were interviewed concerning the hiring practices they were involved in to obtain their full-time employment. Of the 21 male and 20 female individuals with varying degrees and categories of disabilities, the results indicated that the individuals with disabilities must remain focused on their job skills, training, and what employable assets they bring to the future employer, if the disabling condition was not visible (Jans et al., 2011).

Many participants in the Jans et al. (2011) study were afforded a job coach who trained them in making exact statements about their skills and helped participants develop

self-confidence about the interview process, to improve their prospects for employment. Jans et al. also recommended business policy change so that the interview process would allow individuals with disabilities to frame responses accentuating their skills and job readiness, emphasizing talents the individual brings to employment. The study demonstrated that hiring managers want individuals to arrive workforce-ready, armed with job training skills, and the confidence needed to perform the work (Jans et al., 2011). Becker's (1975) human capital theory posits job readiness and training as key components of employee success. In keeping with research and the theoretical framework for this project case study, job training skills are afforded to an individual in their post-secondary employment transition goals of the IEP document and have potential to positively impact employability.

### **Matching Skills with Employment**

Hall et al. (2014) focused on matching an applicant's skill set with the job offered to the individual with ID. Hall et al. followed 19 and 20-year old's with ID and was based on the research previously conducted by Parsons et al. (1990), who proposed that when an individual with ID is provided with employment that aligns with the individual's preferred work choice and abilities, the individual's productivity doubled. These studies suggest that the hiring managers are succeeding with this strategy but limit opportunities (Hall et al., 2014; Jans et al., 2011). Success occurs when an individual with ID has secured paid employment that meets the needs of the employer, and the individual is earning at least minimum wage. While this success in gainful, inclusive employment is not yet the norm. The transition of a student out of high school and into the adult world of

employment requires a team trained to implement a coordinated set of activities to prepare the student with job skills necessary to secure inclusive employment (Shogren & Plotner, 2012). However, some research has indicated that the post-secondary transition component of a student's IEP has failed to meet the basic requirements and expectations of job training skills and workforce readiness (Shogren & Plotner, 2012).

Shogren and Plotner (2012) dissected data from the NLTS-2 (Office of Special Education Programs, DOE, 2005). The NLTS-2 was a federally funded national study of persons with disabilities transitioning from high school to the workforce (Shogren & Plotner, 2012). The NLTS-2 was a 10-year longitudinal study of 12 federal disability categories, including individuals with ID and the progress of the post-secondary transition component in an individual's IEP (Shogren & Plotner, 2012). The NLTS-2 discovered that most individuals with ID were not actively involved in their post-secondary transition planning.

IDEA 2004 (DOE, n.d.) regulations intentionally invited active collaboration the student and all other IEP team members at IEP meetings. Shogren and Plotner (2012) contended that when the student invests in the post-secondary transition process, students are more likely to achieve intended outcomes in skills training, job coaching, and future employment. A thorough examination of the NLTS-2 indicated that while most students with ID had a post-secondary transition plan in their IEP, students were never active participants in the process of determining the content or providing input in the post-secondary transition document.

Students still had no say in job training skills suited to their interests or strengths (Shogren & Plotner, 2012). As indicated earlier in this study, IDEiA (DOE, n.d.) mandated the post-secondary transition section's inclusion in the IEP with the expectation that the team would create this section and include the student as an active participant. The post-secondary transition section of the IEP document includes a collaborative team approach. This collaborative approach includes the student's needs, desires, and necessary supports to be a part of the community post-high school; including pre-graduation employment opportunities may lead to post graduation employment (Ohio's Graduation Requirements, 2017).

Shogren and Plotner (2012) concluded that the NTLs-2 indicated concern about the lack of student collaboration in the post-secondary transition section of the IEP document. Shogren and Plotner also suggested that this lack of student voice might be leading to less than desirable outcomes in employment for individuals with ID and failing to prepare individuals with ID for the transition to the workforce. Individuals with ID need the early collaboration of service agencies, parents, support personnel, and job skills coaches during their high school years. This collaboration is key to students' self-determination, that they may voice their preferences for vocation and secure their place in their community for independent living and employment.

### **Employment in the Community**

A work skills analysis study conducted by Brown et al. (2016) stated that while many individuals with ID can work in a community setting, hiring managers block the individual's employment because of the hiring managers perceived burden of extra

instruction and supports, including job skills training. However, supports and services are available through community agencies, and individuals with ID are willing and ready to seek employment. Previous research (Chhabra, 2017; Duvdevany et al., 2016; Getzel, 2014; Job Accommodation Network, 2012; Katz et al., 2012; Riesen et al., 2015; Siperstein et al., 2014) indicated that supports and services are essential tools for successful community employment of individuals with ID, yet employment data continue to show that the majority of businesses still do not hire individuals with ID and the employment rate continues to be well below the rates for their nondisabled peers. The attitudes of prospective hiring managers on the employment of individuals with ID vary based on the often-unstable job market, technological advances, and living in a global market (Nota et al., 2014). Economic issues in business might be a reason many hiring managers are not investing in human capital, even though national and state policy mandates inclusion of individuals with ID in the workplace. Stigma remains a means to exclusion and employment as compared to their nondisabled peers.

Employers describe their employees with disabilities as less competent than their nondisabled peers performing the same job (Louvet et al., 2009). Houtenville and Kalargyrou (2014) discovered that in the hospitality and service industry, hiring managers faced the constraints of accommodations, lowered work expectations, and a productivity challenge. The work of Houtenville and Kalargyrou centered on the attitudes of businesses toward individuals with disabilities. The findings by Houtenville and Kalargyrou indicated that individuals with the disability placed in a job that matched the individual's skills set faced fewer challenges and had more reports of success.

The Houtenville and Kalargyrou (2014) study made a clear point that the employee skills must match the job available; the individual with disabilities cannot be asked to perform a job that is in direct conflict with the disability (i.e., reading when there is a vision issue or lifting if there is an orthopedic issue). They further asserted that possible issues to employment remain in the area of the employers' concern for productivity and fear of perceived cost of accommodations. A review of the literature conducted by J. Burke et al. (2013) indicated while there are positive attitudes reported among hiring managers, when it comes to hiring employing individuals with disabilities, negative attitudes are prevalent.

Hiring managers in larger companies have stated difficulty often arises when attempting to find qualified, workforce-ready individuals with disabilities (Domzal et al., 2008). The hiring managers requested information on the individuals' performance and productivity as well as how hiring the individual will help the company's profit margin prior to employing an individual with ID. For companies that already hire individuals with disabilities, the lack of promotional opportunity was a major deterrent to hiring of individuals with disabilities (Domzal et al., 2008).

Horace Mann supported the human capital theory assertion that people find job satisfaction through proper employment and the premise that a person's education is the strength of a person's community (Spring, 2012). A survey by Kaye et al. (2011) indicated that employers' attitudes toward hiring individuals with ID are favorable. Fortune 500 Companies have shown positive attitudes about hiring an individual with significant disabilities, including ID, believing both the individual as well as the



employer would benefit. Additionally, a survey of private businesses indicated a positive orientation toward hiring individuals with ID in the workplace (Kaye et al., 2011; Sima et al., 2014) even though the organizations had to offer accommodations to the workers with disabilities by creating flexible policies, modifying work environments, restructuring jobs, providing written job instructions, and modifying equipment.

Toad & Company, a California-based warehousing business that employs individuals with ID, echoes this principle about dignified work. At the turn of the century, Toad & Company CEO Gordon Seabury was inspired to integrate individuals with ID into the workforce when he realized that the company was falling short of its motto, *Planet, People, and Profit*. Seabury recognized they neglected the *people* part of the motto. Seabury developed a program to employ individuals with ID and the corporation has employed 338 individuals with disabilities since 2004. Seabury worked tirelessly to make his company friendly to people of all ability levels by finding ways and creating jobs opportunities for individuals with ID to be successful in his company. Seabury stated that hiring managers who do not employ individuals with ID are missing meaningful employee impact and neglecting an overlooked valuable personnel resource (Chhabra, 2017).

Lengnick-Hall et al. (2008) found a common factor amongst businesses hiring people with disabilities was the willingness to seek out expertise from community-based disability organizations and to work collaboratively to match the individual's job skills with open positions. Another common factor for success was training hiring managers to overcome misconceptions about individuals with disabilities. A third factor for success

was the development of a company-wide vision statement on inclusiveness and diversity; other effective strategies included engaging all employees in an exit interview to improvements accommodations for individuals with ID. Finally, company leaders welcomed assistive technology as part of accommodation, and trained all employees on disability awareness.

### **Implications**

Previous research (Heyman et al., 2016; Nota et al., 2014) has shown that employment offers an individual with ID the opportunity to be part of the broader community, meet the societal norm of adult employment and potentially offer financial independence and security. Additionally, research demonstrates that strong, goal-oriented, collaborative post-secondary transition plans lead to student employability post-graduation (Cavendish et al., 2016; Mazzotti et al., 2013; Molfenter et al., 2017). There is an established need to support and provide employment opportunities to bring value and purpose to the life of individuals with ID (Bouck & Joshi, 2014; Burge et al., 2007; Butterworth et al., 2015; Grossman, 1978; Henry et al., 2014; McDaniels, 2016; Riesen et al., 2015; Siperstein et al., 2014). The fulfillment of federal employment laws for rural central Ohio and individuals with ID may offer appropriate community employment, and community norms may shift as they have at businesses with successful inclusion programs like Toad & Company, Walgreens, Hewlett-Packard, Dow Chemical, and Microsoft.

The implications for my qualitative project case study rest in investigating how time management and job training skills in the workplace and in post-secondary

transition plans may improve employment for individuals with ID in rural central Ohio. This study may result in a deep discussion on the effective design, delivery, and implementation of time management and job training skills for individuals with ID for hiring managers and special education teachers in rural central Ohio. Hiring managers are seeking a diverse workforce in the 21st century, and this should allow managers to develop an open mind toward the hiring of individuals with ID (Henry et al., 2014). Equally important is the ability to develop post-secondary transition plans for individuals with ID that lead to successful employment.

The outcome of my qualitative project case study is the development of a collaborative professional development training program for local hiring managers and for special education teachers in rural central Ohio. The professional development training would allow these key stakeholders to work together in defining critical workforce readiness skills in time management and job training skills for individuals with ID. The workshop may be able to facilitate integration of the specific skills employers seek into post-secondary transition plans.

### **Summary**

The national employment rate for individuals with ID is below the employment rate of their nondisabled peers despite legislation across more than 40 years mandating that individuals with ID have a right to inclusive employment and must not be discriminated against (Bouck & Joshi, 2014; Employment First, n.d.; Grossman, 1978; Henry et al., 2014; McDaniels, 2016). Hiring managers have expressed concerns related to hiring individuals with ID, such as (a) fear of legal litigation, (b) cost of

accommodations, (c) customer perception of individuals with ID visible in the business, (d) the added cost of compensation and healthcare coverage, and (e) the added cost for training and support (Brown et al., 2016; Houtenville & Kalargyrou, 2014; Kaye et al., 2011; Nota et al., 2014; Sima et al., 2014). Despite fears, there are businesses with successful records of hiring individuals with ID and have found them to be competent, stable, and effective employees (Burke et al., 2013; Duvdevany et al., 2016; Siperstein et al., 2014). Research has shown positive examples from hiring managers' successful employment of individuals with ID across many industries (Duvdevany et al., 2016; Lengnick-Hall, 2007). Given the mandates for specific post-secondary support in transition planning, special education teachers who include time management and job skills training in post-secondary transition plans may improve the likelihood of successful employment for individuals with ID.

## Section 2: The Methodology

### **Qualitative Research Design and Approach**

The research methodology and design for this study was a qualitative project case study. A qualitative project case study approach is appropriate when a researcher desires to obtain in-depth comprehension of a situation or problem that involves a small number of participants (Zach, 2006). This qualitative project study was an interview-only qualitative case study and consisted of semi structured interviews with local hiring managers who have successfully hired individuals with ID, and semi structured interviews with special education teachers involved in developing postsecondary employment goals for individuals with ID. All interview questions, developed with permission from the work of Cheong and Yahya (2013), formed the basis of this qualitative study.

Sample size variation exists in a sample size of qualitative research; sample size in a qualitative research study can vary drastically within a qualitative study itself as well as among the published experts. Guest et al. (2006) recommended the sample size range should be between six and 12 participants, whereas Ritchie et al. (2013) suggested that, at a certain point, evidence demonstrates that to gather data from more participants does not add to a study because it does not create new evidence.

Conversely, Houck (2000) argued that it is not necessarily the sample size that is of utmost importance in a qualitative study but rather the importance of the sample chosen and the quality of the sample. Depending on factors that are study specific, Smith et al. (2009) referred to a sample size of three to 11 as being ample. Kuzel (1999) recommended five to eight participants to arrive at maximum variation, and Parse (1990)

suggested two to 10 participants to arrive at data saturation. Qualitative researchers who use interviews attempt to see the world from the interviewees' point of view on specific themes and topics (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2014).

Interviewing in a qualitative research project is a public interface grounded in a conversation (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Semi structured interviews permitted me to add to or ask follow-up questions, depending on the interview process and the interviewees' responses to original questioning (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Researchers use interviews in qualitative research to investigate behavior, describe events, and gain information quickly (Ponto, 2005). I interviewed local hiring managers in rural central Ohio representing a variety of industries who already hire individuals with ID. The research also included semi structured interviews with local special education teachers in rural central Ohio who develop post-secondary transition plans for individuals with ID.

Interview questions based on the work of Cheong and Yahya (2013) in Malaysia guided this qualitative project study. Cheong and Yahya studied students' transition plans and employment outcomes as they applied to a successful transition plan. The case study involved two special education teachers and four employed students with disabilities, as well as the students' parents, job coaches, and employers. The findings revealed that a collaborative system involving teachers, students, parents, job coaches, and employers led to successful employment of individuals with ID.

