Spring 2002

Self-determination and success outcomes of two-year college students with disabilities: An integration of quantitative and qualitative approaches

Deborah Russo Jameson

University of New Hampshire, Durham

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Self-determination and success outcomes of two-year college students with disabilities: An integration of quantitative and qualitative approaches

Abstract
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The purpose of this study was to investigate a possible relationship between post-secondary success outcomes and self-determination. Data were collected from students who enrolled in an open access two-year college. A two-phase quantitative/qualitative design attempted to answer: (1) What is the relationship between the success outcomes of college students with disabilities and self-determination? (2) How do students with higher and lesser degrees of self-determination understand and describe the outcomes of their post-secondary experience?

In the quantitative phase, the ARC Self-Determination Scale (Wehmeyer, 1995), and Demographic and Outcomes Survey (researcher developed) were administered to willing participants who disclosed a disability between Spring, 1993--Fall, 2000. The data revealed that students with positive success outcomes (retention, GPA, and employment, if not enrolled) had higher degrees of self-determination than those with less positive outcomes.

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Integrated data analysis showed complementarity of results (Greene, Caracelli & Graham, 1989); the interview participants who had higher self-determination scores on the Arc Scale described highly self-determining behaviors, and the two students with low self-determination scores described low self-determining behavior within Wehmeyer's framework.

Recommendations for practitioners and future research that reflect the depth and breadth of knowledge gained from this two-phase design are included in the last chapter.

Keywords
Education, Adult and Continuing, Education, Community College

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SELF-DETERMINATION AND SUCCESS OUTCOMES
OF TWO-YEAR COLLEGE STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:
AN INTEGRATION OF QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE APPROACHES

BY

DEBORAH RUSSO JAMESON
B.A., Framingham State College, 1977
M.Ed., Worcester State College, 1984

DISSERTATION

Submitted to the University of New Hampshire
in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

In

Education

May, 2002
This dissertation has been examined and approved.

Barbara Krysiak  
Dissertation Co-Director, Dr. Barbara Krysiak  
Associate Professor of Education

Todd G. Demitchell  
Dissertation Co-Director, Dr. Todd DeMitchell  
Associate Professor of Education

Casey Cobb  
Dr. Casey Cobb  
Assistant Professor of Education

Georgia Berns  
Dr. Georgia Berns  
Associate Professor of Education

Charles Moseley  
Dr. Charles Moseley  
Director of Special Projects, NASDDDS

4-22-02  
Date
DEDICATION

This study is dedicated first to my husband Gil, without whom I never could have completed this project, and to my three sons, Gil III, Sean, and Craig, who I hope understand that hard work and self-determination, despite frustration, can lead to a successful outcome. Special thanks, too, goes to my mother and father for their interest and encouragement throughout this endeavor.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In addition to my family, both immediate and extended, I would like to acknowledge several of my co-workers: Dr. Cheryl Petersen, who encouraged me from the beginning to do an integrated design, Dr. Vincent Benincasa, whose daily visits to my office to check in on my progress kept me from “whining” too much, Elaine Minnehan-Caron, Kelly Bourbon, and Tonyel Mitchell, who regularly encouraged me and praised my endeavors, and my good friend Karen Diaz, who listened to my complaints with care and always offered positive support and reinforcement. I would also like to acknowledge Triandfyllos Bougiannou, who assisted me tremendously in the beginning of the process and had faith in my efforts.

Appreciation is also extended to all of my committee members who were never too busy to review my drafts, especially my co-directors, Todd DeMitchell, who has been there since the beginning of my decision to embark on this journey, and Barbara Krysiak, who helped me recognize, among other things, that I can “write the book later.”
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ABSTRACT

SELF-DETERMINATION AND SUCCESS OUTCOMES
OF TWO-YEAR COLLEGE STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:
AN INTEGRATION OF QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE APPROACHES

by

DEBORAH RUSSO JAMESON

University of New Hampshire, May, 2002

Two recent movements have occurred in the name of equality of opportunity in a
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numbers of students with disabilities are enrolling in college; and the Self-Determination
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relationship between the success of college students with disabilities and self-
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1. What is the relationship between the success outcomes of college students with
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In the quantitative phase, the ARC Self-Determination Scale (Wehmeyer, 1995),
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Recommendations for practitioners and future research that reflect the depth and breadth of knowledge gained from this two-phase design are included in the last chapter.
CHAPTER 1

GENERAL INFORMATION

Personal and Practical Positioning

The American Dream

Two major movements have occurred in the last 20 years in the name of equality of opportunity in a democratic America. One is the Disabilities Movement in higher education where increasing numbers of students with disabilities are looking to post-secondary education and training to help them achieve success in career development (Adelman & Vogel, 1990); the other is the Self-Determination Movement (Wehmeyer, Summer, 2000; Ward & Meyer, Fall, 99) as it relates to transition initiatives and positive adult outcomes for individuals with disabilities in elementary/secondary education or in the community of individuals with developmental disabilities. (Note: self-determination as a movement is not universally accepted, but rather is considered an approach). To date, the Self-Determination Movement has made very few in-roads into higher education, and as such, any relationship between the success of college students with disabilities and self-determination remains largely untested. This is unfortunate because, as research suggests, many college students with disabilities are having trouble staying in and completing programs (Bruck, 1987; Sitlington & Frank, 1990) and self-determination "may be critical" to their success (Aune, 1991; Sitlington & Frank, 1990).

Throughout the history of our country, young adults with disabilities have
maintained minority status on college campuses. Nonetheless, in the name of affording equal educational opportunity, the passages of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Education for All Handicapped Children's Act of 1975 (now called the IDEA-Individuals with Disabilities Act), and especially the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, have led to recent increases in the percentage of freshmen entering college with reported disabilities. Though data are somewhat uneven, all reports indicate the increase of students with disabilities on college campuses has quadrupled since 1978. The U.S. Department of Education Office of Special Education reports an increase from 2.2% in 1978 to 8.8% in 1991 (OSEP, 1992, p. xxiv). Furthermore, in a study conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) of 21,000 college students in the 1995-1996 academic year, 6% reported having a disability. In a more recent survey, HEATH Resource Center (Oct., 1999) published its data about freshmen college students with disabilities and reported that one in 11 first-time, full-time freshmen entering college in 1998 self-reported a disability (approx. 9%) or about 154,520 students. The study also reported that the majority tend to enroll in sub-baccalaureate institutions, mostly two-year public colleges, and aspire to Associate Degrees rather than Bachelor Degrees.

At the two-year college from which the data for this study were gathered there has also been an increase in college students with disclosed disabilities. In 1993, the at-risk at the college were identified as those students who scored low on the reading, writing, and math Basic Skills Assessment (BSA). Some of them might have informally suggested in the mandatory essay, which was part of the BSA, that they had "dyslexia" or an "IEP" (Individualized Education Plan) in high school, but there were few cases of documented disabilities. As the years went by, however, the increase in the number of documented at-
risk began to occur. At first the change was subtle. Between 1995-1997, a few IEP's with formal disclosure documentation were received by the learning center, mailed by anxious parents wondering if their children would be accepted and how the college could help. Recently, it appears the floodgates have opened. Of those enrolled in the calendar year 2000, over 7% (Table 3.2, p. 69) of the students enrolled disclosed a disability.

Further, at this college, not unlike at others across the country, requests for "reasonable accommodations" range from wheel chair accessibility for those with physical handicaps, adaptive devices for those with hearing and visual impairments, extra time on tests and quiet alternative settings for those with learning disabilities and Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (AD/HD). The most recent requests have been made from a population who, in the past, rarely came forward, those with emotional disabilities. Their requests for accommodations are usually to seek alternatives to attending traditional classroom settings because agoraphobia, panic anxiety, or regulation of medication has made classroom attendance impossible. Further, many parents and students alike are aware that colleges are now mandated by law to provide "reasonable accommodations" for their requests.

Though most post-secondary institutions were experiencing an increase in the number of students with disabilities, two-year colleges were/are particularly appealing for this group of diverse learners. The majority of students with disabilities, who enroll in post-secondary education of any type, enroll in the two-year community college. This is, in part, because such institutions in most states have open enrollment and admit all who wish to further their education (Heath Resource Center, Feb. 1993). As previously suggested, these students are in search of the "American Dream." In America, the "land
of opportunity" (or as Ronald Reagan put it, the "opportunity society" (Brint & Karabel, 1989, p. 3)), it is believed that each and every individual should be able to pursue the "American Dream" of individual advancement and upward mobility. Further, it is taken for granted that "higher education should provide ladders of upward mobility" (p. 5). However, because selective four-year colleges and universities exclude many members of the American community by their admissions standards, the lesser able students turn to the two-year, open access type institutions as their ticket to advancement.

There is no doubt that the emergence of the junior college has contributed to and continues to "satisfy the precept that in a democracy everyone is entitled to access to higher education...not only because of the contribution to the diffusion of higher learning within society, but also because of the promise to satisfy the needs of those of lesser means and abilities" (Lucas, 1994, p. 221).

This message, too, is clear in the voices of students and parents. I have heard comments like: everyone goes to college today; you have to go to college because you will end up working at MacDonald's; you have to go if you want to make money and have a career that you or your family can be proud of; everybody needs a college degree today, and if you can't get into a four year school, this is the next best thing.

