



Foundations of Special Education

By Dr. Kathleen VanTol

Chapter 14: Transition

Discussion Questions

1. Why is transition planning an important part of the special education process? How does it differ from other components of the IEP?
2. IDEA requires transition planning to begin no later than age 16 (and earlier in many states). Why is it important to begin planning for adult life several years before a student leaves high school?
3. Students are expected to be involved in planning the transition portion of their IEP. Why is it important for all students, including those with disabilities, to play an active role in planning for their own futures?
4. Transition assessment is an ongoing process rather than a single evaluation. What types of information could be collected to help students develop meaningful postsecondary goals?
5. Successful transition planning requires collaboration among families, educators, students, and community agencies. What unique perspective or expertise does each member contribute to the planning process?

6. Employment is an important transition outcome for many students with disabilities. What skills and experiences during the school years can help prepare students for successful employment?
7. Many students with disabilities pursue postsecondary education or training after high school. What supports or accommodations might help students succeed in college, technical training, or other educational programs?
8. Independent living means different things for different individuals. How can transition planning help students develop the skills needed to live as independently as possible?
9. Community participation includes much more than employment or education. Why are recreation, friendships, volunteer opportunities, faith communities, and civic participation important aspects of adult life?
10. The chapter discusses the transfer of educational rights at the age of majority. Why is it important for students and families to learn about this before it occurs?
11. Many adults with disabilities continue to need supports after leaving school. What community agencies and adult service providers are available in your community to help individuals with disabilities achieve their postsecondary goals?
12. Why is it important that transition goals reflect both the student's aspirations and the results of transition assessments? What problems might arise if goals are either too limited or unrealistic?

13. Although opportunities for individuals with disabilities have expanded considerably over the past several decades, important challenges remain. What barriers continue to affect successful transitions to adult life, and how can educators, families, and communities work together to address these challenges?
14. Throughout this textbook, inclusion has been presented as more than physical presence. Inclusion involves belonging, participation, and contribution. How does this broader understanding of inclusion apply to adult life after high school?
15. Looking back over this textbook, what do you believe is the single most important responsibility of a special educator? How has your understanding of special education changed as you have learned about inclusion, assessment, IEPs, evidence-based instruction, behavior support, collaboration, and transition planning?

About the Author

Dr. Kathleen VanTol has over 35 years of experience working in the field of education. She holds a doctorate in special education from Western Michigan University and is a professor of special education at Dordt University. She is also a Board Certified Behavior Analyst and a Board Certified Advocate in Special Education.

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