Ponto (2005) described possible inaccuracies that can occur in obtaining interviews: (a) nonresponses, (b) measurement errors, (c) mistakes in sampling, and (d) coverage errors. To maintain integrity of the interview process, I presented my interview

questions to peers at a local university to review for accuracy and adjust for potential issues. The interviews consisted of a series of questions inviting hiring managers to identify, describe, and discuss time management and job training skills in their specific workplaces, focusing on skills they would like to see integrated in postsecondary transition plans so that individuals with ID can thrive when employed at their local businesses (see Appendix B). The interview questions for local special education teachers focused on how they target strategies and methods for integrating time management and job-training skills into post-secondary transition plans for students with ID (see Appendix C). I utilized human capital theory as the framework, which emphasizes the economic necessity of education and job training skills that lead to successful employment (Becker, 1964, 1975).

The need to investigate how local hiring managers and special education teachers incorporate time management and job training skills in the workplace and in postsecondary transition plans was the rationale for semi structured interviews. The focus was on answers to the planned questions while I worked to notice respondents' intended meaning for follow-up questions for clarity and depth (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2014). The qualitative interviews provided ground level, direct, and personal access to the needs and concerns of local hiring managers and special education teachers, two critical stakeholders in setting outcomes for employability of individuals with ID.

The interview procedure included establishing the purpose of the interview quickly and permitting the interviewees to have a full understanding of the purpose. To establish a positive relationship with the interviewees, I remained a solid listener,

showing interest in the words spoken, and respecting the subject matter. I was clear and concise about what information I needed to establish a working relationship between the interviewer and interviewee (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2014).

A quantitative study would not permit direct access to the hiring managers or to the special education teachers regarding time management and job training skills critical to employment. Further, a mixed method approach was not possible given the professional development workshop content will be devised in response to concerns and ideas gained from direct qualitative study. I chose the qualitative project case study approach because my research topic addresses the need to describe, document, and discover how hiring managers and special education teachers incorporate time management and job skills training in the workplace and in post-secondary transition plans (Hancock & Algozzine, 2017). A qualitative project case study approach was appropriate for this study and permitted a deep investigation of a specific phenomenon through descriptive research to solve a problem by analyzing data gathered in an interactive process (Leedy & Ormrod, 2018).

All recordings of all semi structured interviews used Voice Recorder (Quality apps, n.d.). I will keep the recorded interviews and a confidential database coded to protect the identity of each participant's response to the interview questions in a locked, secure location in my home for 5 years. All transcriptions were coded using a computer-based NVivo coded all transcriptions (diGregorio, 2019).

In the interest of full disclosure, I have an adult daughter with an intellectual disability. Therefore, it was necessary to address and avoid researcher bias by only



interviewing businesses entirely unaffiliated with her care, including job training, job coaching, or any other form of on-the-job assistance. Each interview took 30-45 minutes to complete. Total recording time was 6.5 hours. Transcription took place after the interviews, and I transcribed all recordings.

Sample size in a qualitative project case study is a matter of judgment by the qualitative researcher and sample size is an important consideration for any qualified researcher (Sandelowski, 1995). In a study of first-year teachers conducted by Cook (2009), sample size considerations included the various ways a teacher might enter the profession. Some interviewees were first-year teachers exiting a traditional four-year college experience, and some interviewees were second career first-year teachers. When I arrived at the saturation point of recording the same responses from multiple teachers, I determined the sample size was adequate.

As I examined the vast number of hiring managers available to interview, I chose the main employers in my research area of rural central Ohio. The targeted population of the qualitative project case study was at least eight businesses within the city limits, registered with the Chamber of Commerce, with a history of hiring individuals with ID for at least 1 year. I sought to interview the four special education teachers who are responsible for post-secondary transition plans within rural central Ohio for students with ID. Each of the four special education teachers have at least 5 years teaching experience working with individuals with ID.

## Participants

Participant recruitment can affect the adequacy and representation of the samples returned (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I submitted a letter of intent to all local businesses within the city limits registered with the local chamber of commerce and submitted a letter of intent to all four of the special education teachers within the city limits who create postsecondary transition plans for students with ID. All 52 businesses listed in the local chamber of commerce that have hired an individual with ID received invitations to participate in the qualitative project case study. A complete listing of those businesses obtained from the local County Board of Developmental Disabilities listed 52 businesses. Of the 52 businesses listed, 15 are outside the city limits, five are self-employed individuals, and eight presented a conflict of interest due to my daughter's services. Given these exclusions, there remained 24 viable businesses to consider for interviews, and these included (a) churches, (b) fast food establishments, (c) grocery stores, (d) hotels, (e) library, (f) lumber yard, (g) manufacturing establishments, (h) national retail stores, (i) preschools, (j) restaurants, (k) retail establishments, and (l) a hospital. A mailing of the advance letter of informed consent stating my intent and interests went to the hiring managers of all 24 businesses indicated. The prospective participants had calendar days from the day of mailing the letters of informed consent to reply regarding their interest. I called each of the 24 businesses that failed to respond to the letter of intent after the 14-day deadline to inquire about their interest. It was necessary to select willing participants because of the time constraints of the study and timeframe to complete this project study.

I intended to interview at least eight business leaders for this qualitative study. Because I also planned to interview all special education teachers within rural central Ohio who are responsible for creating postsecondary transition plans, I mailed an advance letter of informed consent stating my intent and interests to the special education teachers who create postsecondary transition plans for individuals with ID stating my intentions. I gave the special education teacher participants 14 calendar days to reply regarding their interest in the qualitative project study. I called each of the special education teachers who failed to respond to the letter of intent after the 14-day deadline to inquire about their interest.

To preserve confidentiality, I coded identities of participating businesses and special education teachers. I also coded each business based on its area of service. A statement regarding confidentiality was included in the letter of interest to participants, assuring all parties that the identity of the businesses and the names of special education teachers will remain confidential during and after this study.

To assure validity, a qualitative researcher uses triangulation. Triangulation refers to multiple methods applied to a study's stated problem. A researcher may establish validity if the multiple methods of gathering data are similar upon analysis of the data (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Triangulation of data may offer the benefit of increased confidence in my data study, and it allowed me to capture multiple dimensions of the problem studied. It was my goal to utilize interviewing as my primary data acquisition. I intended to interview hiring managers who hire individuals with ID and special education teachers who create postsecondary transition plans for the individuals with ID.

## Data Collection

The qualitative interview method of inquiry provided the most effective research design to supply thematic schema. The data collection instrument were interview questions developed from the work of Cheong and Yahya (2013), identifying critical time management and job training skills necessary for workplace success.

Yin (2016) suggested that a qualitative researcher should define the research protocol before conducting the qualitative research. Some qualitative researchers choose not to identify the protocol to capture social aspects of the interviewee. However, values, expectations, and perspective are a part of the protocol (Yin, 2016). Following Yin's (2016) guidance, I understood that I must remain open-minded when encountering the unexpected information during the interview process, and I had to adhere to the protocol to remain focused on the topic of the study.

The semi structured interview protocol required me to (a) speak in limited amounts, (b) let the voice of the interviewee be heard, (c) be neutral and non-guiding when responding to the interviewee, (d) stay neutral throughout the process (e) maintain rapport, (f) make eye contact, (g) use an interview guide, and (h) analyze while interviewing to determine when to probe or ask follow-up questions (Yin, 2016). Once the interviews were complete, I coded the data to protect confidentiality. I have an adult daughter with ID who lives in rural central Ohio; I involved no one with whom my daughter worked to limit bias in this study. I disclosed my daughter's disability to participants to assure them that I intended to avoid any appearance of bias or preference in implementation of this qualitative research project.

## Data Analysis

Qualitative data focus on naturally occurring, real-life events in a natural setting (Miles et al., 2013). Unlike quantitative researchers who derive their data from a statistical standpoint, qualitative researchers investigate with the goal to understand and investigate life situations (Hoepfl, 1997; Stake, 2010). The interviews conducted by a qualitative researcher frame the interpretations of the overall experience, with rich data analysis occurring through a focused lens (Miles et al., 2013). All data coding is an inherent judgement, but coding of qualitative data involves the sorting of datasets as they apply to thematic schema and important issues related to the research questions (Stake, 2010). It is also essential to establish trustworthiness in a qualitative research study. Reliability and validity in a qualitative research study are necessary for the trustworthiness to be established (Stake, 2010).

Creswell and Miller (2000) argued validity may not be applicable in qualitative research and my assumptions may affect the qualitative data gathered. Some qualitative researchers have settled on using the terms *quality*, *rigor*, and *trustworthiness* to address research validity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, Stake, 2010). To maintain validity and reliability in qualitative research, a researcher must establish reader confidence in the qualitative findings through trust (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

To validate the voice of the participant, I used member checking to ensure that members from the tested groups verified my data interpretations (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Yin, 2016). When given an opportunity to examine and agree or question my conclusions, the participants were able to validate my conclusions. Member checking

added additional time to the study, but it added necessary validity to the research project. The member checking allows the participants to add or clarify any of my interpretations of their data used in draft findings (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

The COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 slowed the interview data gathering from hiring managers; it involved alternative measures to obtain data. After the COVID-19 shut down of nonessential businesses, including all schools in the state of Ohio, it became necessary for me to deliver the informed consent letters to each business (March 27, April 3, and April 8, 2020). As of April 10, all completed, transcribed, and analyzed interviews completed the data portion of the qualitative project study. I utilized the NVivo qualitative data analysis program to code data, reviewed all data for consistency, and identified emergent themes related to time management and job training skills (Swygart-Hobaugh, 2019).

I applied Creswell's five-step approach to analyzing qualitative interviews and transcribed data, requiring researchers to record the experiences as described by participants. Next, I developed a chart, tracking significant comments from the participants. In the third step, I grouped similar comments into themes. Next, I listened for specific textual comments that identified what the participants experienced. To conclude, I identified descriptions involving fundamental experiences that explained how the participants encountered that experience. The final analysis involved synthesizing the data into the structural (how) and textual (what) themes that came together and created a combined description of themes curated from participants' interview comments (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

### **Limitations**

One limitation of this qualitative project study was many rural central Ohio businesses were small, privately owned, rather than large corporate businesses. Other limitations included time constraints, as well as the coding and analysis process. The research process was exhaustive and performed by one researcher who maintained full-time employment while researching and documenting data. An additional limitation existed in the rural location of the businesses.

In a qualitative research project, I must understand that the data are complex and that contradictions in the data may complicate findings in the research and lead to unexpected results. My role is to understand that these unexpected findings make a stronger project case study. Despite these limitations, the outcomes of this qualitative project case study fully address the social change expectations of Walden University. Social change is central to growth and inclusion of all community members in all aspects of a community. Awareness of the need for social change provided hiring managers with possible solutions to employment for individuals with ID through understanding of time management and job skills training. Awareness of the need for social change could potentially lead to more results-oriented post-secondary transition plans written by special education teachers, and implementation of these transition plans to leverage employability.

### **Qualitative Research Design and Approach**

In a qualitative study, I sought in-depth personal comprehension of a specific problem (Zach, 2006). Semi structured interviews applied in a qualitative study permits

me to see the problem from the participants' perspective and allows the interviewer to be involved in an interactive conversation centered on the problem and the research questions (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). I used semi structured interviews to investigate behavior, describe events, and gain information quickly.

The research question in context of the qualitative research project revealed that a small percentage of individuals with ID (23.1%) were employees in rural central Ohio compared to their nondisabled peers (Qu The research questions focused on suspected issues of time management and job skills training from the perspectives of the special education teachers and hiring managers in rural central Ohio.

I chose semi structured interviews over other methods because this interview method provided the personal, human connection desired from the hiring managers and the special education teachers to hear their voice on the matter involving time management and job skills training of individuals with ID in rural central Ohio (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2014). Walden University IRB granted approval to conduct this qualitative project study (Walden's approval number for this study is 02-14-20-0362369 expires on February 13, 2021).

### **Participants**

Sample size may vary in a qualitative project case study. Houck (2000) claimed sample size was not of primary importance; but rather the quality of the chosen sample was critical. Semi structured interviews in a qualitative study must continue until data saturation (no new evidence) occurs (Houck, 2000; Ritchie et al., 2013).



In 2017, 23.1% of individuals with ID were employed in rural central Ohio, with significantly lower employment rates than their nondisabled peers of 72% (Employment First, n.d.; Employment specialist DD, personal communication, 2017; Getzel, 2014; Katz et al., 2012; Lysaght et al., 2012). Participants for this qualitative project study recruited from the local rural central Ohio school district's website involving special education teachers who created post secondary transition plans for individuals with ID participated in the study. Additionally, the local developmental disabilities agency provided a recognition brochure that included all businesses that had hired individuals with ID in rural central Ohio. I narrowed the list of perspective businesses and included businesses who were members of the Chamber of Commerce and were within the city limits. All invited special education teachers (four) participated in interviews and of the 24 businesses invited, nine participated (see Table 1).

**Table 1***Interview Participants*

Participant	Business type or Special Ed Teacher grade/ age taught
B1	Library
B2	Retail: Shoes
B3	Retail: Office
B4	Fast food
B5	Nonprofit
B6	Home Health
B7	Nursing Home
B8	Retail: Cards
B9	Fast food: Pub
T1	18- 22-year-olds
T2	18- 22-year-olds
T3	14- 18-year-olds
T4	18- 22-year-olds

**Data Collection**

This qualitative project study involved the interviewing of special education teachers and hiring managers in rural central Ohio. Semi structured interviews allow me to ask follow-up questions for topic clarity (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Semi structured interviews also added clarity to the themes of the responses to planned questions (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2014). According to Dillman et al. (2014), a qualitative study interviewer asks clarifying questions, redirects the participant as needed, and answers any participants' questions for clarity during the interview process. The interview questions for this study were based on the work of Cheong and Yahya (2013). Cheong and Yahya studied transition plans and employment outcomes as they applied to a successful transition plan. To ensure the data collection was sufficient to answer the research

question, the interview questions based on the problem statement and guided the data collection process.

Research was initiated with the mailing of the informed consent letter to 24 chosen businesses and four special education teachers who met the study criteria. A second informed consent letter was mailed after 14 days with no response. All special education teachers returned informed consent letters and upon receipt, interviews were started. There was no response from hiring managers after 21 days from the initial mailing and 2 follow up mailings of the informed consent letter. Due to the COVID-9 pandemic, nonessential businesses were shut down by order of the Governor of the State of Ohio, and this created a unique interview situation. A third letter of informed consent was sent, indicating the hiring managers could respond via email or phone interview. Nine of the possible 24 hiring managers responded to the third mailing.