Yet the reasonableness of these hopes and dreams for students with disabilities and their parents can be questioned. The biggest challenge, to date, is not knowing if they will persist and graduate, or just quietly exit from the system in the same manner many of them arrived. And for those that do graduate, it's the not knowing if they are getting jobs that are any better (in terms of money and respect) than ones they could have gotten without a college degree.
Few studies have dealt with such outcomes. Those that do remain unclear about the reasons for successful outcomes for students with disabilities, and often report mixed results (Vogel & Adelman, 1990; Vogel, Hubrey & Adelman, 1993; Greenbaum, Graham & Scales, 1995; Horn & Bobbitt, 1999). The emergence of the Self-Determination Movement in the community of adults with disabilities has attempted to respond to the challenge of understanding positive success outcomes. It appears to have become as much a part of the disabilities landscape as Section 504, IDEA, and ADA. Its original intent was to address the needs of those with developmental disabilities attempting "to gain control over their rights as citizens in order to receive the services needed to live their lives" (NPO, 2001). Most recently, however, there has been some movement into self-determination transition initiatives for students with disabilities leaving elementary and secondary education (Wehmeyer, Winter, 1997; 1995; Durlak & Rose, 1994).

Nationally recognized organizations like Partners in Policymaking (1987), The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Initiative (1996), The ARC of the United States Self-Determination Program, (1996), and The National Center on Self-Determination and 21st Century Learning (1997) have funded numerous projects (Johnson, 1999) in the spirit of a democratic America. As with the disabilities movement, the self-determination movement began in response to the "stunning lack of freedom experienced by individuals with disabilities" and demanded that we address "questions of equity" as we never have before (Nerney, 2001a). Further, the foundation of the movement "rests on a set of principles deeply rooted in equality and both civil and human rights" (Nerney, 2001b).

In this study it is the primary goal to investigate how students with disabilities, accepted at a two-year, open access institution (with five campuses serving both
traditional and non-traditional day and evening students) are faring and whether or not "self-determination" might be linked to "positive success outcomes" (Wehmeyer, Winter, 1997). It is the hope that such a study will add to the limited body of research available on the success of college students with disabilities (especially those at two year, open access institutions), and to the self-determination literature. Perhaps, too, it might prove useful to disabilities coordinators at the college level as they structure support services and programs which foster success outcomes in order to give all students the opportunity to achieve the "American Dream."
Definitions of Key Terms/Concepts

American with Disabilities Act of 1990

Signed into law by George Bush on July 25, 1990, this act extends to people with disabilities civil rights similar to those available to individuals in the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Specifically, it "extends civil rights protections for people with disabilities to employment in the public and private sectors, transportation, public accommodations, services provided by state and local governments, and telecommunications." The act guarantees that persons with disabilities have the same rights to all goods and services as anyone else. The educational right is also guaranteed in Section 504; however, at the time there was limited knowledge about rights and services that could be expected. This act serves as an important reminder that compliance with civil rights guarantees must be made a priority for post-secondary institutions. Title II of the act covers state institutions and community colleges; Title III covers private institutions (ADA, 1990).

Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987

This act defined the broad scope of non-discrimination as it relates to post-secondary institutions or a public system of higher education, making the entire institution, not a specific program, subject to non-discrimination laws even if only one portion of the institution received federal funds (O'Brian & Wright-Tatum, 1997, p. 20).

Developmental Disabilities Act of 1975 and Bill of Rights Act of 2000

In 1975 Congress created and authorized funding for the Protection and Advocacy Systems in each state to ensure the safety and well being of individuals with developmental disabilities. The Act covered three major entities: 1. Protection and advocacy centers; 2. University Affiliated Programs (now called Centers for Excellence)
to conduct projects of national significance; 3. Developmental Disabilities Planning
Councils. The amendment in 2000 reinforced the basic precept of the policy: “that
disability is a natural and normal part of the human experience that does not diminish the
rights of individuals with developmental disabilities to exert control and choice over their
own lives and to fully participate in and contribute to their communities through full
integration and inclusion in the mainstream.” Additionally, the amendment emphasized
promoting “self-determination through culturally competent programs.”

Disability

Both Section 504 and ADA define handicapped individuals as "any person who
(i) has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life
activities (i.e., caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing,
speaking, breathing, learning and working), (ii) has a record of such impairment, (iii) is
regarded as having such an impairment."

Currently under the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), the following
categories are used for eligibility and reporting purposes:

1. a specific learning disability (LD)
2. Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (AD/HD)
3. speech or language impairment (S & L)
4. mental retardation (MR)
5. serious emotional disturbance (ED)
6. multiple disabilities (MD)
7. hearing impairment (deafness is sometimes included with hearing
   impairment as a single category) (HI)
8. deafness
9. orthopedic impairment (OD)
10. other health impairment
11. visual impairment or blindness
12. autism
13. traumatic brain injury (TBI)

Disclosure

For purposes of identifying a population of students with disabilities for this study, disclosure of a disability will be defined as either a formal document provided by the student indicating a disability as diagnosed by a certified professional, or informal disclosure by the student of a disability through the incoming freshmen essay.

Documentation

In order to determine service eligibility and the provision of "reasonable accommodations," service providers must have documentation of the individual's disability, prepared by a certified professional, i.e. psychiatrist, psychologist, physician, etc. The documentation is usually not more than three years old and should describe the tests administered, background information, test results and explanations of results, a definitive diagnosis, data to support the diagnosis, and recommendations for appropriate accommodations (Section 504; Niesslein & Lindstrom, 1997, p. 27)

Education for All Handicapped Children Act, Public Law 94-42, 1975 (now called Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA))

This act provides that students should be taught in the same classrooms with non-handicapped students and that every student with a handicap shall be provided with an
individualized education plan (IEP). The act expands the federal government's role in securing educational opportunity for a minority group. It requires that:

...to the maximum extent appropriate, handicapped children, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are not handicapped, and that special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of handicapped children from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature of severity of the handicap is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily, and procedures to assure that testing and evaluation materials and procedures utilized for the purposes of evaluation and placement of handicapped children will be selected and administered so as not to be racially or culturally discriminatory. Such materials or procedures shall be provided and administered in the child's native language or mode of communication, unless it clearly is not feasible to do so, and no single procedure shall be the sole criterion for determining an appropriate educational program (in Lazerson, 1987, p. 186-188).

Hidden Disability:

Learning disabilities, AD/HD, depression and other psychological disabilities, Traumatic Brain Injuries (TBI), Acquired Brain Injuries (ABI), Seizure Disorders, AIDS, MS, and Diabetes are categorized as hidden disabilities. They are conditions that are not necessarily apparent upon first meeting a person yet they can be as equally as debilitating as many of the mobility impairments (Ham, 2001; Pigza, 1993; Santa Monica College, 2001, Stolowitz, 1997, p. 75; Zimmerman, 1997, p. 57).

Open Access

This, like the term "open admissions," is usually defined as a standard of admissions to post-secondary education that includes admitting any students who have a high school diploma or GED.

"Otherwise qualified"

Students must be able to meet the technical and academic qualifications for entry
into the school, program, or activity in order to be considered "otherwise qualified" (Rehabilitation Act, Section 504, U.S.C. Section 794(a)).

Rehabilitation Act of 1973: Section 504 (Equal Opportunities)

"No otherwise qualified individuals with handicaps in the United States, as defined in section 7(8), shall solely by reason of the handicap, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance or under any program or activity conducted by any Executive agency or by the United States Postal Service" (U.S.C. Section 794(a)).

Reasonable accommodations

Section 504, as reinforced by the ADA, requires institutions to provide modifications, accommodations or auxiliary aids that are necessary to permit access by qualified students with disabilities. Some examples of common accommodations include, but are not limited to: note-takers, scribes, taped texts, readers, test accommodations, assistance with registration, taped lectures, interpreters, classroom and institutional accessibility. A college or university is not required to provide academic adjustments or auxiliary aids and services if such provision would be unreasonable. That is, that it would fundamentally alter the nature of the program or when the academic requirements are essential to a program of study or to meet licensing requirements. An auxiliary aid may also be denied when the provision of such would place "undue burden" on the institution (34C.F. R. Section 104.44 (d)(2)).

Self-Advocacy (commonly referenced definitions)

1. "Self-advocacy is about independent groups of people with disabilities working together for justice by helping each other take charge of their lives and fight

2. "Teaches people with disabilities how to advocate for themselves and to learn how to speak out for what they believe in...how to make decisions and choices that affect their lives so they can become more independent" (Hayden & Shoultz, 1991, p. 4).


Self-Determination (It should be noted that there is not universal agreement on the meaning of self-determination. These are commonly referenced definitions that will be discussed further in Chapter II: Review of the Literature. However, # 7 was the most significant for this study as it was applied to post-secondary success outcomes).

1. Self-determination is an approach to support provision that is based on the belief that people with disabilities must not have to give up their rights as citizens in order to receive the services they need to live their lives. The goals of such self-determined approaches are designed to shift control over the administration, selection and control of services to the individual receiving support. Change is based on four principles of self-determination: freedom, support, authority and responsibility (Self-Determination for Persons with Developmental Disabilities, a project of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2001).

2. The amended Developmental Disabilities Act of 1975 includes the first definition in recent federal legislation of "self-determination activities": Activities that result in
individuals with developmental disabilities, with appropriate assistance, obtaining: a. the ability and opportunity to communicate and make personal decisions; b. the ability and opportunity to communicate choices and exercise control over the type and intensity of services, supports and other assistance the individuals receive; c. the authority to control resources to obtain needed services, supports and other assistance; d. opportunities to participate in, and contribute to their communities; e. support, including financial, to advocate for themselves and others, to develop leadership skills through training in self-advocacy, to participate in coalitions, to educate policymakers, and to play a role in the development of public policies that affect individuals with developmental disabilities (Developmental Disabilities Act as amended in 2000).