With permission from authors Cheong and Yahya (2013; Appendix E) I adapted the interview protocol to fit this qualitative project study. Separate questions were developed for hiring managers (Appendix B) and for special education teachers (Appendix C). Interview questions were peer-reviewed before participant interviews in order to ensure clarity of the questions and to obtain intended information. A secure location permitted privacy and confidentiality for all interviews and notes taken from phone discussions. I coordinated meeting times with the participants and recorded each interview using Voice Recorder on my iPad. Participants were welcomed upon arrival and provided a copy of the signed consent form. Each participant was given time to prepare and feel comfortable and safe in the location. I reminded each participant that

their participation was voluntary, that they should answer only what they were comfortable in sharing, and that they could end the interview at any time.

The confidentiality of each participant was guaranteed, and the recordings are stored in a secure location in a locked file cabinet. The recorded interviews lasted between 25 and 60 minutes. Upon the completion of each interview, I downloaded the audio interview to a password-protected file on my computer. A locked file cabinet will keep the recorded files secure. I used pseudonyms for each participant (T1-T4 and B1-B9). I served as the sole interviewer in this study. If participants had questions, they directed them to me via email communication. Because of the circumstances surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic in the community, the hiring managers were unable to participate in interviews in person. I was able to obtain responses to all interview questions from nine hiring managers via postal mail. This limited my ability to hear the voice of the hiring managers. Hiring managers added comments to their responses to the interview questions. I labeled and coded responses through specific themes. The themes that emerged from the hiring managers' responses aligned with the special education teachers' responses of soft skills, time awareness, job skills, and job coaches.

It was necessary to address any bias for this qualitative research study. Avoiding bias can be difficult in qualitative research. Stake (2010) challenged qualitative researchers to acknowledge their bias but remain open to the voices of those interviewed. Qualitative research involves listening to the voices of the participants to problem solve using the deep rich language of another (Lodico et al., 2010). I encouraged participants to be free to share their ideas, experiences, and concerns. I assured participants' anonymity

by using pseudonyms, and participants were given the opportunity to review transcription of interviews to verify accuracy. All participants reviewed and approved their transcriptions.

### **Data Analysis and Results**

A qualitative data analysis approach established themes to answer the following questions: RQ1: How do hiring managers incorporate job training in the workplace for individuals with ID? RQ 2: How do hiring managers incorporate time management training in the workplace for individuals with ID? RQ 3: How do special education teachers incorporate time management training in the workplace for individuals with ID post-secondary transition plans in the IEP? RQ 4: How do special education teachers incorporate job training in the workplace for individuals with ID post-secondary transition plans in the IEP? The larger problem studied answered the research questions.

Qualitative data from semi structured interviews need analyzing to reveal common themes, investigate behavior, and explore specific events to gain information on a chosen topic (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I analyzed and coded data from the special education teacher interviews using NVivo. I applied coding to sort the data sets into themes, clusters, or categories (Stake, 2010). Codes inform researchers of general categories that aid in organizing the data further into commonalities (Lodico et al., 2010). The emergent themes from the data were time awareness, job skills, job coaches, and soft skills. Once themes emerged, I reviewed direct quotes that supported the identified themes as aligned with the human capital theory; that employees have inherent value and education remains a means to improve the human condition (Becker, 1964; Spring,

2012). Additionally, I reviewed the frequency of the themes in relationship to human capital theory. I organized the data multiple times, examining it in relation to the research questions, by frequency of responses, and finally by participant until solid patterns emerged. The data analysis developed into common themes from hiring managers and special education teachers. The common themes that erupted from the interviews of this qualitative project study were time awareness, soft skills, job coaches, and job skills (Tables 2 & 3).

### **Major Theme 1: Time Awareness**

Time awareness was among the highest ranked comments from the special education teachers and hiring managers. Special education teachers developed goals for time management such as time awareness, completion of a task, arriving on time, and doing the next task in the post-secondary transition plans. The special education teachers were addressing the training that hiring managers were seeking in the study during their individual interviews; therefore, hiring managers were experiencing successful employment for individuals with ID. T1 displayed set schedules for each student, while T2 stated the students had access to a time clock to clock in for the day and clock out to teach time awareness whether in the school setting or in the community. It was important to T2 that the room looked like an office and less like a classroom; hence, the students arrived thinking they were an employee. The questions posed to the special education teachers and the hiring managers reflected a combined effort of teaching the goals that the hiring managers were seeking in job ready employees.

The hiring managers' desired employees who arrived on time and understood the need to complete a task which was the goal of the special education teachers in the post-secondary transition plans. Hiring managers expected new hires to enter the job arriving on time, staying on task, and demonstrate self-initiative. The hiring managers desired employees who arrived on time and understood the need to complete a task which was the goal of the special education teachers in the post-secondary transition plans. From review of the data, it is clear both special education teachers and hiring managers were striving to reach the same goal: an individual who had a strong sense of the time awareness and was motivated was successful.

Human capital theory research rests on the premise that individuals should be job ready when they exit their high school experience (Becker, 1975; Spring, 2012). Human capital theory researchers maintain that individuals should be job ready when they exit their high school experience including time awareness (Becker, 1975; Spring, 2012). Human capital theory touts the necessity of a business to train an employee for the job being hired (Spring, 2012). The questions posed to the special education teachers and the hiring managers reflected a combined effort of teaching time management goals that the hiring managers were seeking in job ready employees.

### **Major Theme 2: Soft Skills**

Soft skills are necessary for students as they enter community employment. Soft skills are a person's ability to be a team member, to be able to problem solve, make decisions, and communicate verbally and nonverbally with other employees (Dixon et al., 2010). Repeated practice, reflection, and feedback from the teacher, hiring manager, or

job coaches results in the acquisition of soft skills for an employee with ID (Dixon et al., 2010).

A positive attitude and a willingness to learn are lifelong skills necessary for employees with ID seeking employment (Agran et al., 2016). A soft skills training program entitled *UPGRADE Your Performance* is a tool to measure a student's ability to learn what the hiring managers are seeking (Clark et al., 2018). While none of the interviewees applied this program, it may connect the students' post-secondary transition goals with the hiring managers' need for prepared employees in the future (Clark et al., 2018).

Special education teachers focused on soft skills, whereas hiring managers focused on specific details of the job for in-house training. A study conducted by Cannella-Malone and Schaefer (2015) indicated that of the 62 schools studied, only 13% were heavily involved in school-based interventions for employment involving a transition-aged student with ID. T2 stated they are in a unique situation in providing 16 community-based sites that offer apprenticeships. T1 emphasized soft skills training and transferability of skills while in the high school setting or in volunteer opportunities in the community at a few sites as essential to the student's employability. In T1's class, students acquire recycling skills; upon visiting a local university, the individuals with ID assisted in the university's recycling efforts.

Additionally, while working with the university students, the individuals with ID were able to practice their soft skills training in a real-world venue. T1 stressed the repetitive nature of the task is helpful in skills acquisition. To this end, it was evident that



the special education teachers were striving for a broad approach to soft skills training based on the individual's strength. However, the respondents noted there is limited time to master the soft skills because of time and lack of support. T3 cited she was in a different area of instruction because her students were not yet finished with their core curriculum. T3 offered only one opportunity for job shadowing and no soft skills training.

Interviewed hiring managers mentioned soft skills as a needed skill such as individuals should arrive with a willingness to learn (66.6%). Additionally, the hiring managers also mentioned that customer service was an asset for employees (55.5%), and finally hiring managers spoke of an employee having the ability to go to the next task and be a self-starter (22.2%). One hiring managers of a restaurant mentioned that if the employee arrived on time (time awareness) he would teach all the soft skills needed (B3, interview April 2020). The special education teachers in this study were introducing the idea of soft skills and attempting to practice in the field while the hiring managers were additionally willing to train in this area once hired.

Human capital theory research states that employees must be present in the work to be accountable and be valued while working by their employer. Demonstrating soft skills on the job may be witness to the hiring manager of an employee's value. In her book, *Being Heumann*, Heumann (2020) stated, "We need to accept our humanity and design a world around it: use universal design, support personal assistance, and change how we hire" (Heumann, 2020, p. 208). Perhaps Heumann understood what the interviewees were stating; communities must collaborate and design a process that teaches job skills so managers can hire job-ready employees in rural central Ohio.

### **Major Theme 3: Job Coaches**

The collective work of Cheong and Yahya (2013) involved a study of individuals with ID and employment. In Cheong and Yahya's study, job coaches helped create a collaborative system of support including parents and employers that leads to successful employment for individuals with ID. I asked the special education teachers and hiring managers regarding what assistance, help, or support benefitted the transition from high school to work. Seventy-five percent of the special education teachers interviewed solicited job coach support, while 77.7% of hiring managers requested job coach support for their hired employees with ID (T1, T2, T4, B1, B2, B4, B5, B7, B8, B9, Personal interviews, March-April 2020). The special education teachers stated that students needed repeated assistance with job skills to mastery.

T1 supported the necessity of job coaches for individuals with ID in rural central Ohio: "Another area of support might be job coaches; people who could be there, who walks them through the job skills every single time they report to work. A mentor of sorts" (T1, Personal interview, March 2020). T2 stated, "What I am trying to say and what I'm advocating for is excellent support" (T2, Personal Interview, March 2020).

T4 pointed to job coaches being a necessary commodity to successful employment of individuals with ID:

If we could have job coaches either hired through the school or hired through DD who would come stick with a student. I know that's asking for the moon, but job coaches who could shadow the students. Very hands on as we begin and fade, as they don't need that help anymore. (T4, Personal interview, March 2020; Table 2)

Supported employment (job coaches) was the recommendation from the work of Dowler and Walls (2014). Dowler and Walls maintained that job supports (coaches) could be an effective strategy to aide in securing employment for people with disabilities. Supported employment was a research-based practice that permitted individuals with ID to work, receive a paycheck, and receive the support necessary for them to be successful in a community job setting (Ellenkamp et al., 2015). Almost 77% of the hiring managers responded job coach support was necessary in assisting with the transition from high school to work (B1, B2, B4, B5, B7, B8, B9, Personal interviews March-April 2020; Table 3). One hiring manager responded that job coaches are necessary until the student/employee reaches job mastery.

Further supporting the need for job coaches, participants B1 and B2, both hiring managers, indicated more training support is needed on the job. Additionally, another hiring manager stated, “Job coaches are needed until they master the job perhaps 1 year of coaching” (B3, Personal interview, April 2020). A final hiring manager stated, “They need support until they can do the job with little to no supervision” (B8, Personal interview, April 2020). The premise of human capital theory rest on training of employees to be the best employee they can become while working (Becker, 1964; Spring, 2020). The interviewing of special education teachers and hiring managers demonstrated the importance of training and the application of job coaches in this important role of training as indicated in human capital theory.

#### **Major Theme 4: Job Skills**

Job skills training permits an individual with ID employment post high school. (Björnsdóttir et al., 2015; Siperstein et al., 2014; Wehman et al., 2014). This qualitative research study revealed that special education teachers were addressing the idea of job skills in the post–secondary transition plans while the individual with ID was in high school. On multiple occasions during the interview sessions, all of the special education teachers mentioned job skills as a necessary goal in the post-secondary transition plan. The special education teachers' interviews revealed their focus on training in the areas of apprenticeship opportunities, the transferability of skills, and the ability to complete a job.

In contrast to the special education teachers, the hiring managers focused on business-related skills such as customer service skills, following multi-step directions, stocking shelves, operating a cash register, and handling money. Job skills training was the primary focus of one hiring managers who informed me that if the schools can assist the individual with ID with soft skills mastery, she could teach all of the other skills. She had a sense of who the individuals with ID were and what they needed and was able to explain the cash register and stocking of shelves (B9, personal interview, April 2020). The hiring managers expected specific training of the individuals with ID once hired. Each hiring manager listed training skills pertinent to their specific business (i.e., cash register, stocking shelves, and making change).

In conclusion, I noted that the special education teachers had a broader stroke in the creation of the job skills training. Human capital theorists support that education

combined with training may lead to successful employment of the individual with ID after graduation (Becker, 1964). This qualitative interview study supported the view that a collaborative effort between the special education teachers and hiring managers was producing successful employment for individuals with ID in rural central Ohio.