3. Self-determination is one's ability to define and achieve goals based on a foundation of knowing and valuing oneself (Field & Hoffman, 1994, p. 164).

4. Self-determination is defined as "the attitudes which lead people to define goals for themselves and to their ability to take the initiative to achieve these goals...it is the importance of people taking control, without undue external influence, over what affects their lives" (Ward, 1988, p. 2).

5. "Personal attitudes and abilities that facilitate an individual's identification and pursuit of goals...reflected in personal attitudes of empowerment, active participation in decision-making, and self-directed action to achieve personally valued goals" (Powers, Singer, & Sowers, 1996, p. 10).

6. Acting "out of choice rather than obligation or coercion, and those choices are based on an awareness of one's organismic needs and the flexible interpretation of external
events. (It) often involves controlling one's environment or one's outcomes, but may also involve choosing to give up control" (Deci & Ryan, 1985, p. 38).

7. "The attitudes and abilities required to act as the primary causal agent in one's life and making choices and decisions, regarding one's quality of life, free from undue external influence or interference.... An act or event is self-determined if: a. The person acted autonomously; b. The behaviors were self-regulated; c. The person initiated and responded to events in a psychologically empowered manner; and d. The person acted in a self-realizing manner" (Wehmeyer, 1995, p. 17).

Success Outcomes

For purposes of this study, success outcomes will be defined as:

**Measurable:**

1. Retention: successful if still currently enrolled, transferred to another college, or graduated from Associate Degree Program or Bachelor Degree Program.

2. GPA (Grade Point Average): 2.0 or above constitutes a successful outcome.

3. Full-time Employment: if no longer enrolled due to graduation or departure from college. Salary and Part-time employment will be descriptively analyzed.

**Experiential:**

Based on follow-up interviews using Wehmeyer's framework for understanding Self-Determination: Autonomy, Self-Regulation, Psychological Empowerment, Self-Realization. (Described in detail in Chapter II: Literature Review)

"Undue burden"

Any accommodation that would create "significant difficulty or expense" for an institution (Rehabilitation Act, Section 504).

14
Statement of Purpose/Research Goals:

This study integrated quantitative and qualitative research approaches (Creswell, 1994; Greene, Caracelli, & Graham 1989; Hathaway, 1995; Howe, 1992, Petersen, 1985; Rossman & Wilson, 1985) designed to investigate the success outcomes of college students with disclosed disabilities and self-determination to determine: a. if there is a relationship between the success outcomes of students with higher and lesser degrees of self-determination; b. how students with varying degrees of self-determination describe the outcomes of their post-secondary experience within the construct of Wehmeyer’s framework.

Research Questions

Using the two goals described above, the following questions were designed:

A. Quantitative:

1. How do the measurable success outcomes (in terms of retention, GPA, and full-time employment—if graduated or departed) of two-year college students with disclosed disabilities and higher degrees of self-determination compare with students with lesser degrees of self-determination as determined by the Arc Self-Determination Scale (Wehmeyer, 1995)?

B. Qualitative:

2. How do two-year college students with disclosed disabilities and varying degrees of self-determination describe their post-secondary experience within the construct of Wehmeyer’s framework of self-determination?
Research Hypothesis

The qualitative phase does not lend itself to the development of a research hypothesis due to the inductive nature of such research. Rather, this phase reflects a non-directional orientation that will lead to an emergent theory of understanding (Creswell, 1994, pp. 71-73). The quantitative phase, however, with its underlying deductive nature, can substantiate the following "operational alternative hypothesis" (Creswell, p. 74) based upon the purpose described above and question #1:

Students who achieve more positive post-secondary success outcomes have higher degrees of self-determination than those with less positive success outcomes.

Research Methodology and Data Analysis: An Overview

(Due to the complexity of the integrated design involved in this study, the following summative overview is presented in Chapter I to allow for a better understanding of the methodology. A more thorough discussion appears in Chapter III: Research Methodology.

The purpose of this study was to better understand whether there is a relationship between the success of students with disabilities in higher education and self-determination. Success was defined in three ways: Retention (graduation, still enrolled, or transferred to a bachelor program), GPA (2.0 and above would constitute success); and/or Full-time employment (if not enrolled in college due to graduation or departure.) An integrated quantitative/qualitative approach was used to identify whether such a relationship exists.

The target population consisted of day students and continuing education students.
(from 1993 through Spring, 2001) who either formally or informally disclosed a physical, emotional or learning disability at a two-year post-secondary institution. Two mailings yielded 48 returns of the *Arc Self-Determination Scale* (Wehmeyer, 1995) and a *Demographic and Outcomes Survey* (researcher developed for purposes of this study).

For the quantitative phase of the design, the results were organized according to the three success outcomes: Retention, GPA (2.0 or above), and Full-Time Employment. T-tests were computed using SPSS statistical software system. This enabled the researcher to examine whether the mean of the self-determination scores was higher for the group who experienced positive success outcomes in any of the three categories of success. Data received from this phase were also analyzed descriptively.

Once results of the T-test were obtained and analyzed in the first phase, the qualitative phase (follow-up interviews) was designed and carried out. Four willing participants were selected using the results of the Retention Success Outcome. Students were placed, based upon self-determination scores, into the following four categories:

- High Self-Determination with success (HSD w/ S)
- High Self-Determination with no success (HSD w/ NS)
- Low Self Determination with success (LSD w/ S)
- Low Self-Determination with no success (LSD w/ NS)

Such a selection within the groups was designed to understand how two people experiencing relative retention success make sense of that success, given that one has the highest degree of self-determination and the other the lowest degree in this category of participants. Additionally, in terms of those not experiencing retention success, an understanding of how the participant with the highest degree of Self-Determination, and
alternatively, the one with the lowest, make sense of a lack of retention success.

A three-part interview was adapted from the "Three Interview Series" as set forth by Seidman (1998) in *Interviewing as Qualitative Research*. Once interviews were carried out, analysis of the interview data focused on verbatim transcriptions, crafting of profiles (Seidman), and analysis within the construct of Wehmeyer's framework of the characteristics of self-determination: autonomy, self-regulation, psychological empowerment, and self-realization. Data were analyzed first in terms of the qualitative results and were subsequently followed by an integration of analysis with the quantitative results.

**Assumptions of the Integrated Design**

As Hathaway (1985) suggested, the best approach, especially for institutional researchers at colleges and universities, is to combine qualitative and quantitative paradigms in order to strengthen the results of research endeavors and enhance the ability to understand "what is going on" (p. 555). The key, for the researcher, is in understanding the assumptions of the two approaches (p. 555) and to keep the assumptions explicit at all times in order to "avoid logically incompatible findings" (Patton, 1991, p. 392). Further, pragmatists believe that quantitative and qualitative methods are capable of informing each other "throughout the research process" (Hathaway, 1995, p. 539). The pragmatist considers that the two approaches can simultaneously answer a research question. "Using interviews, surveys, questionnaires and observation techniques within one study is an example of a pragmatist approach to integrating or combining research methods"(p. 539).

Kenneth Howe (1992) pointed out that "human beings are neither wholly passive and determined, nor wholly active and self-creating... they exhibit these characteristics in
varying degrees" (p. 243). Further, Howe suggested that a compromise will "provide a better philosophical account— in terms of a conception of explanation, a conception of human nature and a conception of the relationship between research and practice and as providing a better account of various current types of educational research practice—in terms of what researchers do and what worries them" (p. 254). Such research helps to "make educational research serve a democratic society" (p. 255). A more thorough review of the underlying assumptions appears in Chapter III.

Based on the above, an integration of methods enables the researcher to develop a comprehensive understanding of "what is going on" by assessing the research questions from different perspectives. Additional personal assumptions include the following:

1. This study can be considered "early inquiry into new research" and thus an integration of approaches is "particularly suited" to such research (Firestone, 1987).

2. This study attempted to "tap the relative strength of both (approaches)" (Rossman & Wilson, 1985) in order to add "breadth and depth" to the findings rather than pursue "objective truth" (Mathison, 1988; Jick, 1979). This might be at the expense of identifying "resistance" (where results are at odds) (Howe, 1992) or inconsistent findings (Greene et al., 1988). If such is the case it is the responsibility of the researcher to "make sense of the contradictory results" (Mathison, 1988) should they occur.

3. Most important, no study which embarks upon the success outcomes of college students with disabilities and the notion of self-determination, both based upon research "to serve a democratic society" (Howe, 1992), should proceed without a pragmatic integration of qualitative and quantitative approaches. If we are to believe
that the activist conception of human nature is "grounded in the moral ideal that individuals possess autonomy (at least to some degree) and that they ought to have a say in shaping social life" (Howe, 1992, p. 250), and if we further assume that one major component of self-determination is "autonomy" (Wehmeyer, 1995), then the insider's perspective is crucial to the understanding of success outcomes of such individuals. In a society such as ours, which embraces the notion of democracy and equal opportunity, disabled populations of post-secondary students must speak to the empirical findings resulting from traditional positivist approaches.

**Limitations of the Study**

In this section I will address the issue of threats to internal and external validity in the quantitative phase, as well as possible limitations of the qualitative phase.