**Table 2***Special Education Teacher Data*

Interview question	Results	Teacher referenced responses to themes	Themes
What job skill goals do you incorporate into post-secondary transition plans?	1. Exploration of vocational skills	16	Soft Skills
	2. Self-awareness of the student's skill set	11	Time Awareness
	3. Working with others	4	Job Skills
What job skills training is incorporated into a student's post-secondary transition plan?	1. Apprenticeships Opportunities	12	Soft Skills
	2. Transferability of skills	9	Job Skills
	3. Time management to complete a job	5	Job Skills
What time management goals do you incorporate into a student's post-secondary plan?	1. Sense of time and time awareness.	9	Time Awareness
	2. Completion of a task (job or homework).	10	Time Awareness
	3. Comprehending what to do next.	10	Job Skills
	4. Arrive to job site on time	9	Soft Skills
What time management training do you incorporate into a student's post-secondary transition plan?	1. Apprenticeship Opportunities in Community.	8	Job Skills
	2. Transferability of skills.	9	Soft Skills
	3. Time management to complete a job.	11	Time Awareness
What information or support would assist you in the transition from school to the workplace?	1. Developmental Disabilities (DD) board involvement earlier.	9	Administrative Support (Job coaches)
	2. Job coaches on job site for longer timeframe.	15	Soft Skills
	3. More job opportunities in community.	9	Soft Skills

**Table 3***Hiring Manager Data*

Hiring Managers	Results	Which businesses referenced the results	Themes
What job skills do you expect an entry-level employee with ID to have as an entry-level employee?	Willing to learn 66.6%	B3, B4, B6, B7, B8, B9	Soft Skills
	Be on time 22.2%	B1, B2, B9	Time Management
	Count money 11.1%	B5, B9	Job Skills
What job skills are taught once an employee with ID is hired?	Customer Service 55.5%	B1, B2, B4, B5, B9	Soft Skills
	Multi-step directions 44.4%	B6, B7, B8	Job Skills
	Stocking of shelves and money handling 11.1%	B3	Job Skills
What time management skills do you expect an entry-level individual with ID to possess as an entry-level employee?	Arrive on time 66.6%	B1, B2, B3, B4, B7,	Time Awareness
	Stay on task 22.2%	B6, B8	Time Awareness
	Learn how to go to the next task 22.2%	B9, B5	Soft Skills
What time management skills are taught once an employee with ID is hired?	Multi-step directions 66.6%	B1, B2, B3, B4, B6	Time Awareness
	Self-starter training 22.2%	B5, B9	Time Awareness
	Learn how to go to next task 22.2%	B7, B8	Job Skills
What would assist you as the employer in the transition from school to the workplace for an individual with ID?	Job coaches on site longer 77.7%	B1, B2, B4, B5, B7, B8, B9	Time Awareness
	Employees have a willingness to accept change. 11.1%	B3	Administrative Soft Skills
	Sense of urgency in the employee. 11.1%	B6	Soft Skills

### **Discrepant Cases**

Yin (2016) defined discrepant cases as opposing thoughts. Yin outlined the premise to embrace opposing thoughts and incorporate them as new opportunities for consideration in study findings. I acknowledged that differing viewpoints could emerge from the study and acknowledged that this information must still be gathered and analyzed. To ignore the discrepant cases would be an integrity issue on the part of a researcher and therefore examining discrepant cases would add stronger analysis to the research (Morrow, 2005; Waite, 2011). T3 shared her experiences as a teacher who created post secondary transition plans with 14 through 18-year-old students; she became frustrated with the school system's requirements to meet all academic mandates prior to job shadowing. T1's responses were appropriate to her role as the core academic teacher, but her responses were out of alignment with her peer's responses who taught 18 to 21-year-old students who had already met their academic requirements.

T3 further explained her role in the student's academic career for her students age 14-18. The following statement further clarifies her disconnect to her peers and makes her responses fall out of alignment of the responses of her peers in this study.

At the high school, we don't have a ton of flexibility. So, we have a curriculum that is determined by the state of Ohio, students must earn credits that they must complete to receive their diploma. They have to focus on earning points toward the end of course exam. Graduation is a huge emphasis obviously, but also at our school because our graduation rate has been an area of weakness. And so, to take



class time, for example, to focus on a job training skill, unless it's quite directly related to the curriculum, is difficult. (T3, Personal Interview, March, 2020)

T3's cited data were limited and not pertinent to the study. T3's professional role was to prepare the individuals with ID for passage of end-of-course exams and not for community employment. The role of T3 involved limited job shadowing, and she expressed an interest in more job goals for her students but expressed her concern with limited time and job coaching support.

## Section 3: The Project

### **Introduction**

The outcome of the study was the creation of a professional development training directly related to the data indicating that special education teachers and hiring managers who work together could increase the likelihood of higher rates of employment for individuals with ID in rural central Ohio. The special education teachers were creating postsecondary transition plans for the student with ID, while the hiring managers were seeking employees who have time awareness, soft skills, and job skills in rural central Ohio. I developed a 3-day professional development training to enhance collaborative work between special education teachers and hiring managers, supporting connections for successful employment for individuals with ID. I was led to create a professional development training because during the interview process, there was much success for students with ID and employment because of the postsecondary transition plans and the hiring managers who worked with the students. If employment rates were to improve it was the logical next step to discuss the employment success with one another and with others in the community who might be interested in this employment success. The professional development training to utilize the data from the study was ideal because it brought together the participating populations and other interested hiring managers in the community to learn from those who were successful.

### **Rationale**

During the interviews, the special education teachers and hiring managers shared in-depth information about the goals and job skills development of postsecondary

transition plans as well as employee expectations. The information included specifics necessary to understand their stories as participants focused on employment for individuals with ID in rural central Ohio. A 3-day professional development training was the most efficient means of sharing the research data, where all parties would be free to attend to the final data and work collaboratively with one another to improve the employment statistics for individuals with ID in rural central Ohio.

Project considerations included a position paper to share the data results; however, a position paper would not target the rural central Ohio population and would limit collaboration between local participants. Professional development training is common in education and in business, so this project type was selected. The goal of the professional development training project was to create an opportunity to share the study data and support collaborative interaction between community participants. Legislation also mandates professional development training for teachers to improve student achievement, and professional development training in business is often linked to the organization's strategic plan for improving the value of the business (DOE, n.d.; Handshaw, 2014).

### **Review of the Literature**

The literature review consisted of journal readings, books, indexed publications, and observing videos of other professional development training. The bulk of the literature review came from journals using Google Scholar, the Walden University Library. Databases accessed included EBSCO, ProQuest Central, Thoreau, ERIC, and Sage. Terms used to search the topic included *professional development training*, *teacher*

*training, business training, business professional training, community change, employment change, professional development and special education teachers, post-secondary professional development, employment training and disabilities, professional development and post-secondary transition plans, professional development, special education teachers professional development, teachers as adult learners, adult learning, adult professional development, and effective professional development that yields results.*

### **Professional Development**

Local teachers feel pressure to meet new federal mandates such as Every Student Succeeds Act. With the increased pressure to address federal mandates, many special educators are concerned their professional development remains ineffective (Flower et al., 2015; Leko et al., 2015; Rock et al., 2016; U.S. Department of Education, 2015). Teachers, as adult learners, need to know they can inform their own practice and self-regulate their professional development on an individual basis (Masuada et.al, 2013; Sylvester, 2014). According to research, effective professional development is content-focused, involves active learning and collaboration, provides coaching and support, offers reflection and feedback, and is sustainable (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 2011; O’Conner et al., 2016; Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 2017). Kragler et al. (2014) demonstrated that changes in practice are difficult for adults. Fundamental changes such as employment of individuals with ID take time for teachers as well as hiring managers. Attendees to this project study’s professional development must be given time to process, engage with others, and be permitted reflection on new material and ideas. Additionally,

effective professional development encourages participants to participate collaboratively in concrete tasks (Irish, 2019; Nelson & Hammerman, 1996). Appropriate professional development may impact new teaching strategies and may improve teacher's self-efficacy centered on individual teaching practices (Byrd & Alexander, 2020; Irish, 2019; Pokhrel & Behera, 2016). Further, professional development should be ongoing, varied in its approach, yet specialized in the individual needs of the teacher and hiring manager (Darling-Hammond, 2009; Francois, 2020; Kragler, 2014; Pokhrel & Behera, 2016). The Self-Sustained Employability Professional Development (SSEPD) will be a 3-day training program developed to implement each of the identified themes (i.e., time awareness, soft skills, job coaches, and job skills) gathered from interviews during the study which included hiring managers, special education teachers, and administrators from the local developmental disability agency. The SSEPD will provide opportunities for the participants to reflect on the data from the study through the lens of human capital theory.

It is vital that attendees have a voice in expressing ideas and suggestions for their learning while attending SSEPD; it will be driven by teacher and hiring manager input as well as collaboration and trust with time worked in for reflection and team building in sharing with one another throughout the 3-day event (Ajani, 2018; Ajani et al., 2018; Irish, 2019; Leko et al., 2015; Ochirovna & Moiseyevna, 2016; Quaglia & Lande, 2016). Professional development may be most effective when it is developed with the attendees in mind. Teachers desire to take an active part in what they attend and may attend more

willingly if given the option for learning outcomes (Dasoo & Muller, 2020; Masuda et al., 2013; O’Conner et al., 2016; Svendsen, 2020; Quaglia & Lande, 2016).

Effective professional development for adult learners assumes that adult learners are self-motivated. Irish (2019) added that any professional development for adult learners must contain the following seven key components:

1. Leverage technology to keep engagement ongoing.
2. Use visuals wisely. When visuals are used as a supplement to the professional development there may be an 89% advantage to the learning outcomes.
3. Add audio. Audio may add to the learning experience and assist in the learning process of complex ideas or tasks.
4. Use presenters in real time. This may add to the relatability of the material.
5. Get the content right. Adult learners learn from experiences and prefer examples to abstract thought.
6. Be consistent. Presenting in a clear, concise manner assists the adult learner in being able to grasp new concepts.
7. Add supplementary materials. Supplementary materials permits the adult learner to not only be an auditory learner be a visual learner and this assists in retention of new material.

Adult learners must see the value of the professional development in which they are involved. Attendees should be a part of being decision makers in the professional development and feel a sense of community as they process new information (Martin, 2019; Svendsen, 2020). The intent for the SSEPD is to allow participants to challenge

one another and spend time with experts in the field of hiring individuals with ID.

Participants will learn how to mentor new hiring managers and work with individuals with ID to achieve community employment. When professional development is designed with the adult learner in mind, it may have social change implications in the classroom and the overall community (Irish, 2019; Martin, 2019). The 3-day professional development seminar may lead to improved employment opportunities for individual with ID in rural central Ohio.

### **Project Description**

The study results influenced the project design and included the use of human capital theory as a method for the participants to view the results. The SSEPD will be a 3-day training session. Each day will last 6 hours with a working lunch.

For learning and sharing to begin, all participants will be divided into teams of five to seven per each round table to permit casual comfortable conversation. The SSEPD will commence in a reserved conference room of a local conference center, centrally located for ease of access. The conference center contains a room conducive to professional development training and is equipped with a projector, wireless high-speed Internet, and a sound system. Participants will receive a folder that contains printed materials of the presentation with areas to take notes and extra paper and writing instruments. To enhance the learning experience, there will be planned stopping points for questions and clarification. Time to process the material throughout the day will permit each participant to work collaboratively with team members and review

strategically chosen videos to enhance the participants' learning of successful hiring strategies for individual with ID.

There are three goals for the SSEPD. Goal 1 will be to develop a deeper understanding of and review of local data from the project study, human capital theory and each attendee's responsibility in the hiring process for individuals with ID. Goal 2 will focus on the examination of collaborative practices, leading to group discussion concerning the successful hiring of individuals with ID. Goal 3 will focus on the strategic plans for each business to improve the hiring of individuals with ID.

Day 1 of the SSEPD will encompass a large percentage of the day being centered on the participants learning about my qualitative project study in rural central Ohio, studying the data acquired during the semi structured interview process, and learning the importance of human capital theory as it relates to the project study in rural central Ohio.

Day 2 of the SSEPD will encompass feedback obtained during the qualitative project study's interviews with special education teachers and hiring managers. Small group work will concentrate on quotes from interview participants and their relevance to the study. Day 2 will open with an overview of the post-secondary transition plan document to assist new participants or those who might have lost focus of what drives employment for individuals with ID. Day 2 training will encompass human capital theory as it relates to employment. Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) stated that collaboration is necessary in effective professional development.

Day 2 of the SSEPD will include planned collaboration to encourage dialogue between participants centered on training in the areas of time management and job skills.



Special education teachers will be intermingled with hiring managers and new hiring managers with specific questions for each small group. Groups will share their findings in a main session. Day 2 of the SSEPD will include the voices of other hiring executives around the country who have successfully employed individual with ID. Videos infused into the presentation will serve as the topic discussion themes for each small group.

The goal of the final day of the SSEPD will be to allow time for participants to develop a strategic plan to improve the hiring of both individuals either with intellectual disabilities in the development of postsecondary transition plans and hiring managers. Successful professional development will permit the participants to engage in developing strategic plan strategies. Effective professional development will allow the participants to problem solve, disseminate shared information, and permit participants to share their experiences to dissect the study's problem (Cochran-Smith et al., 2015). The local superintendent of the developmental disabilities agency will provide additional insight into employment of individuals with ID in rural central Ohio. After the opening remarks from the developmental disabilities superintendent, small groups will be formed to discuss individual strategic development strategies. At the completion of Day 3, each participant will have produced a beginning strategic plan that promotes their creation of more productive post-secondary transition plans or improved hiring of individuals with ID in rural central Ohio.

### **Project Evaluation Plan**

Participants will be asked to complete an evaluation each day through an anonymous Google Doc in a Likert scale format provided in the participant packet (see

Appendix A. All participants will complete the evaluation form prior to the next day's activities. Since responses will be anonymous, it may improve the likelihood that participants will respond in an honest manner to the survey. Formative assessment used to assess a lesson to inform instruction for the next day's learning is common in educational settings (McAfee & Leong, 2007). Evaluation forms completed at the end of each training day will provide formative assessment data for the presenter for the following day's activities.

Day 1 evaluations (see Appendix A) will allow the presenter to grasp the participants' knowledge of the data shared as well as human capital theory and its overall effect on the community. The evaluation for Day 2 (see Appendix A) will permit me to measure the extent to which participants felt they are able to apply the research and human capital theory to the larger community and the problem of under-employment of individuals with ID as well as their own role in the issue. The Day 3 evaluation plan (see Appendix A) will be each team's submitted beginning strategic plan. The participants in SSEPD will but is not limited to include (a) all participants in the original study, (b) any new interested special education teachers and hiring managers in the rural central Ohio community, as well as (c) administrative representation from the developmental disabilities agency who assisted in the employment of individuals with ID in rural central Ohio. Four special education teachers, the nine hiring managers who responded, the remaining 15 who did not respond to the initial request for interviews, as well as all other qualifying businesses, and developmental disabilities administration for a total of up to 45 participants will attend the SSEPD. The feedback from the SSEPD may provide

valuable information for future training and follow up training in the community that involved regarding the hiring of individuals with ID.

### **Project Implications**

For the entirety of the project study, I was mindful of the project's implications and the wider reaching influence to assist with employment of individuals with ID in rural central Ohio. Sharing the data obtained and offering a professional development training for the participants and interested parties, I was able to keep the problem of under employment of an at-risk population alive and active in the community. The SSEPD will be specific to the needs of the special education teachers, hiring managers, and other participants to learn and grow from the professional development to improve the job skills training and time management awareness for individuals with ID. The SSEPD may be timely for the participants to open further conversations in the future concerning employment of individuals with ID in rural central Ohio.

## Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

### **Project Strengths and Limitations**

The strengths and limitations will be numerous for SSEPD regarding the study of time management and job skills training for individuals with ID in rural central Ohio. The strengths of SSEPD are evidenced in the literature and in the interviews (DeGroot-ReveKamp, 2018; Francois, 2020; Hall et al., 2014; Jans et al., 2011). Special education teachers I interviewed indicated that their responsibilities include enhancing the students' job skills, improving soft skills, and developing the students' awareness of time, as attainable goals in the postsecondary transition goals of a student's IEP. Additional strengths in this study were the hiring managers indicating they sought applicants' ability to apply soft skills, stay on task, and follow multi-step directions while on a job. Research has substantiated that time management skills, soft skills like customer service and staying on task are necessary for maintaining employment (Bouck & Joshi, 2014; Cheong & Yahya 2013; Chhabra, 2017). The results of this study corroborated the findings of Christensen and Richardson (2017) and Spring (2012), who recommended the application of appropriate training, often involving a job coach, as a necessary component to the success of maintaining employment for the individual with ID.

The limitations of the SSEPD may be the limited number of responses for interviews. Therefore, there may be a limited number of active participants who are able to participate in SSEPD. Nine of the 24 viable businesses that fit the study's criteria (37.5%) responded to the request for an interview. Research stated that in a qualitative interview study, these data fit within the acceptable criteria of three to no more than 18

participants in a sample size or until saturation of data occurs (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2014; Guest et al., 2006; Smith et al., 2009). Therefore, the number of businesses that responded was sufficient for the purpose of this study. An additional limitation may be the limited number of special education teachers who teach individuals with ID within the city school system. I was able to interview all four special education teachers who met the criteria. However, a larger population might have provided more data to support this study. Nevertheless, it was not the quantity but the quality of the sample size and follow up questions that supported the reliability and validity of the data. A final limitation in this study, and therefore in the SSEPD, may have been the COVID-19 pandemic, which caused the closure of the schools and nonessential businesses in the city during the study in late February 2020, thus limiting my access to the participants (Coronavirus.ohio.gov).

### **Recommendations for Alternative Approaches**

During the interviews, both groups of constituents stated that job coaching would add to the successful hiring of people with ID in the workplace (77.7% of hiring managers, and 75% of special education teachers). Additional training and support was also noted in the literature (Christensen & 2017; Duvdevany et al., 2016; Molfenter et al., 2017; O'Connor et al., 2016). Project SEARCH demonstrated that individuals with ID who received significant job training supports and internships were successfully employed (Christensen & Richardson, 2017). Let's Get To Work Wisconsin implemented a targeted approach to employment by directly involving hiring managers in the training process while students were still in high school (Molfenter et al., 2017). Both groups

interviewed requested the addition of job coaches and the lengthening of job coach availability while the individual with ID was learning the job skills. The extended presence of a job coach reduced individuals' behaviors that lead to the individual quitting or being terminated (Heyman et al., 2016).

An additional approach might be to hire individuals with ID while they remained under the direction of the postsecondary transition goal in the IEP. An individual with ID hired while in school could take advantage of the OOD services that include job exploration, work-based experiences, and job readiness training (OOD, 2017). None of the teachers interviewed in this study utilized the OOD training. Human capital theory principles were grounded in employers seeing employees as valuable; the appropriate training of the employees adds value to the company that hired the individual (Spring, 2012). The application of training for individuals (including individuals with ID) for them to be economic contributors to their community is central to the human capital theory (Becker, 1964; Spring, 2012).

### **Scholarship, Project Development and Evaluation, and Leadership and Change**

Employment among individuals with ID continues to be a major issue in the United States as compared to employment of their nondisabled peers (Butterworth et al., 2015; DOE, n.d.; Getzel, 2014; Nota et al., 2014). Hiring managers seek individuals who arrive on time, work well with others, and perform the job they are assigned (Cavendish et al., 2016; Mazzotti et al., 2013). In addition, supported employment, postsecondary employment goals involving time management and job skills training are the primary

reasons students with disabilities become employed after high school (Björnsdóttir et al., 2015; Siperstein et al., 2014; Wehman et al., 2014).

Underemployment of individuals with ID continues to be a national problem (Cavendish et al., 2016; Shogren & Plotner, 2012). Locally, the data were even lower surrounding the under employment for individuals with ID compared to their nondisabled peers, according to an employment specialist at the developmental disabilities agency. The project study stemmed from research focused on hiring managers and special education teachers incorporating time management and job training skills in the workplace and in post-secondary transition plans (Agran et al., 2016; Clark et al., 2018; DHHS, 2001; DOE, n.d.; EFI, 2012; IDEA, 1997; Katz et al., 2012; Shogren & Plotner, 2012; U.S. Federal Government, 1973).

Research, and a passion for fairness for individuals with ID, led me to further investigate why, despite existing legislation and provision of a postsecondary transition plan, individuals with ID in rural central Ohio were hired according to an employment specialist with the local developmental disabilities agency, at a rate of 23.1%, lower than the national average, and continued to be hired at a significantly lower rate than their nondisabled peers. The topic interest gave me the initiative to further the study employment and individuals with ID in rural Central Ohio in this doctoral study project.

I commenced the process of interviewing hiring managers and special education teachers with trepidation. I processed the fact that no one might chose to respond to an interview request focusing on lack of employment. I was concerned that while hiring managers might want to share their successes and failures, teachers might be reluctant to

share their postsecondary journey of students with ID, especially if the individuals remain unemployed.

After the COVID-19 pandemic shut down of nonessential businesses and schools in the state of Ohio, it became necessary for me to drive to the selected businesses and deliver the informed consent letters (March 27, April 3, and April 8, 2020). As of April 10, all completed, transcribed, and analyzed interviews completed the data portion of the qualitative project study. The proposal acceptance stage of the doctoral process kept me engaged for 3 years.

I feared longer progression of interviews and data acquisition during the COVID-19 pandemic might continue to limit access to potential participants. I experienced a new level of awareness of professionalism involving the integrity of the data analysis process. Previously, I was not aware of the level of vulnerability on the part of the interviewee in the process. I felt a sense of responsibility to protect those interviewed as well as tell their story in this qualitative project study. The development of the project study was not unlike the process of the proposal.

The project study developed through revisions of initial thoughts and alignment to the research questions and the conceptual framework of the overall study. Through this study involving interviews of successful hiring managers and special education teachers, I was interested in sharing the voices of interviewed participants with others who have not attempted to hire the population with ID. The project study of a professional development training (SSEPD) will center on the collaboration of special education teachers, hiring managers, uninformed hiring managers, and administrators from the



developmental disabilities agency; the study results remain vital for the betterment of the community and the Walden University expectation of positive social change.

### **Reflection on Importance of the Work**

In 2017, 23.1% of individuals with ID were employed in rural central Ohio, significantly lower employment rates than their typical peers of 72% (Employment First, n.d.; Getzel, 2014; Katz et al., 2012; Lysaght et al., 2012). The lower employment rates of individuals with ID in rural central Ohio justified a qualitative study to allow me to reflect on the success of and learn from the hiring managers and special education teachers. My goal was to promote strong initiatives for future successes as I developed an SSEPD series in rural central Ohio.

Postsecondary transition plans align with the premise of human capital theory that an individual's training may lead to employment based on the interests and skills (Becker, 1975). Nota et al. (2014) suggested paid work experience and internships might best prepare individuals with ID for community employment. To improve the hiring percentages of individuals with ID within the community of rural central Ohio may add to the financial health of the individuals as well as the community. Research has shown that being involved in community employment permits an individual with ID to be a part of the active community, meet social norms of employment, and have financial choices and independence (Heyman et al., 2016; Nota et al., 2014).

It benefits the community when businesses provide employment opportunities that add value and purpose to the life of individuals with ID (Bouck & Joshi, 2014; Burge et al., 2007; Butterworth et al., 2015; Grossman, 1978; Henry et al., 2014; McDaniels,

2016; Riesen et al., 2015). The most significant result from the interviews with rural central Ohio hiring managers and special education teachers was the need for job coaches while in a work experience. Research supports the need for paid internships while learning the job for individuals with ID (Heyman et al., 2016; Nota et al., 2014). The hiring managers and special education teachers believed that with the support of a job coach on the employment site, the individual would experience more success (see Tables 2 and 3). The special education teachers referenced job coaches nine times in the interviews, while 77.7% of the hiring managers reported that job coaches provide relevant support for a longer period.

### **Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research**

The research findings shared in the professional development training may give new hiring managers a clear sense of how to work with individuals with ID. Another implication for SSEPD may be an awareness for new hiring managers that individuals with ID have a desire to be competent, stable, effective employees (Burke et al., 2013; Duvdevany et al., 2016; Siperstein et al., 2014). Business owners' awareness of employability of individuals with ID in rural central Ohio may increase employment percentages for this at-risk group.

Future researchers should examine whether transition services should begin at an earlier age for individuals with ID. Beginning services earlier may permit the individual to become aware of their strengths to apply to employment and perhaps apply learned skills in a job setting. Future researchers should consider exploring the development of an appropriate curriculum for teaching soft skills to individuals with ID. The study

participants indicated that soft skills were a necessary skill set for successful employment, yet none interviewed had curricula to assist with this (Tables 2 and 3). Research has shown that soft skills are a necessary attribute to successful employment yet there are few studies showing how to teach soft skills (Casner-Lotto & Barrington, 2006; Ju et al., 2014). Perhaps future researchers might include specific soft skills training in the post-secondary transition plans for individuals with ID.

### **Conclusion**

Local research in rural central Ohio supported the under employment of individuals with ID (Bouck & Joshi, 2014; Employment First, n.d.; Employment specialist, DD, 2019; Getzel, 2014; Katz et al., 2012; Lysaght et al., 2012; McDaniels, 2016; Riesen et al., 2015). Special education teachers and hiring managers through qualitative interviews voiced soft skills acquisition, job skills training, and time awareness as the top needs in the post-secondary transition plan to help students with ID obtain community employment. Additionally, 75 percent of special education teachers and 77.7 percent hiring managers interviewed requested job coaches, expressing the need for job coaches to be on site longer to support the successful employment (Table 2 and 3). In rural central Ohio in 2016, 160 graduated individuals with ID expressed an interest in employment, however, only 37 were employed (Employment specialist, DD, 2017). For many individuals, the only means of support was in a sheltered workshop. Special education teachers and hiring managers through qualitative interviews voiced soft skills acquisition, job skills training, and time awareness as the top needs in the post-secondary transition plan to help students with ID obtain community employment.

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## Appendix A: The Project



### Day 1: Agenda

- **9:30** Registration and continental breakfast
- **10:00** Introductions
- **10:20** Purpose of SSEPD & Overview of local 2020 study
- **11:00** Local employment data shared
- **11:30** Goals for 3 days of SSEPD
- **11:45** Lunch: In table groups discuss the questions concerning employment and an individual with ID
- **12:45** Large group recap to discuss lunch topics
- **1:15** Employment skills needed and taught: Win Win
- **2:00** Break
- **2:15** How are you teaching or utilizing skills in workplace (table discussion)
- **3:00** Report out of small groups
- **3:30** Review goals and complete evaluation for Day 1

Notes: Welcome to everyone. Instruct where self-care places exist in facility. Discuss the timeline for the days to follow. Give short intro of you.

### Introductions:

- Please take a moment to meet those at your tables that might be new to you.
- What agency or school do you represent?
- What are your goals for the next three days?
- What questions do you have right now?

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Note: Allow 2-3 minutes for this activity.

### How Did SSEPD Come to Be?

- It was discovered that rural central Ohio employment numbers for individuals with intellectual disabilities (ID) were lower than the national employment numbers as compared to non-disabled peers

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Note: 2016 the employment rates for individuals with ID in rural central Ohio was 23.1% as compared to nondisabled individuals at 72% (Employment First, n.d.; Getzel, 2014; Katz et al., 2012; Lysaght et al., 2012). Research supports employment with no discrimination based on a disability and educational laws support post secondary transition plans.

### Why Self-Sustained Employment Professional Development

- The purpose of this Self-Sustained Employment Professional Development (SSEPD) is to impart knowledge and materials to assist in the future hiring of individuals with ID into businesses as a direct correlation to the individual's post-secondary transition plans.
- SSEPD is meant to create a self-sustaining training for collaboration between the special education teachers and the local hiring managers.

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### Why Self-Sustained Employment Professional Development

- The purpose of this SSEPD is to share with stakeholders the collaborative benefits when special education teachers are able to align post-secondary goals of the IEP with the needs of local businesses to improve hiring of individuals with ID
- **Goal 1:** Gain a deeper understanding of the issues surrounding unemployment for individuals with ID
- **Goal 2:** Develop an increased awareness of ways to improve hiring for individuals with ID.

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Note: Goal 1: Day 1  
Goal 2: Day 2

## Why Self-Sustained Employment Professional Development

- **Goal 3:** Examine how the collaboration of the post-secondary transition document together with the hiring manager's needs increases the likelihood of employment.
- **Goal 4:** Develop a strategic plan working collaboratively together with local special educators and hiring managers to employ individuals with ID.

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Note: Goal 3: Day 2  
Goal 4: Day 3

## What is SSEPD: Self-Sustained Employment Professional Development

**SSEPD was developed:** To create a collaborative environment to permit sharing between rural central Ohio hiring managers and special education teachers involving the hiring of individuals with ID.

**What is the purpose of SSEPD:** To bring about awareness of the low employment of individuals with ID and to share the successes of the special education teachers and hiring managers who are being successful in order to create a collaborative partnership between special education teachers and hiring managers.

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Note: SSEPD was developed out of a passion for individuals with ID. That is why we are all gathered. All individuals have a right to be a part of their community. Individuals with ID are no different. Employment leads to community involvement, financial independence.

## Local Employment Data

- A post-secondary transition plan in high school supports an individual with ID's right to be employment.
- Despite existing legislation and provision of a post-secondary transition plan, individuals with ID in rural central Ohio have a hiring rate of 23.1%, lower than the national average of 34.1%.
- This percentage is a significantly lower rate than their nondisabled peers at 74.1%

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Note: Discuss the importance of relevant data: Nationally 34.1%. Locally hiring is only 23.1%. How might we improve this data? Perhaps allow some time among tables to break out and discuss as appropriate.