1. As a primary participant in the institution being investigated from which the sample is selected, the researcher may be considered biased. However, a majority of the students who participated in the quantitative phase are no longer enrolled, either by virtue of graduation or departure, therefore the researcher assumes no position of power over their responses. The two-phase design will help reduce bias since there will be no monopoly on inference (Trow, 1957; Denzin, 1970).

2. Students still currently enrolled may feel it is a requirement to participate.

3. Since participation is voluntary, "the subjects are likely to be biased" (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996, p. 238). This is true in both the qualitative and the quantitative phases.

4. In the qualitative phase, the researcher's consciousness plays a major role in the interpretation of interview data; however, because the interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed word for word, that consciousness is interacted with the participant's
words as fully and as accurately as possible, thus reducing bias (Seidman, 1998).

5. There is danger, as suggested by Seidman, in forcing the excerpts of interview text into pre-determined categories. However, care was taken to thoroughly review the interview data, keeping as true as possible to the detailed descriptions of each of the domains and sub-domains as outlined by Wehmeyer. Further, at no time during the interviews was the framework mentioned, thus allowing for the three-part interview structure to do its job in eliminating forced responses to fit a pre-determined framework.

6. The study was not experimental in nature, and lacks controls that are inherent in more sophisticated research designs (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996), thus limiting a cause-effect relationship with this design.

7. Although the findings of this study will provide implications for further study, generalizability on any large scale was limited by the use of only one research site (in the quantitative phase) and the underlying assumptions of qualitative research.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Emergence of the Disabilities Movement: The American Dream

There are few that would question the inherent value of education. The right to an education is as American as apple pie or baseball. It is "a key to unlocking the promise of American life, a way to move from the back of the line to the front" (Manno, 1995, p. 47). In order to understand the increased interest in higher education for students with disabilities today, as well as the emergence of the Self-Determination Movement as a possible important piece to the puzzle of opportunity and success, it is necessary to understand the historical and political underpinnings of equal educational opportunity in a democratic America and its effects on the emergence of open-access, two-year, post-secondary institutions and learning support centers.

Equal Educational Opportunity in Higher Education

There is little doubt that interest in higher education has soared, affording opportunities for more and more Americans (Lucas, 1994). "America, as a democratic society, has set for itself the goal of ensuring that as many of its youth as possible should graduate from high school and continue on to college" (Lucas, 1994, p. 290). The underpinnings of this statement can be traced back to the G.I. Bill of Rights (1944), which proclaimed that veterans were entitled to and would be subsidized for education or
training at any post-secondary institutions at which they were deemed "qualified" (Lazerson, 1989). According to Lazerson in *American Education in the Twentieth Century*, the success of this bill expanded the expectation that higher education "...ought to be available to whomever wanted it..." (Lazerson, 1989, p. 132). Central to the furthering of educational opportunity, community colleges soon became the fastest growing sector of higher education, because its mission was dedicated to serving local communities through adult learning, training for the skilled labor market, and preparation for students not yet ready to attend four year colleges.

Furthering opportunities for more and more students to attend college was *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* (1954), one of the most dramatic cases in the history of American Education, when the Supreme Court ruled that the "separate but equal" doctrine was unconstitutional and that segregation was illegal. Though this law pertained to public primary and secondary schools, it had tremendous impact on institutions of higher learning and further paved the way for the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Lazerson, 1989). In 1966, a publication titled Equality of Educational Opportunity, commonly referred to as the Coleman Report, called national attention to the lack of availability of equal educational opportunity for individuals by reason of race, color, religion or national origins. Further, the ESEA Act of 1965 (Elementary and Secondary Education Act) paved the way for the Bilingual Education Act of 1968 and 1974. Further, the Developmental Disabilities Act of 1975 and its most recent amendments and the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, now called the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), have contributed to the increasing number of college students with learning disabilities (Rossi, Herting, & Wolman, 1997).
It is clear that post-secondary institutions were required to respond to these acts. It is clear too, that Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act, as well as the Americans with Disabilities Act probably had the biggest impact on institutions of higher learning.

Section 504 states that:

> No otherwise qualified handicapped individual in the United States... shall, solely by reason of...handicap, be excluded from participating in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance... (29USC794).

Further, the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) extended the 1964 Civil Rights Act to people with disabilities (Lazerson, 1989). Signed into law by George Bush on July 25, 1990, it extended civil rights protections for people with disabilities to employment in the public and private sectors, transportation, public accommodations, services provided by state and local governments, and telecommunications. The act sought to guarantee that persons with disabilities have the same access to all goods and services as anyone else. This educational access was also assured in Section 504; however, at that time there was limited knowledge about the access and services that could be expected. The act serves as an important reminder that compliance with civil rights guarantees must be made a priority for post-secondary institutions. Title II of the act covers state institutions and community colleges; Title III covers private institutions (in Franklin, 1997; in Troiano, 1999). ADA (Title III) further states that:

> Any such authority that is covered by 504 or Title II, because it is a function of a State or local government, must make all of its programs accessible to persons with disabilities, which includes physical access as well as modifications in the way tests are administered, e.g. extended time, written instructions, or assistance of a reader... a public entity offering an examination must ensure that modifications of policies, practices, or procedures or the provision of auxiliary aids and services furnish the individual with a disability an equal opportunity to demonstrate
his or her knowledge or ability... (1990, Section 36.309).

The impact of these laws on post-secondary institutions has been enormous, especially for the two year, open access Associate Degree granting institutions.

Two Year, Open Access, Post-Secondary Institutions

Historically speaking, it is evident that our country was built around philosophical and political beliefs that America is a place of “limitless opportunity” (Brint & Karabel, 1989, p. 3), which must, as Abraham Lincoln expressed in a special message to Congress shortly after the onset of the Civil War, “…afford all an unfettered start, and a fair chance in the race of life…” (Id.). But what is even more evident is that such beliefs could never have been realized without the emergence of open access post-secondary institutions.

Around the early 1900’s, four-year institutions, especially many of the public ones, were being pressed in the name of democratic opportunity to relax admission requirements and accept students in ever increasing numbers. Discontent among these colleges loomed large. Professor Norman Forester of North Carolina spoke for many when he wrote, “If higher education is to deserve the name, it cannot be brought within the reach of the uneducable and the passively educable” (quoted in Lucas, 1994, p. 220).

Battlegrounds emerged; camps were formed. On the one side were those who supported unlimited growth, in the name of opportunity, even if it meant compromising standards. On the other were those who believed there was a need to preserve academic excellence and elitism in higher education, even if it meant turning students away.

Thus began the emergence and rapid growth of the “open access” higher
educational institution. Such institutions had humble beginnings with only 8 reported in 1900, but growing in number throughout the century to approximately 1,236, with 1082 public and 154 private (Cohen & Brawer, 1996, p. 15) coming to represent over 40% of America’s colleges (Brint & Karabel, p. 6).

By the late 1920’s the primary mission of these schools took the form of a terminal institution where students of limited means, and/or limited abilities and aspirations might prepare themselves for skilled trades and semi-professions (Lucas). They began to serve local communities through adult learning, training for the skilled labor market, and to provide a college education for the youth of the community “so as to remove geographic and economic barriers to educational opportunity and discover and develop individual talents at low cost and easy access” (Lazerson, p. 135). No matter what their function in their early beginnings, however, the emergence of the junior college contributed to and continues to “satisfy the precept that in a democracy everyone is entitled to access to higher education” (Lucas, p. 221).

The idea that higher education is the only way to provide a ladder to any sort of upward mobility is today taken for granted among the masses. Two years of post-secondary education are within the reach—financially, geographically, practically, of virtually every American (Cohen & Brawer, 1996). “Open admissions policies and programs for everyone ensure that no member of the community need miss the chance to attend” (p. 31). There is no other advanced civilized society, not Japan, Canada, or Sweden that sends as many of its youth to colleges and universities as does the US. The commitment to the principle of opportunity is reinforced over and over again in thought, word and action.
Philosophically and historically speaking, the commitment to equality dates back to our forefathers and the beginnings of a democratic America. Further, the laws passed by government, i.e., the Civil Rights Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, etc., have become the "word" to which our present society and our institutions of higher education respond. As more and more students with disabilities take advantage of the opportunities now afforded them in higher education, there is little doubt that the role of the two-year "open access" post-secondary institution will continue to flourish as well.

Learning Support Centers

No picture of equal educational opportunity in higher education would be complete without a discussion of the history of learning support centers. It is clear that as the doors to educational opportunity opened even wider, the need for learning assistance and developmental education became even more of a necessity (Casazza & Silverman, 1996; Cohen & Brawer, 1996). Irwin and Risser (1988), in an unpublished manuscript from Onondaga Community College at Syracuse, NY, pointed out that there was a tremendous need for ongoing academic support beyond providing only initial opportunities for under-prepared students or those in need of special assistance, so that "keeping the door open" could offer real benefit to these students, not only for the sake of the students, but also to promote retention.

Just as there has existed tension between advocates for and against open access to higher learning, learning assistance programs and learning centers have their supporters and critics. The traditionalists argue that student enrollment must be selective so that high
academic standards can be maintained...the needs of students are secondary to the needs of prescribed curricula. Traditionalists further charge that it is the individual, rather than the institution, which has the responsibility for success or failure. Reformers, on the other hand, promote the ideal that “...in a democracy, education is the right of every citizen and certainly a means for advancement” (Casazza & Silverman, 1996, p. 4). They contend that curricula must be relevant and prepare people for their roles in society. Further, they believe that student success can be facilitated by support mechanisms.