**During lunch discuss the relevance of the study and its possible findings as it relates to your position (teacher/hiring manager)**



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Note: One hour lunch:

### Large Group Discussion:

- Let's take a moment to discuss each table's reactions to the work to be accomplished during your lunch time chats.

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Note: Go table to table giving each group two minutes to respond to their lunch time discussions

### Themes in Common: When Employing Individuals with ID

#### Skills NEEDED and TAUGHT:

- Time Awareness
- Soft Skills
- Job Coaches
- Job Skills
- Each of these themes were vital for the hiring managers and special education teachers.

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Note: Discuss time awareness, soft skills, job coaches, and job skills.

Time awareness: what to do when

Soft skills, working with others, arriving in a good mood ready to work

Job coaches: Adults hired to help individual with ID while on the job

Job skills: The specific skills needed to perform the job at each job site. (Stack shelves, work cash register, seat customers, empty trash etc.).

It was discovered that the SE were preparing the individuals for the jobs the HM had waiting

**Time Awareness**

**Special Education Teachers:** completion of a task, arriving on time, doing the next task.

**Hiring Managers:** Arrive on time, know the job to complete, stay on task and demonstrate self-initiative.

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Note: Give tables time to process and discuss what time awareness means in their business while SE align goals for each business in the IEP

**Soft Skills**

**Special Education Teachers:** This was a main focus in the IEP document. Ability to transfer skills of working with others, volunteering, a broad approach to soft skills

**Hiring Managers:** Willingness to learn, customer service skills, self-starter

**Needed Actions:** Communities must collaborate and design a process that teaches job skills so individuals are job ready

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Note: Table discussion: What soft skills do you teach as a SE teacher?  
What soft skills do you expect as a HM?




## Job Coaches

**Special Education Teachers:** 75% of teachers mentioned job coaches as a missing element in the employment process

**Hiring Managers:** 77.7% of the hiring managers mentioned more time for job coaches was needed

**Findings:** More and longer placement of job coaches is vital to individual successful employment

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Note: Ask for feedback on this slide. What does it tell each of you? Agree disagree and why or why not?

## Job Skills

**Special Education Teachers:** Included in the Post-secondary transition plan with apprenticeship opportunities, transferability of skills, and the ability to complete task given

**Hiring Managers:** Concentrated on customer service skills, multi-step directions, stocking shelves, cash register, and handling money

**Findings:** Teachers covered broad topics in the IEP, while hiring managers rained on specific skills for their specific business needs.

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Note: Part to whole? SE teachers  
Whole to part? HM

**Discussion Question: 10 minutes**

- Discuss with your table mates:
- 1. Overall reflection of results
- 2. How does this assist you with future planning for employment of individuals with ID?

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Note: Allow 10 minutes to reflect

**15 minute break**

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Note: Restroom facilities to the right for men and to the left for women. Snacks will be brought to each table. Remind participants exactly what time to return. Music will begin when they have two minutes left in break.

### Did we accomplish goals 1 and 2 for the day?

- **Goal 1: Gain a deeper understanding of the issues surrounding unemployment for individuals with ID**
- **Goal 2: Develop an increased awareness of ways to improve hiring for individuals with ID**
- ~~**Goal 3: Examine how the collaboration of the post-secondary transition document together with the hiring manager's needs increases the likelihood of employment.**~~
- ~~**Goal 4: In teams develop a strategic plan for your business together with special educators to hire individuals with ID**~~

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Note: Large group discussion

### Please complete the evaluation for today's session

- Please complete your survey for today's professional development (Day 1) and place in basket as you exit.
- Dismissal for the day

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Note: Arrive by 9 a.m. tomorrow

## Welcome: Schedule Day 2

- 9:00 Registration and continental breakfast
- 9:30 Opening remarks and overview for the day
- 9:45 Introduction of Employment Specialist
  - Representing local developmental disabilities agency
- 10:30 Overview of Post-Secondary Transition Plans in and IEP
  - Presented by local special education teacher
- 11:00 Break
- 11:15 Collaborative IEP work in small groups
- 12:00 Share with larger group IEP work
- 12:15 Collaborative Quotes
- 12:30 Lunch
- 1:30 Benefits of transition to employment
- 2:00 Break
- 2:15 Overview of Strategic Planning and Transitioning
- 2:45 End of the day final thoughts did we meet goal #3?
- 3:00 Complete surveys

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Note: Welcome and discuss schedule for the day.

## Opening Remarks

- **“We need to accept our humanity and design a world around it: use universal design, support personal assistance, and change how we hire” (Heumann, 2020, p. 208).**
- What does this mean to you and your businesses or your IEP document?
- Report out to the larger group

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Note: Do not forget to allow them time to reflect on this work (10-15 minutes)

### Guest Speaker

- Local job training Employment Specialist from Local Developmental Disabilities agency:
- “Local Employment and the Skills Needed to Employ Individuals!”



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Note: Short introduction of employment specialist from developmental disabilities agency. Permit 20 minutes for his story of employment of individuals with ID in the county

### Post Secondary Transition Plans: An overview


- Please welcome local special education teacher to present the IEP document and post-secondary transition plans: Section 5.
- Please refer to your packet for a complete document of the most recently updated IEP form Sept 2018 (ODE, 2018).
- Parent's perspective

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Note: Pull out all forms from packet to display for quick reference as HM might not yet know about IEPs. Each SE teacher will present the document to their respective tables ONLY section 5 Transition section.

**15 minute break: discuss with your table mates the IEP document as it relates to employment**



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Note: Set time and disseminate snacks

**Group work**

- Work together to develop a number of IEP transition goals that might assist with employment with the hiring managers at your table.

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Note: Remind tables to refer back to the importance of job coaches, time awareness, job skills, and soft skills from previous day's work. Tables will work collaboratively with SE and HM. Expectation is one goal with three objectives centered on one of the four themes previously discussed (job skills, job coaches, soft skills, or time awareness).

**Share Goals**

- Each Table will share at least one IEP goal that you generated collaboratively with the hiring managers

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Note: Use whiteboard, or overhead, or wall paper to write out goals and objectives

**Interview Quotes to note**

- “Another area of support might be job coaches; people who could be there, who walks them through the job skills every single time they report to work. A mentor of sorts.”
- “If we could have job coaches either hired through the school or hired through DD who would come stick with a student. I know that’s asking for the moon, but job coaches who could shadow the students. Very hands on as we begin and fade, as they don’t need that help anymore.”

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Note: After going over each quote permit teams to discuss in more depth.  
 Suggestions: What is the SE or HM really saying? Is it reasonable? How do we (you) make it happen?

## Interview Quotes

- “Job coaches are necessary until the student/employee reaches job mastery.”
- “Job coaches are needed until they master the job perhaps 1 year of coaching.”

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During lunch discuss the connections between the IEP and employment in the community and the quotes just shared



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Note: One hour for lunch



## Responses to Quotes

- How do you respond to the request for job coaches?
- How might you use a job coach in your business or your student's job apprenticeship?
- Share at your tables (10 minutes)

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Note: Remind participants that job coaches are paid through state funds through employment with local developmental disabilities agency.

## Successful Companies that hire individuals with ID: Tim Horton's



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Note: Tim Horton's have improved their financial bottom line with the hiring of individuals with ID: Link to video:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CRHnlyJI0dg&t=123s>  
 Is closed captioning on?

**She started her own cookie company**



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Note: Young woman with DS and her ability to operate in a supported employment company she owns.

Video link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=75OlgWaHYsw&t=44s>

Is closed captioning on?

### What the research stated about successful hiring

- Accommodations offered often benefit all workers (National Disability Rights Network, 2012).
- Job coaches may help with interviewing, job skills, and improving overall confidence on the job (Jans et al., 2011).
- Matching ability with job improves success (Hall et al., 2014; Jans et al., 2011).
- Hiring managers need to be involved in the IEP process (Shogren & Plotner, 2012).
- Our perceptions might be incorrect (individuals with ID are unable to work) (Brown et al., 2016).

Note: As in a classroom accommodations help all present. i.e., Additional training, break job up into chunks, given a work load and they have freedom to decide when it is completed).

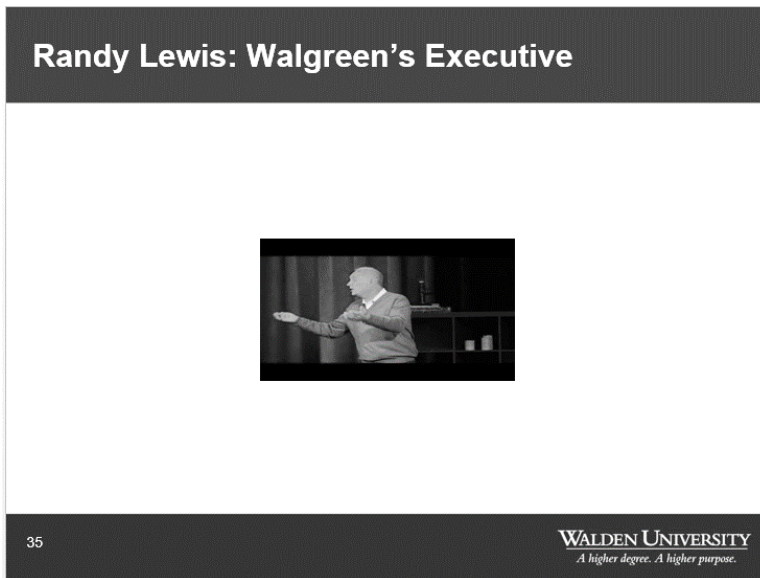
Role of job coaches is to guide not enable. We might need specific training for job coaches

Work with the strengths of each individual try to place them where their strengths lie.

I.e., I should never be an architect, not my strength area.

Can we have HM at the IEP table?

What is your perception of hiring individual with ID? Can the community help in any way?




Note: While Mr. Lewis is now retired however, his impact has been far reaching. Link to video:

[https://www.youtube.com/results?search\\_query=walgreens+ex+and+hring+with+disabilities](https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=walgreens+ex+and+hring+with+disabilities)

Is closed captioning on?

How might we write IEP goals and objectives to make this happen at a greater percentage?

## Chevrolet Dealer and Parts Store



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Note: Could auto parts stores employ our local individuals with ID? What might the goals in an IEP transition plan look like to make this happen?

Link to video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LvyVpeZ-NxI>

[https://www.youtube.com/results?search\\_query=hiring+people+with+disabilities+at+a+parts+store](https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=hiring+people+with+disabilities+at+a+parts+store)

What might IEP goals look like for this young person?

**Why Hire People With Disabilities? In the Employees Words.**



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Note: Important to hear from the employees themselves. Link to video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L7KTODIJGwg>

Is closed captioning on?

What might an IEP goal have looked like for this young woman to arrive at this employment goal?

**15 minute break: discuss with your table mates your reaction to the previous videos.**





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Note: Set timer distribute snacks


## Strategic Plans: What is it?




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Note: Do others around the table know if their company has a SP? If so what is it? If we do not know if we have one how effective is it right now? SE discuss how your school's mission statement might feed into a SP for a company

## Strategy Plans that Get Results



40


Note: Permit HM to discuss their preliminary plans for hiring individuals with ID

## Teachers together with Hiring managers

Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much. Helen Keller

It is amazing what you can accomplish if you do not care who gets the credit. Harry Truman

Coming together is a beginning, keeping together is progress, working together is success. Henry Ford

41

Note: We are all in this together? How might the SE at the tables help the HM at the tables to collaboratively work the IEP goals into the SP of the business for the successful hiring of individuals with ID?

## Strategic Planning Time:

- In your small table groups being to work a basic strategic plan for incorporating the four themes into the IEP and/or hiring individuals with ID into your business.

42

Footer



### Share with one person at your table: 10 minutes

- One new idea you are thinking of trying either as a business plan or in an IEP goal for individuals with ID
- Two things you learned during today's training
- Three People that will be involved in your strategic plan (if not by name, by title)

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### Today did we meet our goals? Goal #3

- ~~Goal 1: Gain a deeper understanding of the issues surrounding unemployment for individuals with ID~~
- ~~Goal 2: Develop an increased awareness of ways to improve hiring for individuals with ID~~
- Goal 3: Examine how the collaboration of the post-secondary transition document together with the hiring manager's needs increases the likelihood of employment.
- ~~Goal 4: In teams begin to develop a strategic plan for your business together with special educators to hire individuals with ID~~

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**Please complete the evaluation for today's session**

- Please complete your survey for today's professional development (Day 2) and place in basket as you exit
- Thank you for your participation today!

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Note: Be sure someone is available to collect surveys as they exit.

**SSEPD: Day 3**

- **9:00** Registration and continental breakfast
- **9:30** Opening remarks and overview for the day: What is successful Employment? Local Developmental Disabilities Superintendent
- **10:30** Break
- **10:45:** Local Hiring Managers Speak of Hiring Success
- **11:00** Strategic Planner
- **11:30** Questions from Tables
- **11:30-12:30 lunch**
- **12:30-2:00:** Planning in small groups with the goal to have a skeleton Strategic Plan to improve hiring of individuals with ID.
- **2:00-2:15 Break**
- **2:15-3:00** Sharing of plans
- **3:15** Evaluation and dismissal

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Note: Short welcome as they finish breakfast today. Go over agenda Invite a.m. speaker to the podium

## SSEPD: Day 3 Opening Remarks

- “No one can whistle a symphony, It takes a whole orchestra to play it.” H.E. Luccock



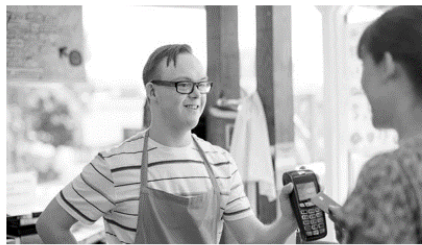
47

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Notes: Thoughts?

## Welcome: Local Developmental Disabilities Superintendent

- “But I Have Never Hired Anyone With a Disability, What If.....? Why Your Fears Might be Invalid.”



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Notes: Local Supt of developmental disabilities agency to present on current hiring trends and success in the county. He plans to stress the importance of collaborative work between the schools and local employers.

**15 minute break: discuss with your table mates your reaction to the previous videos.**



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Note: Set timer distribute snacks

**Hiring Managers Share their Success**

- Speaker 1: “What Never Happened.”
- Speaker 2: “I Should have Done it Years Ago: I Missed Out.”
- Speaker 3: “I Missed Out On Making New Friends.”

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Note: Allow each speaker 5-7 minutes per talk. Questions at the end of presentations by local HM and their successes.


Market executive: Speaker 1

Grocer HR executive: Speaker 2

Retail HR executive: Speaker 3

Allow time for Q and A at the end

**Who Is Mintzberg? Why are his thoughts important to planning?**



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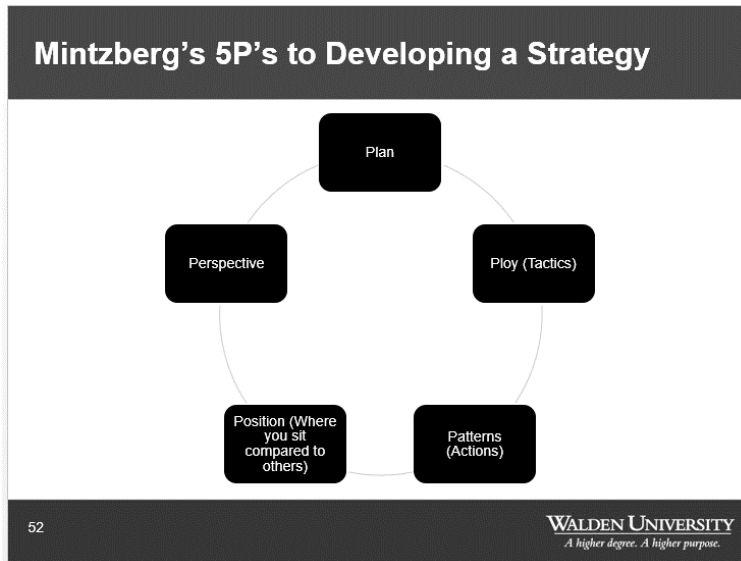
Note: Allow each speaker 5-7 minutes per talk. Questions at the end of presentations by local HM and their successes.

Market executive: Speaker 1

Grocer HR executive: Speaker 2

Retail HR executive: Speaker 3

Allow time for Q and A at the end



Note: This idea of creating a strategic plan in five steps begins with plan (brainstorming) and goes to the right. Ploy: What is the goal, Patterns: What has worked prior, Position: How is your school or business compared to others in area? Perspective: How do you approach this idea?

### Begin YOUR strategy Planning

- In your groups begin to brain storm and jot down your thinking into the five areas for a strategic plan to being hiring individuals with ID into your business.
- You may use the graphic organizers in your packets or create your own

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Note: 30-45 minutes to develop thoughts and brainstorm beginning ideas.



Note: Only permit those to share who offer. DO NOT Call on anyone who does not volunteer

**Thoughts to continue the discussion and collaboration?**

- How might we as a group continue this collaborative effort to improve employment for individuals with ID in our community?
  - Are hiring managers interested in attending IEP meetings to assist in goal and objective writing?
  - Are special education teachers interested in spending time with hiring managers in their business to learn more about expectations of employees?
  - How might we as a community work together in this employment effort?
  - Can we create a think tank committee for future trainings?

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Note: As the presenter lead the whole group in a collaborative chat centered on the above four questions.

### Today did we meet our goals? Goal #3

- ~~Goal 1: Gain a deeper understanding of the issues surrounding unemployment for individuals with ID~~
- ~~Goal 2: Develop an increased awareness of ways to improve hiring for individuals with ID~~
- ~~Goal 3: Examine how the collaboration of the post-secondary transition document together with the hiring manager's needs increases the likelihood of employment.~~
- Goal 4: In teams begin to develop a strategic plan for your business together with special educators to hire individuals with ID

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### Please complete the last evaluation

- Please complete your survey for today's professional development (Day 3) and place in basket as you exit.



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## Questions?

- Contact me at:  
[Lynn.shoemaker@waldenu.edu](mailto:Lynn.shoemaker@waldenu.edu)

## References

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Participant Surveys

Participant Survey Day 1 SSEPD

Based on the content covered today in Day one of the Self-Sustainable Employment Professional development, Rate your level of agreement to the following statements. When you survey is complete please turn in to the basket by the door:

Disagree 2. Somewhat Disagree 3. Somewhat Agree 4. Strongly Agree

1. I was able to understand the Problem; regarding the hiring of individuals with ID in rural central Ohio. Your score: \_\_\_\_\_.
2. The presenter was able to connect the importance of the Post-Secondary Transition Plans and the hiring manager’s needs for employees. Your score: \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Because of the material presented I have a clearer understanding of the employment concerns centered on individuals with ID in rural central Ohio. Your score: \_\_\_\_\_.
4. The presenter used my time wisely regarding a fair balance of presentations, group sharing time, and breaks. Your score: \_\_\_\_\_.
5. I found the training worth my time today. Your score: \_\_\_\_\_.

6. Additional Comments:

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Thank you,

## Participant Survey Day 2 SSEPD

Based on the content covered today in Day one of the Self-Sustainable Employment Professional development, Rate your level of agreement to the following statements. When your survey is complete please turn in to the basket by the door:

Disagree 2. Somewhat Disagree 3. Somewhat Agree 4. Strongly Agree

1. I was able to understand the Post-secondary transition plan as explained; regarding the hiring of individuals with ID in rural central Ohio. Your score: \_\_\_\_\_.
2. I understood the importance of the collaboration between the special education teachers and the hiring managers. Your score: \_\_\_\_\_.
3. The presenter was able to connect the importance of the Post-Secondary Transition Plans and the hiring manager's needs for employees. Your score: \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Because of the material presented I have a clearer understanding of the need to hire individuals with ID. Your score: \_\_\_\_\_.
5. The presenter used my time wisely regarding a fair balance of presentations, group sharing time, and breaks. Your score: \_\_\_\_\_.
6. I found the training worth my time today. Your score: \_\_\_\_\_.
7. Additional Comments:

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Thank you,

## Participant Survey Day 3 SSEPD

Based on the content covered today in Day one of the Self-Sustainable Employment Professional development, Rate your level of agreement to the following statements. When you survey is complete please turn in to the basket by the door:

Disagree 2. Somewhat Disagree 3. Somewhat Agree 4. Strongly Agree

1. I was able to understand the necessity to work collaboratively to complete my strategic plan for hiring individuals with ID. Your score: \_\_\_\_\_.
2. The information presented allowed me to complete a strategic plan. Your score: \_\_\_\_\_.
3. The guest speakers added clarity to the hiring issues for individuals with ID. Your score: \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Because of the material presented I have a clearer understanding of the need to hire individuals with ID. Your score: \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Today I was able to engage with my peers and participate in a meaningful way. Your score: \_\_\_\_\_.
6. I found working with my table partners to be a helpful way to process the information and work to be completed today. Your score: \_\_\_\_\_.
7. I will continue to work strategically to better prepare my students/hire individuals with ID. Your score: \_\_\_\_\_.

8. Additional Comments:

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Thank you,

<b>IEP Individualized Education Program</b>	CHILD'S NAME:
	DOB: ID Number

**TYPE OF EVIDENCE INDICATING THE TRANSITION SERVICE HAS BEEN COMPLETED**

- A. Anecdotal Record
- B. Checklist
- C. Work Sample
- D. Rubric
- E. Other (list)

**FREQUENCY OF WRITTEN PROGRESS REPORTING TOWARD COMPLETION OF TRANSITION SERVICES/ACTIVITIES TO THE CHILD'S PARENTS**

*Note: Progress Reports must be provided to parents of a child with a disability at least as often as report cards are issued to all children. If the district provides interim reports to all children, progress reports must be provided to all parents of a child with a disability. See OP-6B Transition Progress Report form.*

Target Date for Child to Graduate:

Check when complete

<b>IEP Individualized Education Program</b>	CHILD'S NAME: _____ DOB: _____ ID Number: _____
---	--

**1 FUTURE PLANNING**

Check when complete

**2 SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONAL FACTORS**

**Items checked "YES" will be addressed in this IEP:**

- Does the child have behavior which impedes his/her learning or the learning of others? YES  NO
- Does the child have limited English proficiency? YES  NO
- Is the child blind or visually impaired? YES  NO
- Does the child have communication needs (required for deaf or hearing impaired)? YES  NO
- Does the child need assistive technology devices and/or services? YES  NO
- Does the child require specially designed physical education? YES  NO

Check when complete

**3 PROFILE**

Child's profile to include Reading Improvement and Monitoring Plan (if applicable):

Check when complete

**4 EXTENDED SCHOOL YEAR SERVICES**

Has the team determined that ESY services are necessary?  Yes  No

If yes, what goals determined the need?

Will the team need to collect further data and reconvene to make a determination?  No  Yes

Check when complete

Date to Reconvene

**5 POSTSECONDARY TRANSITION**

**POSTSECONDARY TRAINING AND EDUCATION**

<b>MEASURABLE POSTSECONDARY GOAL:</b>	
<b>Age Appropriate Transition Assessment regarding Post Secondary Training and Education</b> (indicating student's needs, strengths, preferences and interests)	
<b>COURSES OF STUDY:</b>	<b>NUMBERS OF ANNUAL GOAL(S) Related to Transition Needs</b>

<b>IEP Individualized Education Program</b>	CHILD'S NAME: _____ DOB: _____ ID Number: _____
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TRANSITION SERVICE/ACTIVITY	PROJECTED BEGINNING DATE	PROJECTED END DATE	FREQUENCY	PERSON/AGENCY RESPONSIBLE	+
					-

TYPE OF EVIDENCE INDICATING THE TRANSITION SERVICE HAS BEEN COMPLETED

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> A. Anecdotal Record | <input type="checkbox"/> D. Rubric       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> B. Checklist        | <input type="checkbox"/> E. Other (list) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> C. Work Sample      | _____                                    |

**COMPETITIVE INTEGRATED EMPLOYMENT**

<b>MEASURABLE POSTSECONDARY GOAL:</b>					
<b>Age Appropriate Transition Assessment regarding Competitive Integrated Employment</b> (indicating student's needs, strengths, preferences and interests)					
COURSES OF STUDY:				NUMBERS OF ANNUAL GOAL(S) Related to Transition Needs	
TRANSITION SERVICE/ACTIVITY	PROJECTED BEGINNING DATE	PROJECTED END DATE	FREQUENCY	PERSON/AGENCY RESPONSIBLE	+
					-

TYPE OF EVIDENCE INDICATING THE TRANSITION SERVICE HAS BEEN COMPLETED

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> A. Anecdotal Record | <input type="checkbox"/> D. Rubric       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> B. Checklist        | <input type="checkbox"/> E. Other (list) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> C. Work Sample      | _____                                    |

**INDEPENDENT LIVING (as appropriate)**

<b>MEASURABLE POSTSECONDARY GOAL:</b>					
<b>Age Appropriate Transition Assessment regarding Independent Living</b> (indicating student's needs, strengths, preferences and interests)					
COURSES OF STUDY:				NUMBERS OF ANNUAL GOAL(S) Related to Transition Needs	
TRANSITION SERVICE/ACTIVITY	PROJECTED BEGINNING DATE	PROJECTED END DATE	FREQUENCY	PERSON/AGENCY RESPONSIBLE	+
					-



<b>IEP Individualized Education Program</b>	CHILD'S NAME:
	DOB: ID Number

**TYPE OF EVIDENCE INDICATING THE TRANSITION SERVICE HAS BEEN COMPLETED**

- A. Anecdotal Record
- B. Checklist
- C. Work Sample
- D. Rubric
- E. Other (list)

**FREQUENCY OF WRITTEN PROGRESS REPORTING TOWARD COMPLETION OF TRANSITION SERVICES/ACTIVITIES TO THE CHILD'S PARENTS**

*Note: Progress Reports must be provided to parents of a child with a disability at least as often as report cards are issued to all children. If the district provides interim reports to all children, progress reports must be provided to all parents of a child with a disability. See OP-6B Transition Progress Report form.*

Target Date for Child to Graduate:

Check when complete

<b>IEP Individualized Education Program</b>	CHILD'S NAME: _____ DOB: _____ ID Number: _____
---	--

**6 MEASURABLE ANNUAL GOALS**

NUMBER:  AREA:

PRESENT LEVEL OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AND FUNCTIONAL PERFORMANCE

MEASURABLE ANNUAL GOAL

METHOD(S) FOR MEASURING THE CHILD'S PROGRESS TOWARDS ANNUAL GOAL

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> A. Curriculum-Based Assessment | <input type="checkbox"/> E. Short-Cycle Assessments | <input type="checkbox"/> I. Work Samples |
| <input type="checkbox"/> B. Portfolios                  | <input type="checkbox"/> F. Performance Assessments | <input type="checkbox"/> J. Inventories  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> C. Observation                 | <input type="checkbox"/> G. Checklists              | <input type="checkbox"/> K. Rubrics      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> D. Anecdotal Records           | <input type="checkbox"/> H. Running Records         |  |

Select Display Mode

MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES

NUM	OBJECTIVE
1.1	<input style="width: 90%; height: 20px;" type="text"/>

FREQUENCY OF WRITTEN PROGRESS REPORTING TOWARD GOAL MASTERY TO THE CHILD'S PARENTS

*Note: Progress Reports must be provided to parents of a child with a disability at least as often as report cards are issued to all children. If the district provides interim reports to all children, progress reports must be provided to all parents of a child with a disability. See OP-6A Progress Report form.*

Reported every  weeks

Check when complete

<b>IEP Individualized Education Program</b>	CHILD'S NAME: _____ DOB: _____ ID Number: _____
---	--