These philosophically conflicting theories are evident throughout the history of higher education. Such acknowledgement of historical traditions in these areas, according to Casazza and Silverman, help administrators and colleagues see the validity and credibility of such programs. They suggested that even before the emergence of the democratic ideal, early American colleges often stepped in to create committees that would help determine whether or not to accept marginal applicants. There was also much debate over the traditional strategies used to impart knowledge, which included proceeding at exactly the same pace and with the same instructional delivery techniques for every student. Such lack of individualization, some felt, failed not only to stimulate the most intelligent students, but also failed to address the needs of the slower students. Though reform efforts to address these issues came in and out of popularity, it was only a matter of time before the struggle to “Americanize” higher education reconciled the debate.

As a democratic America further evolved, the need for learning assistance and developmental education became even more of a necessity. The passage of the first and second Morrill Acts, equal educational opportunity legislation, the GI Bill and most significantly the emergence of the junior college in the early 1900’s further brought
learning assistance into the mainstream of higher education (Casazza & Silverman, p. 15; Cohen & Brawer, p. 256).

The debate over learning assistance and non-selectivity between 1960 and 2000 continued stronger and louder than ever before. Reformers, often times college leaders, defended their institutions against those who charged that standards were declining. Nonetheless, diverse populations of students were accessing higher education and college classrooms were significantly changing. The reality was that many students entering higher education settings, especially open access institutions, had limited proficiency in reading, writing, and math. Learning assistance programs and developmental education were the only answers (Casazza & Silverman).

Gleazer (1970) best summed up the direction of higher education in the seventies:

Meet the student where he is. I am increasingly impatient with people who ask whether a student is "college material"? We are not building a college with the student. The question we ought to ask is whether the college is of sufficient student material. It is the student we are building, and it is the function of the college to facilitate that process (p. 26).

However, efforts to combine access with excellence were also promoted. At Miami Dade Community College for example, President Robert McCabe expressed "...The college should assume responsibility for assisting individuals to succeed..." yet “...hold to high standards not by excluding students but by requiring developmental coursework when test scores indicate the need...” (quoted in Casazza & Silverman, p. 29).

“In order to realize their academic missions and respond to state demands for access, assessment and accountability", the nations’ community colleges, along with all other institutions of higher education, began "focusing increasingly on the enhancement
of academic support services" (Prager, 1991, p. 1).

Today, not only do all colleges entertain such centers, but they are also exploring the notion of Teaching and Learning Centers, as well. In dealing with populations of diverse learners, there is little doubt that the teachers need to know and understand their roles and expectations, too. According to Casazza and Silverman, the teacher/practitioner is central to an effective learning assistance program. It is clear that the emergence of learning assistance programs, developmental education and learning centers parallel, to some degree, the emergence of two-year open access post-secondary institutions as well as the laws passed by government, i.e., the Civil Rights Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. It is also clear that with the passage of these laws, the open access post-secondary institution and its subsequent counterpart, learning assistance, are here to stay as post-secondary education in a democratic America struggles to give all Americans the opportunity to achieve the American Dream.

Related Disability Studies

The stage has been set. We know why students with disabilities are here on college campuses today...they are in search of the American Dream because in a democratic America they have a right to such opportunity. We know that two-year colleges continue to attract more and more of these students because of their open-access nature. Finally, we know that colleges are mandated to provide services to help these students succeed by providing "reasonable accommodations," through learning support centers and most recently, teaching and learning centers, all of which have been identified as important in helping these students be successful. The question now
remains, are they?

The results are mixed. A small set of studies focused on outcomes and experiences of college students with LD. Vogel and Adelman (1990) reported a graduation rate of 37% (the national average is 50%) for 110 students with LD enrolled at a small Midwestern college that provided students with special academic advisors and intensive support services. In a follow-up study Vogel and Adelman looked at the differences between those with LD who graduated and those who did not. They found that those who graduated had better oral language skills, were more motivated and had more positive attitudes toward learning than did those who did not receive a college degree.

In a subsequent study by Vogel, Hruby, and Adelman, (1993), students with LD who had graduated from the Midwestern college were compared with those who were dismissed or dropped out. Findings showed that the ones who graduated took more rigorous courses during high school, were part of "inclusionary" programs in their elementary and secondary schools, and received more intense tutoring than their counterparts. They were also older and more likely to have attended another college.

Finally, in a study by Greenbaum, Graham, and Scales (1995), 67% of the students with LD graduated, although it took them approximately 5.5 years on average, and attended several different colleges before graduating. According to the researchers, the educational success of the individuals could be explained by the following:

1. As a group, their learning disabilities were mild-to-moderate (rather than severe) and their IQ and socio-economic status was higher than average.

2. The participants were knowledgeable about their disability. They had
acceptance of it and a sense of "self-awareness" of its impact. (Adelman and Vogel (1990) and Wehmeyer (1995) argued that more positive outcomes are possible when an individual has such an understanding of the disability.)

3. Determination and perseverance were identified as factors contributing to the success of the majority of participants. Words like "motivation" and "tenacity" were used in their descriptions of their success. The researchers noted that a strong sense of determination and the belief in one's power to overcome adversity had played an important role in the success of adults with disabilities in other non-college related studies (Baker, 1972; Maker, 1978; Speckman, Goldberg, & Herman, 1992).

4. Success was also related to the support, guidance and encouragement that came from "significant" others, for example, families, financial, friends, faculty members or advisors, etc.

Barriers to success were also identified by the authors:

1. Too much socializing
2. Lack of motivation
3. Negative responses of instructors or peers to the disability, ie., lack of understanding from faculty and administrators.

These studies demonstrated that though the results of successful outcomes for students with disabilities vary, notions surrounding words like motivation and determination continue to surface for those who have been successful.

Perhaps the most important reports on success outcomes for students with disabilities were the ones published by the National Center for Education Statistics:
"Profiles of Students with Disabilities as Identified in NELS:88" (National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988), published in June 1997 (Rossi, Herting, Wolman, & Quinn), "Students with Disabilities in Post-secondary Education: A Profile of Preparation, Participation, and Outcomes published in June, 1999 (Horn & Bobbitt), and "An Institutional Perspective on Students with Disabilities in Post-Secondary Education," published in August, 1999, (Lewis & Greene). Overall, these studies suggested that students with disabilities may not be doing as well as their non-disabled counterparts, despite the supports that are in place.

The first report "Profiles of Students with Disabilities as Identified in NELS:88" was designed in response to a need to understand better the characteristics, educational experiences, and outcomes of students with disabilities since the passage of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (now called the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (p. 1). NELS: 88 (National Education Longitudinal Studies) began in 1988 with a base year survey of eighth grade students and was followed up at two year intervals in 1990, 1992, and 1994. NELS: 88 collected data from over 20,000 students, as well as their parents, teachers, school principals and high school transcripts. The target population consisted of public and private schools containing eighth graders in the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Excluded were Bureau of Indian Affairs schools, special education schools for individuals with disabilities, area vocational schools that did not enroll students directly and schools for dependents of US personnel overseas. Also excluded were students with severe mental disabilities, students with English proficiency limitations, and students with severe physical and emotional disabilities that would have made it too difficult to participate in the surveys.
The study recognized that 5.35% of the potential student sample was excluded and as a result a possible one-half of the children with disabilities served under the IDEA were likely excluded and thus "should not be considered representative of all children with disabilities as identified under the IDEA. However, given these limitations, some of the results presented in the document were important to this study, in particular Chapter 3: Background Characteristics of Students with Disabilities and Chapter 5: Educational Outcomes of Students with Disabilities.

Chapter 3 described the specific breakdowns of disabilities that are generally covered under ADA and 504: learning disabled (LD), health problems (HP), physical and emotional problems and sensory impaired (PE and SE) and a category for more than one problem. Other characteristics that were discussed in this chapter related to gender, family background, and most important, the psychological characteristics of these students.

Overall, the results indicated that more male students represent the population of students with disabilities than females. Further, students with disabilities were slightly older in eighth grade than their non-disabled counterparts, with students with LD representing the oldest population. In terms of minority status, there was an overrepresentation of minorities in students with learning disabilities when reported by teachers, but not parents. However, there were similar results in the distribution of students with disabilities reported in terms of Parents SES, Socioeconomic Status. Teachers reported more students with disabilities in the lower SES quartiles. Further, especially in the category of physical and emotional disabilities, teacher-identified students with disabilities tended to be from homes with single female-headed households.
Perhaps the most significant results in this chapter pertain to psychological profiles of these students. Students were asked to respond to questions relating to their self-concept and locus of control (both constructs make up characteristics of self-determination). Students perceived by their teachers to have disabilities scored lower on the locus of control items, as well as the self-concept items. Interestingly, students with health and physical problems did not differ from non-disabled students. In addition, students perceived by their parents as having disabilities also had lower locus of control scores but not self-concept.

Chapter 5 reported results on the following: 1 Academic performance (i.e., grades in selected areas and proficiency in math and reading), 2. Educational expectations (i.e., highest expected education level), and 3. High school dropout rates. The data included graduates and dropouts of the original cohort only...those students who were eighth graders in 1988 and the follow-up survey conducted in 1992.

Academic Performance: The average grades in English, math and science for those identified with any disability earned lower grades than non-disabled counterparts, which was consistent with earlier findings based on a previous study done from the High School and Beyond (HS & B) survey of high school sophomores and seniors in 1980 and 1982. Of particular interest was that students with learning disabilities or multiple problems scored lower than their non-disabled counterparts, whereas students with health problems generally scored the same as non-disabled students.