**7 DESCRIPTION(S) OF SPECIALLY DESIGNED SERVICES**

TYPE OF SERVICE	GOAL ADDRESSED	PROVIDER TITLE	LOCATION OF SERVICE				
SPECIALLY DESIGNED INSTRUCTION: <span style="float: right;">+</span>							
<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;">BEGIN: _____</td> <td style="width: 25%;">END: _____</td> <td style="width: 25%;">AMOUNT OF TIME: _____</td> <td style="width: 25%;">FREQUENCY: _____</td> </tr> </table>				BEGIN: _____	END: _____	AMOUNT OF TIME: _____	FREQUENCY: _____
BEGIN: _____	END: _____	AMOUNT OF TIME: _____	FREQUENCY: _____				
-							
RELATED SERVICES: <span style="float: right;">+</span>							
<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;">BEGIN: _____</td> <td style="width: 25%;">END: _____</td> <td style="width: 25%;">AMOUNT OF TIME: _____</td> <td style="width: 25%;">FREQUENCY: _____</td> </tr> </table>				BEGIN: _____	END: _____	AMOUNT OF TIME: _____	FREQUENCY: _____
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ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY: <span style="float: right;">+</span>							
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BEGIN: _____	END: _____	AMOUNT OF TIME: _____	FREQUENCY: _____				
-							
ACCOMMODATIONS: <span style="float: right;">+</span>							
<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">BEGIN: _____</td> <td style="width: 50%;">END: _____</td> </tr> </table>				BEGIN: _____	END: _____		
BEGIN: _____	END: _____						
-							
MODIFICATIONS: <span style="float: right;">+</span>							
<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">BEGIN: _____</td> <td style="width: 50%;">END: _____</td> </tr> </table>				BEGIN: _____	END: _____		
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SUPPORT FOR SCHOOL PERSONNEL: <span style="float: right;">+</span>							
<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">BEGIN: _____</td> <td style="width: 50%;">END: _____</td> </tr> </table>				BEGIN: _____	END: _____		
BEGIN: _____	END: _____						
-							
SERVICE(S) TO SUPPORT MEDICAL NEEDS: <span style="float: right;">+</span>							
<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">BEGIN: _____</td> <td style="width: 50%;">END: _____</td> </tr> </table>				BEGIN: _____	END: _____		
BEGIN: _____	END: _____						
-							

Check when complete

**8 TRANSPORTATION AS A RELATED SERVICE**

Does the child require special transportation? YES  NO

Does the child need transportation to and from services? YES  NO

Does the child need accommodations or modifications for transportation? YES  NO

If yes, check any transportation accommodations/modifications below that the child needs:

<b>IEP Individualized Education Program</b>	CHILD'S NAME: _____ DOB: _____ ID Number: _____
---	--

- The bus driver will be notified of the child's behavioral and/or medical concerns       Aide (for transportation only)  
 Specially Adapted Vehicle       Wheelchair lift       Safety Vest       Car Seat       Securement Systems  
 Other      Specify: \_\_\_\_\_

Check when complete

## 9 NONACADEMIC AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

In what ways will the child have the opportunity to participate in nonacademic/extracurricular activities with their nondisabled peers?

Describe

If the child will not participate in non-academic/extracurricular activities, explain.

Check when complete

## 10 GENERAL FACTORS

HAS THE IEP TEAM CONSIDERED:

- |   |                              |                             |                             |
|---|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| The strengths of the child?   | YES <input type="checkbox"/> | NO <input type="checkbox"/> |                             |
| The concerns of the parents for the education of the child?                           | YES <input type="checkbox"/> | NO <input type="checkbox"/> |                             |
| The results of the initial or most recent evaluations of the child?                   | YES <input type="checkbox"/> | NO <input type="checkbox"/> |                             |
| As appropriate, the results of performance on any state or district-wide assessments? | YES <input type="checkbox"/> | NO <input type="checkbox"/> |                             |
| The academic, developmental and functional needs of the child?                        | YES <input type="checkbox"/> | NO <input type="checkbox"/> |                             |
| Regarding the Third Grade Reading Guarantee, is the child on-track for reading?       | YES <input type="checkbox"/> | NO <input type="checkbox"/> | NA <input type="checkbox"/> |

Check when complete

## 11 LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT

**For School Age:**

Does the child attend the school they would attend if not disabled? YES  NO

If no, justify:

Does this child receive all special education services with nondisabled peers? YES  NO

<b>IEP Individualized Education Program</b>	CHILD'S NAME: _____ DOB: _____ ID Number: _____
---	--

**For Preschool:**

Does the child attend a general education setting? YES  NO

Does the child receive all of his/her special education and related services embedded within regular classroom routines and activities? YES  NO

What prevents the child from receiving special education and/or related services embedded with the regular classroom routines and activities?

What prevents the child from being able to attend a general education setting?

Who provides the child with instruction in the general education curriculum?

Check when complete

**12 STATEWIDE AND DISTRICT WIDE TESTING**

Is the child participating in the Alternate Assessment for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities (AASCD)? YES  NO

Click below for guidance in considering AASCD:  
[Ohio AASCD Participation Criteria](#)

**Accessibility on district and statewide tests**

Will the child participate in district wide and state wide assessments with accommodations? YES  NO

For each subject tested in the child's grade, choose the method of assessment below.  
If "With Accommodations" is chosen for any subject, provide a description of the Accommodations for each subject in the right column.  
Alternate Assessment, if chosen, must apply to all tests taken.

1. DISTRICT TESTING (Note specific test or tests that student will be taking and any differences in allowable accommodations that may be test specific within the classroom across the district)		
AREA	ASSESSMENT TITLE	DETAIL OF ACCOMMODATIONS
<input type="radio"/> ELA		
<input type="radio"/> Mathematics		
<input type="radio"/> Science		
<input type="radio"/> Social Studies		
<input type="radio"/> Other		

<b>IEP Individualized Education Program</b>	CHILD'S NAME: _____ DOB: _____ ID Number: _____
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2. STATEWIDE TESTING (Note specific test or tests that student will be taking and any differences in allowable accommodations that may be test specific)		
AREA	ASSESSMENT TITLE	DETAIL OF ACCOMMODATIONS
<input type="radio"/> ELA		
<input type="radio"/> Mathematics		
<input type="radio"/> Science		
<input type="radio"/> Social Studies		
<input type="radio"/> Other		

Check when complete

### 13 EXEMPTIONS

**Third Grade Reading Guarantee** (See [The Ohio Third Grade Reading Guarantee Guidance Manual](#) for details)

Applicable  NA

Does the child have a significant cognitive disability? YES  NO

**If yes**, the child is not required to take the reading diagnostic assessment and is, therefore, removed from all the provisions of the Third Grade Reading Guarantee (including retention).

**If no**, the team considered all data and made the following decision (check one):

- Not to exempt the child from the retention provision of the Third Grade Reading Guarantee
- To exempt the child from the retention provision of the Third Grade Reading Guarantee

---

#### Graduation Tests

Applicable  NA

Is the child excused from the consequences of not passing required graduation tests? YES  NO

The child is excused from the consequences of not passing the required graduation tests in the following subjects:

Category	Course Title	Justification	+
<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; width: 100%; position: relative;"> <span style="position: absolute; right: 5px; top: 5px;">▼</span> </div>			

#### Other Assessments

Applicable  NA

<b>IEP Individualized Education Program</b>	CHILD'S NAME: _____ DOB: _____ ID Number: _____
---	--

Assessment	Justification	+

Check when complete

<b>IEP Individualized Education Program</b>	CHILD'S NAME: _____ DOB: _____ ID Number: _____
---	--

**14 MEETING PARTICIPANTS**

THIS IEP MEETING WAS:

- Face-to-Face Meeting
- Video Conference
- Telephone Conference/Conference Call
- Other

IEP EFFECTIVE DATES

START: \_\_\_\_\_

END: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE OF NEXT IEP REVIEW: \_\_\_\_\_

**IEP MEETING PARTICIPANTS**

THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE ATTENDED AND PARTICIPATED IN THE MEETING TO DEVELOP THIS IEP



NAME (Print)	POSITION	SIGNATURE	DATE
	▼		
	▼		
	▼		
	▼		
	▼		
	▼		
	▼		
	▼		
	▼		

**PEOPLE NOT IN ATTENDANCE WHO PROVIDED INFORMATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**



NAME (Print)	POSITION	SIGNATURE	DATE

\*IF THE GENERAL EDUCATION TEACHER, INTERVENTION SPECIALIST, DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVE OR PERSON KNOWLEDGABLE ABOUT THE INSTRUCTIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE EVALUATION DATA HAVE SIGNED AS NOT IN ATTENDANCE AT THE IEP MEETING, THERE MUST BE A WRITTEN EXCUSE ON FILE.

\*\* THE STUDENT IS A PREFERRED MEMBER UP TO AGE 18 WHEN THEY BECOME A REQUIRED MEMBER UNLESS THERE IS NO TRANSFER OF GUARDIANSHIP.

Check when complete



<b>IEP Individualized Education Program</b>	CHILD'S NAME: _____ DOB: _____ ID Number: _____
---	--

**15 SIGNATURES**

**INITIAL IEP**

- I give consent to initiate special education and related services specified in this IEP.\*
- I give consent to initiate special education and related services specified in this IEP except for \*\*

AREA: \_\_\_\_\_

- I do not give consent for special education and related services at this time.\*\*

PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

**IEP ANNUAL REVIEW (Not a Change of Placement)**

- I agree with the implementation of this IEP.\*
- I am signing to show my attendance/participation at the IEP team meeting, but I do not agree with the following special education and related services specified in this IEP.\*\*

AREA: \_\_\_\_\_

*Note: Not a Change of Placement does NOT require a parents' signature to implement the IEP.*

PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

**IEP REVIEW (Change of Placement)**

- I give consent for the Change of Placement as identified in this IEP.\*
- I do not give consent for the Change of Placement as identified in this IEP.\*\*
- I revoke consent for all special education and related services.\*\*

PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

**PROCEDURAL SAFEGUARDS NOTICE**

The parent received a copy of the Procedural Safeguards Notice at the IEP Meeting in the following form:

YES  NO IF NO, DATE SENT TO PARENTS: \_\_\_\_\_

**Transfer of Rights at Age of Majority**

By the child's 17th birthday, the child and the child's parents or surrogate parent received a copy of their procedural safeguards notice informing them that the transfer of procedural safeguard rights under IDEA will take place on the child's 18th birthday.

YES  NO

CHILD'S SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

**COPY OF THE IEP**

The parents received a copy of the IEP at the IEP meeting. YES  NO  IF NO, DATE SENT TO PARENTS: \_\_\_\_\_

\* The district must provide prior written notice to the parents summarizing the outcome of the IEP meeting before implementing the IEP.  
 \*\* If there is not agreement or consent is revoked, the district must provide prior written notice to the parents.

Check when complete

## Appendix B: Interview Questions: Hiring Managers

1. What job skills do you expect an entry-level employee with ID to have as an entry-level employee?
2. What job skills are taught once an employee with ID is hired?
3. What time management skills do you expect an entry-level individual with ID to possess as an entry-level employee?
4. What time management skills are taught once an employee with ID is hired?
5. What would assist you as the employer in the transition from school to the workplace for an individual with ID?

### Appendix C: Interview Questions for Local Special Education Teachers

1. What job skill goals do you incorporate into post-secondary transition plans?
2. What job skills training is incorporated into a student's post-secondary transition plan?
3. What time management goals do you incorporate into a student's post-secondary plan?
4. What time management training is incorporated into a student's post-secondary transition plan?
5. What information or support would assist you as the special education teacher in the transition from school to the workplace for an individual with ID?

## Appendix D: Permission to Use Questions

Permission to Use the Questions from the article: Effective Transitional Plans from Secondary Education to Employment for Individuals with Learning disabilities: A Case Study (2013).

July 12, 2018, 1:06 PM

lohsch@um.edu.my

Effective Transitional Plans (2013).pdf  
629 KB

Dr. Cheong,

I am hoping you can assist me on my journey to a doctorate.

I am a doctoral student (Walden University) doing my dissertation on the constraints of hiring managers and special education teachers working with students with intellectual disabilities and employment in central Ohio.

I have been reading your collaborative work in the article *Effective Transitional Plans from Secondary Education to Employment for individuals with Learning disabilities: A Case Study*. <https://doi.org/10.5539/jel.v2n1p104> (2013).

I would like permission to use your Appendix questions (page117) as a framework for me to interview hiring managers and special education teachers to round out my data collection for my dissertation. Do I have permission to use the questions as a framework and to alter if needed for my research?

I have attached the article in question and feel free to ask any questions for clarification. I look forward to your response.

Respectfully,

Lynn Shoemaker  
(740) 398-9837

Loh Sau Cheong <lohsch@um.edu.my>

July 26, 2018, 11:39 AM  
Lynn Shoemaker  
You replied on 7/26/2018 2:58 PM.

Dear Lynn,

I understand that you are applying the permission from us to use the Interview Protocol from the article: **Effective Transitional Plan from Secondary Education to Employment for Individuals with Learning Disabilities: A Case Study.**

I hereby would permit you to use the Interview Protocol, provided that you quote our names in your research, i.e., Loh, S. C. & Sharifah Zainiyah (2013).

Thank you.

--

Professor Dr. Loh Sau Cheong, *S.A.P.*  
Head of Department  
Department of Educational Psychology and Counseling  
Faculty of Education  
University of Malaya  
50603 Kuala Lumpur  
MALAYSIA

Honorary Secretary  
National Association of Special Education  
Malaysia

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Fax: +603 - 7967 5010

## Appendix E: Protecting Human Research Participants Certification

		Completion Date 29-Nov-2019 Expiration Date N/A Record ID 34397088
This is to certify that:		
<b>Lynn Shoemaker</b>		
Has completed the following CITI Program course:		
<b>Student Researchers</b> (Curriculum Group) <b>Student Researchers</b> (Course Learner Group) <b>1 - Basic Course</b> (Stage)		
Under requirements set by:		
<b>Walden University</b>		
Verify at <a href="http://www.citiprogram.org/verify/?w23cf8798-e1bc-4f01-b6b5-8857557b8d94-34397088">www.citiprogram.org/verify/?w23cf8798-e1bc-4f01-b6b5-8857557b8d94-34397088</a>		