Educational Expectations: Students' expectations of the highest education level were slightly lower than those of their non-disabled peers and their parents' and teachers' expectations of those students were also lower, especially for students identified with
learning disabilities. The study reported that despite the lower expectation levels, almost 50% of the students with learning disabilities aspired to go on to obtain at least a four year degree and 60% of their parents expected their children to complete 4 years or more of college in 1992. Interestingly, however, only 39.2% of the students with disabilities identified by parents and 30.1% of those identified by teachers had taken or planned to take the SAT exam, with students with learning disabilities least expecting to take the SAT. Similar results were reported for the ACT. This can be closely related to the notion that most students with disabilities, especially those with learning disabilities, are seeking out two-year, open access type institutions rather than four year.

**Dropout Rates:** About 1/4 of the students identified by parents and almost 1/5 of those identified by teachers dropped out of high school. The dropout rates were much higher than those of their non-disabled peers. The dropout rates were high for all categories of disabilities, especially those with emotional disorders (49.9%).

In terms of the results when comparing educational outcomes of students who had identified themselves as disabled, as contrasted to the results of teacher/parent identification of having a disability, only the English scores of those students were lower than their non-disabled counterparts; their math and science scores were comparable. However, those self-identified students had much higher drop out rates.

In sum, this report concluded that the educational outcomes for students with disability status, whether identified by teachers, parents or themselves had lower grades, lower scores on proficiency tests, lower educational expectations beyond high school and much higher drop-out rates (almost 2-3 times that of their non-disabled peers). Of further significance was the fact that different disabling conditions yield different results, with
students with learning disabilities and/or multiple problems having less positive educational outcomes than those with health related disabilities, and those with emotional problems having the highest drop out rates. The significance of these results to the following study will be discussed below.

In June 1999, the National Center for Education Statistics published another longitudinal study "Students with Disabilities in Post-Secondary Education: A Profile of Preparation, Participation and Outcomes," conducted as part of the National Post-Secondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS) in which a nationally representative sample of approximately 21,000 undergraduates (1995-1996 academic year) were asked if they had any disabilities. 6% of the population reported some type of disability. (See figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1: Percentage of 95-96 undergraduates who reported a disability

Of the 6% depicted above, learning disabilities topped the list at 29%, followed by orthopedic at 23%, 21% with other health related disability, 16% reported a non-correctable vision impairment, 16% were hearing impaired or deaf and 3% speech impaired. (See Figure 2.2).
The students with disabilities also tended to be male, older and white, non-Hispanic and "more likely to be enrolled in sub-baccalaureate institutions such as public two year colleges (35% of students with disabilities vs. 25% of students without disabilities). These students were also less likely to transfer to four-year programs. The primary reason, the report suggests, for seeking out a two year college is that these students fall behind their counterparts without disabilities in their high school preparation for college (thus also yielding lower scores on all academic areas in the NELS: 88 study). In turn, they also suffer the consequence of being less qualified for admissions into a four-year college. Most significant was the percentage of students with learning disabilities who enrolled in two year or other than bachelor degree granting colleges-71% vs. 40% of non-disabled populations (p. 30.). Nonetheless, the report suggests that public four year institutions with low selectivity admissions standards were also attended in large numbers, though many of the students accepted took significant developmental course work before matriculation.

Perhaps the most important conclusions from this study were the persistence and graduation rates of students with disabilities who were less likely than those without
disabilities to have attained a Bachelors or Associates Degree. In terms of those enrolled in public four-year institutions, 33% of students with disabilities completed their bachelors compared with 48% of students without. In terms of 2 year institutions, similar proportions were evident with 7% vs. 18% (p. 41).

With respect to employment outcomes, although the persistence rate to graduation was smaller for those in the group with disabilities, for those who did persist to graduate with a Bachelor Degree, employment outcomes were similar to those in the non-disabled group (67% and 73%), as well as annual salaries. Further, evidence that students were in jobs pertaining to their major was no different for either group (58% and 55% respectively) (p. 45). However, for the group that was unemployed, those students who had disabilities far outnumbered those who did not…11% vs. 4%. Data were not available for those who only received a two-year degree. No reason was given to the intent of this omission. Finally, in terms of graduate school, once accepted, students with and without disabilities were equally as likely to graduate.

Another report in August 1999, "An Institutional Perspective on Students with Disabilities in Post-Secondary Education" prepared by the National Center for Educational Statistics provided information on a cohort group of students who disclosed to two and four year institutions as having a "disability" showed that in the years 1996-1997 and 1997-1998, 428,280 students with disabilities were enrolled. Most of the students were enrolled at public two-year colleges and many at public four-year institutions. Almost half of the students with disabilities (195, 870 out of 428, 280) had identified a learning disability (LD). This was the most frequently disclosed disability. 59, 650 had mobility or orthopedic impairments; 49, 570 had health impairments; 33,260
had mental illnesses or emotional disturbances; 23,860 had hearing impairments; 18,650 were blind or visually impaired; 4,020 had speech and/or language problems. The remaining 38,410 fell into the "other" category (Lewis & Green, Aug. 1999, p. iii).

The study also reported that support services and accommodations were available at 98% of the institutions that had enrolled students with disabilities, with public two and four years more likely to provide extensive services. Further, 95% of all the institutions that enrolled students with disabilities had at least one kind of educational training activity intended to assist faculty and staff in dealing with these students.

This report was further evidence that two and four year institutions, with open access and/or low selectivity, and teaching and learning centers that encourage support and accommodations are necessary pieces in this puzzle to afford all Americans the opportunity to achieve the American Dream.

Emergence of the Self-Determination Movement—A Missing Piece?

The self-determination movement began in response to the "stunning lack of freedom experienced by individuals with (developmental) disabilities and their attendant poverty in the present human services system" (Nerney, 2001a). Further, the movement demanded that all Americans address "questions of equity like we have never had to before..." (Nerney, 2001b, p. 2). The foundation of self-determination for individuals with disabilities in the US "rests on a set of principles deeply rooted in equality and both civil and human rights" (Nerney, 2001b, p. 2) beginning with the basic ideas/principles of a. freedom, b. authority, c. support, and d. responsibility (Nerney, 2001a, NPO, 200).

But the study of self-determination is not new. For centuries, philosophers have tried to understand the notions of self-determination and will (Deci, 1980). Further, Deci...
and his colleagues (Deci, 1980; Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan, Connell & Deci, 1985) have extensively studied the nature of self-determination. Their findings suggested a theory of self-determination which is essentially concerned with human freedom and limitations to that freedom (Deci & Ryan, 1985) whereby one acts: "Out of choice rather than obligation or coercion, and those choices are based on an awareness of one's organismic needs and the flexible interpretation of external events. Self-determination often involves controlling one's environment or one's outcomes but may also involve choosing to give up control" (p. 38).

Deci also stated that though all people have a considerable capacity for self-determination, that capacity is not without boundaries. Unfortunately, Deci pointed out, "most people fail to utilize the full extent of their capacity for self-determination...they may feel as if they lack and cannot get control over themselves" (Deci, 1980, p. 5). Such loss can happen for two reasons: 1. Loss or lack of intrinsic motivation; 2. Loss or lack of organismic well-being by being denied the opportunity for self-determination (p. 105).

In terms of loss of motivation, Deci suggested that in order to have intrinsic motivation, competence combined with self-determination is necessary. Deci and Ryan's study on the effects of locus of control and other internal and external events on intrinsic motivation and subsequent behaviors created the foundation for this thinking. This prior work focused on four areas: 1. That people interpret events in the environment based on their causality orientation (perceived locus of control). This was based on the notion that all people are somewhat autonomy oriented (internal locus of control) and control oriented (external locus of control) and impersonally oriented (no intentional control).

2. The extent to which an activity represents an optimal challenge to the individual and its
effect on intrinsic motivation, which suggests that if the activity is viewed by the
individual as beyond the person's skill capacity, self-doubt would sabotage intrinsic
motivation to obtain the desired outcomes, which would also result in a decrease in self-
determination. 3. The nature of external initiating and regulatory events, which could, if
there is a presence of "controlling external events" even if subtle, lead to the individual
feeling of being "out of control" and not able to affect outcomes. 4. The intra-personal
aspect of initiating and regulating events which refers to processes that are internal in the
individual, i.e., interest in the activity, task involvement and ego involvement, whereby
these too could be self-defeating if the individual is too self-critical (p. 38).

Further, in terms of loss or lack of organismic well being by denial of the
opportunity for self-determination, Deci argued that when people are not given an
opportunity to be self-determined, that is, to make choices in their lives and feel control
over those choices, they become less and less successful until they reach the point of
helplessness and hopelessness (Deci, 1980, pp. 105-111).

Given this framework for capacity for intrinsic motivation and organismic well
being, it is easy to see why individuals, especially those with disabilities, can lose their
sense of self-determination, especially as they get older. Anyone who is continually
exposed to activities that are too challenging for his/her competence level, compounded
by too many external controls and limited opportunities for demonstrating self-
determination cannot be expected, based on Deci's theory, to experience successful
outcomes. It should be noted that Deci and his colleagues did not rule out innate, genetic
differences in intrinsic motivation and characteristics of self-determination. However, he
contends that the focus on environmental rather than genetic factors, allows for more
meaningful impact on the development of self-determination (p. 151).

And there are several organizations across the country within the last 15 years that have attempted the "development of self-determination" for the developmental disabilities community. J.R. Johnson (1999) noted that organizations like Partners in Policymaking (1987), The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Initiative (1996), The Arc of the United States (1996), and The National Center on Self-Determination and 21st Century Learning (1997) have funded numerous projects to allow "individuals to control their lives, to achieve self-defined goals and to participate fully in society" (p. 4).

Partners in Policymaking is a nationally and internationally recognized competency-based leadership training program initiated in 1987 by the Minnesota Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities. It was developed for adults with developmental disabilities and parents of young children with disabilities to "teach best practices in disabilities and the competencies of influencing communication" (p. 4). Its national recognition has come from its promotion of empowerment and self-advocacy of people with disabilities and their families (Zirpoli, Wieck, Hancox, & Skarnulis, 1989, 1994). The program has been implemented in more than 40 states and has graduated more than 4,000.

In the spring of 1996 the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation funded an initiative which requested proposals to help states "improve the quality of life of persons with developmental disabilities and to do so cost effectively" (Johnson, J.R., p. 5). $5 million was awarded initially to 12 states by the foundation and has resulted in many more innovative initiatives since that time. This foundation has impacted both state and federal regulation more than any other self-determination initiative.
The National Center on Self-Determination and 21st Century Leadership was a result of the Administration on Developmental Disabilities’ call, in August, 1997, for the establishment of a national technical assistance and knowledge transfer center on self-determination and 21st century leadership development. Success for the organization came in the form of six initiatives: 1. Expanding leadership development capacity through expansion of Partners in Policymaking, whose focus was on promoting “self-advocacy” activities; 2. Brokering technical assistance through a national peer mentorship network; 3. Expansion of leadership opportunities for young people; 4. Facilitation of policy education; 5. Operation of a clearinghouse on all relevant knowledge, best practices and policies related to self-determination and leadership; and 6. Collaboration with ADD sponsoring agencies and projects as well as other federal and foundation programs (pp. 5-6).

Lastly, the Arc of the United States, a national organization on mental retardation, established a Self-Determination Program within their Department of Research and Program Services in 1996. The Self-Determination Program enables The Arc, at all levels, to achieve its mission “to secure for all people with mental retardation the opportunity to choose and realize their goals of where and how they learn, live, work and play by: a. conducting model demonstration, outreach and research projects (in conjunction with affiliated chapters) addressing self-determination, equity and quality of life for people with mental retardation; b. providing support to chapters, members and the public; c. advocating for people with mental retardation and their families to promote opportunities for self-determination and choice” (www.thearc.org).

One of the most important initiatives supported by the Arc was a series of model-
demonstration projects to promote self determination for youth with disabilities funded by the Department of Education-Office of Special Education Programs from Nov. 1992-Mar. 1995. The funding initiative was in response to the growing body of literature that indicated students with disabilities were graduating to generally disappointing adult outcomes (Chadsey-Rusch et al., 1991) and the call from people with disabilities to gain more choice and control over decisions that impacted their lives (Gagne, 1994; Kennedy, 1996). Further, self-determination had been identified as a critical outcome of the transition process for students with disabilities (Halloran, 1993; Wehman, 1993). The projects were to identify the component elements of self-determination and to develop and field-test a student self-report assessment of self-determination, so that, once a definitional framework was established, instructional time could be devoted to promoting self-determination. It was believed that "the students who leave school as self-determined young people should achieve more positive adult outcomes" (Wehmeyer, 1997, p. 246). However, as suggested by Wehmeyer, even though this had considerable "face validity," it remained an untested hypothesis" (p. 246).

In sum, through this initiative, many strides were made in the area of understanding the characteristics of self-determination. Through cooperative efforts between the Arc, Wehmeyer and others, a definitional framework was established, identifying four elements that were recognized as characteristics of self-determined individuals: 1. The individual acts autonomously; 2. The behaviors are self-regulated; 3. The person initiates and responds to events in a psychologically empowered manner; and 4. The person acts in a self-realizing manner (Wehmeyer, 1995).
In the Arc's Self-Determination Scale: Procedural Guidelines, Wehmeyer (1995) defines each of these terms in detail:

1. **Behavioral Autonomy** is evident if the person acts (a) according to his or her own preferences, interests and/or abilities and (b) independently, free from undue external influence or interference. Further, four behavior categories operationalize the concept (Sigafoos et al. (1989) in Wehmeyer): self- and family care activities, self-management activities, recreational activities, and social and vocational activities.

2. **Self-Regulated Behavior** is a "complex response system that enables individuals to examine their environments and their repertoires of responses for coping with those environments to make decisions about how to act, to act, to evaluate the desirability of the outcomes of the action, and to revise their plans as necessary" (Whitman, 1990, p. 373 in Wehmeyer).

   Self-regulated behaviors include self-management strategies (self-monitoring, self-instruction, self-evaluation, and self-reinforcement), goal setting and attainment behaviors, problem-solving behaviors and observational learning strategies. Self-regulated behaviors include a combination of behavioral and cognitive strategies needed to become causal agents.

3. **Psychological Empowerment** refers to the multiple dimensions of perceived control, which includes the cognitive (personal efficacy), personality (locus of control), and motivational (Zimmerman, 1990 in Wehmeyer). Self-determined people act on the belief that they (a) have control over circumstances that are important to them (locus of control), (b) possess the
skills to achieve desired outcomes (self-efficacy) and (c) if they choose to apply those skills, the identified outcomes will result (outcomes expectations) (p. 20). The importance of the cognitive contribution is essential for self-determined behavior (Agran, 1995 in Wehmeyer).

4. Self-Realization is a person's capacity for using a comprehensive and reasonably accurate knowledge of him/herself and his/her strengths and limitations to act in such a manner so as to make the most of this knowledge. Such self-knowledge is formed through experience with and interpretation of one's environment and is also influenced by others' evaluations, reinforcements and attributions of one's own behavior.

Wehmeyer further suggested that in order for an individual to be able to express self-determined behavior, an acquisition of the following component elements is necessary, if not sufficient. It is also at this level that instructional efforts to promote self-determination must be focused if self-determined behavior is to emerge:

- Choice-making
- Decision-making
- Problem-solving
- Goal Setting and attainment
- Self-observation, evaluation and reinforcement
- Internal locus of control
- Positive attributions of efficacy and outcome expectancy
- Self-awareness
- Self-knowledge
Using the above framework and a study conducted by Wehmeyer, Kelchner and Richards (1996), Wehmeyer constructed a tool, *The Arc's Self-Determination Scale*, to assess student attitudes and abilities in these four areas. The scale operationalizes the definitional framework and provides data on student global self-determination, as well as individual autonomy, self-regulation, psychological empowerment, and self-realization. Probably no other initiative has promoted so much for the research that was to follow in the area of self-determination.

**Related Self-Determination Studies**

As discussed earlier, background characteristics of students with disabilities show that they score lower on locus of control psychological measures than non-disabled peers (Rossi, Herting, Wolman, Quinn, 1997-NELS: 88). The NELS: 88 showed less positive outcomes for these students as well, although in the NELS study no attempt was made to link the less successful outcomes to lesser degrees of locus of control (an attribute of self-determination).

In a preliminary study, "Perceptions of Self-Determination and Psychological Empowerment of Adolescents with Mental Retardation," Wehmeyer (1994) examined the perceptions of self-determination among youth with and without disabilities. 282 participants with mental retardation between the ages of 13 and 20 who were receiving special education services were compared with two groups, a non-disabled peer group but who were considered to be "at risk" for failure and a group with learning disabilities. They were given four instruments: two measuring locus of control and two measuring self-efficacy and outcome expectancy. Results revealed that those students with mental retardation scored in a direction of extrinsically motivated on the locus of control
measures (even across age groups) as compared to the other two groups. The self-efficacy and outcome expectancy scores of the group with mental retardation showed that students without documented disabilities, but just considered "at risk" scored themselves more positively followed by students with mental retardation and lastly by students with disabilities.

Another study by Wehmeyer (1993), "Perceptual and Psychological Factors in Career Decision-Making of Adolescents With and Without Cognitive Disabilities," examined the perceptual and psychological factors connected with career decision making for students with and without cognitive disabilities. 78 students ranging in age from 14-19 comprised three groups. One group (n=27) included students with mental retardation, one group (n=25) included adolescents with learning disabilities, and the third group (n=26) included students "at risk" behaviorally or academically, but without documented disabilities. They were all administered the Career Decision Diagnostic Assessment (CDDA) which included sub-domains in the locus of control construct. Other locus of control instruments were also administered to validate the decision to use CDDA. Findings indicated that students with disabilities (mental retardation and Id) tended to hold to externally oriented perceptions of control over their lives... fate, luck etc. They also were found to rely on others for career decisions and avoided responsibility for decision-making when compared to the group without documented disabilities.

A third study by Palmer and Wehmeyer (1998), "Students’ Expectations of the Future: Hopelessness as A Barrier to Self-Determination," used the self-determination framework. To review, the underpinnings of that framework suggest that individuals with
self-determination: act autonomously, in a self-regulated way, and in a psychologically empowered, self-realizing manner. Though the researchers recognized that these characteristics can be impacted by age, opportunity, capacity and circumstances and thus may vary over time, these essential characteristics need to be present together to identify self-determined behavior. This study, like Wehmeyer's other studies, used participants from the ages of 10-19 years, in three different groups - those with mental retardation ($n=98$), those with learning disabilities ($n=158$) and those who had no documented disability and received no special services ($n=178$). Though the researchers wanted to use a scale to measure hopefulness and the connection to self-determination, such a scale did not exist and thus they chose "The Hopelessness Scale for Children" (Kasdin et al, 1983) to measure expectations for the future.

Results indicated that students with mental retardation (as hypothesized) held less hopeful expectations for their futures, followed by students with learning disabilities and then those without disabilities. The study recommended that, based upon work done by Powers and colleagues (1996), less positive outcomes for the future would exist for students with disabilities if passivity on the part of the student was encouraged. Opportunities to "express self-determination" by not only skills training but also opportunities to experience situations of control and choice in their environment were crucial, concluded the authors, to a hopeful outlook for the future.

A fourth study conducted by Wehmeyer (1997) "Whose Future is it Anyway?" was conducted in response to the transition requirements in the 1990 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) which stated that "the coordinated set of activities (e.g. transition services) must be based upon the individual student's needs taking into
account the student's preference and interests" (IDEA, Section 602(a)(19)). Wehmeyer and Ward suggested that the intent of this language and the spirit of IDEA were closely aligned with "educational efforts to promote student self-determination" (Wehmeyer & Ward, 1995) which led to the project "Whose Future is It Anyway (Wehmeyer & Kelchner, 1997)

The project consisted of a pre-post test on student self-determination using three different instruments. To measure self-determination, the Arc Self-Determination Scale (Wehmeyer & Kelchner) described above, was used. Important to note here is that Wehmeyer, Kelchner and Richards (1996) had already empirically validated the definitional framework used in this scale with a sample of 408 adults with mental retardation and developmental disabilities, and found that self-determined individuals were significantly different from individuals who were not (indicated by performance or non-performance of behaviors generally agreed upon to reflect self-determination) on measures of each of the four essential characteristics.

Two other measures were used in combination with the Arc Scale. To measure locus of control, ("the degree to which a person perceives contingency relationships between his or her actions and outcomes" (Rotter, 1996)), the Adult version of the Nowicki-Strickland Internal Scale was used. To measure self-efficacy and outcome expectancy (the conviction that one can successfully execute the behavior required to produce a given outcome" (Bandura, 1977, p. 193) for educational planning, the project personnel developed their own 20 item questionnaire.

The researchers, using these scales, set out to determine if 36 instructional "self-determination" sessions introduced to high school students with documented mild
disabilities, primarily learning disabilities and mild mental retardation would yield post-assessment results of higher degrees of self-determination.

Results of the study revealed that only self-efficacy and outcome expectancy for educational planning showed significant changes in post-test scores after intervention, primarily for women with disabilities; however, there were no significant differences between pre-post intervention scores on self-determination and locus of control. The researchers attribute this to the fact that both the locus of control scale and the Arc Self-Determination Scale are measures of global constructs and "as such, changes across time result from very robust changes in environments, circumstances, learning or development which is affected by input variables across multiple environments, such as home, school and community, and across the life span" (Wehmeyer, 1997, p. 7). In sum, the study found that focusing on only one environment in a short amount of time limits the potential that change will occur.

Conclusions suggested that it is very difficult to change "the system and begin to rebuild students' beliefs" and that attempting in one year to overcome years of negative perceptions and beliefs may be "unreasonable." Nonetheless, and especially significant was the conclusion that though there were no pre-post differences in self-determination totals, students who had higher levels of self-determination displayed more "student involvement" (p. 8). Further, qualitative follow-up interviews revealed that at least four students felt more empowered to take control for the upcoming year.

Finally, Wehmeyer and Schwartz (1997) in “Self-Determination and Positive Adult Outcomes: A Follow-up Study of Youth with Mental Retardation or Learning Disabilities,” investigated whether positive adult outcomes were indeed linked to self-
determination. In this study, too, Wehmeyer and Schwartz use the Arc Self-Determination Scale (self-determination measure) and the Nowicki-Strickland Internal-External Scale (locus of control measure). Study participants included 80 students with cognitive disabilities (mental retardation or learning disabilities) and who would be leaving school either by graduating or certificate of attendance at the completion of the school year 94-95. The mean age was 19.82 (reflective of other studies suggesting that students with disabilities tend to be older) and with an average IQ for the group 77.31. 50% of the group had mild mental retardation, with the other 50% with learning disabilities. 55% of the students were female and 45 were male. 69% were white, 21% African American, 5% Hispanic, and the remainder either native American or Asian American. The study took into account the levels of IQ on self-determination because Wehmeyer's population included students with mental retardation.

The procedure involved administering the scales to the students in their classrooms prior to their exiting of the school. 111 students' information was available regarding self-determination. Data collection began nine months after the students exited. Three mailings were conducted in a three-month period, followed by telephone contacts for non-respondents and personal interviews. There were a total of 80 completed surveys: 16% received from the first mailing, 18% from the second, and 4% from the third, 35% from telephone contacts, and 27% from personal interviews. In most cases, the survey was completed by a family member with the ex-student completing when possible. Of the 31 students that did not respond, 74% (n=23) had moved and left no forwarding address and 26% (n=8) refused to complete the survey. Demographic data were also obtained from school records including age, birth date, ethnicity, verification of exit, special
education eligibility, intelligence score and number and type of vocational education classes completed.

To measure the adult outcomes, an instrument was constructed after examining 24 similar type outcomes survey instruments. Questions included a series of questions pertaining to students' living arrangements, current and past employment situations, post-secondary education status, and community integration outcomes. The researchers were careful to note that because they had found small, but significant correlations between intelligence and self-determination, there was a concern that the high self-determination group might disproportionately consist of students with learning disabilities and the low self-determination group might consist of those with mental retardation. To prevent this, two frequency counts were computed one each by disability. The top and the bottom third of each frequency count were assigned to the high or low self-determination groups respectively. Multivariate analysis and linear regression analysis were conducted to identify other variables/factors that might contribute to higher wages per hour, better jobs, etc.

Overall, the results of this study showed that there was a "consistent trend characterized by self-determined youth doing better than their peers 1 year out of school" (p. 250). This was true despite two facts: that the degree of success relative to adult outcomes varies over time and this study used only a single data collection time. It was noted by the authors, however, that generalizations about the link between self-determination and adult outcomes across the lifespan should be limited. Members of the high self-determination group expressed a preference to live outside the family home, have a savings or checking account, and be employed for pay. Students who earned the
most had significantly higher self-determination scores, and individual sub-domains of self-determination contributed significantly to students' wages per hour.

**Summary**

As evidenced in the literature, two major movements have taken place in the last twenty years in the name of equality of opportunity in a democratic America. More and more students with disabilities are enrolling in post-secondary institutions in search of the American Dream. Open-access post-secondary institutions and learning support centers dot the American higher education landscape in response to the call for opportunities for individuals with disabilities. In addition, the notion of self-determination and its relationship to positive adult outcomes is slowly making its way from the adult developmental disabilities community into elementary and secondary educational environments. A missing piece to this puzzle, however, may be the connection between the two movements in higher education. It was the purpose, then, of this research to determine whether or not, and to what extent, such a piece can be added to the puzzle of positive success outcomes for college students with disabilities.
CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

An Historical and Philosophical Perspective

"Three perspectives on combining methods are... the purist approach where the two methods are seen as mutually exclusive, the situationalist approach that views them as separate but equal, and the pragmatist approach that suggests integration is possible."

(Rossman & Wilson, 1985, p. 627)

One of the earliest examples of combining methods dates back to 1934 when LaPiere investigated the relationship between attitudes and behavior (Jick, 1979, p. 604). Years later, in the 1950's, Vidich and Shapiro (1955) (field researchers) made efforts to integrate fieldwork and survey methods. "Without the survey data, the observer could only make reasonable guesses about his area of ignorance in the effort to reduce bias" (p. 28). Trow (1957) claimed that no single technique could claim a "monopoly on inference" (p. 33). Soon after, Lazerfeld and Wagner (1958), two important founders of sociological survey methods, suggested that exploratory interviews should precede the development of questionnaires, in order that the questionnaires could explore "reality."

Campbell and Fiske (1959) searched for ways to use more than one method of investigation to study psychological traits. Their multitrait-multimethod approach is based on the premise that in the development of measures of psychological traits, several methods should be used to measure several traits simultaneously, followed by

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correlational analysis to establish independence of methods and traits.

This thinking began what was later to be coined "triangulation" (Webb et al., 1966), which focused on the use of appropriate multiple methods in order to establish more valid research findings. Reiss (1968), speaking for quantitative-oriented researchers of the time, encouraged an exploitation of "the potentialities of social observation" (p. 360). He was followed by other quantitative researchers in the seventies who believed that field methods could contribute to survey analysis with regard to validation of results, the interpretation of statistical correlations, and clarification of confusing findings (Diesing, 1971; Sieber, 1973).

Denzin (1970), relying heavily on the work of Webb et al., suggested that "...by combining multiple observers, theories, methods and data sources, sociologists can hope to overcome the intrinsic bias that comes from single-method, single-observer, single-theory studies" (p. 313). Later, in 1978, Denzin, provided an in-depth discussion of the "how to" in triangulation methods, outlining four types: a. data triangulation including time, space, and person, b. investigator triangulation, c. theory triangulation, d. methodological triangulation (pp. 294-307). The most often used in the examination of social phenomenon, Denzin, himself, identified, was methodological triangulation with theoretical triangulation determined to be "problematic" (Mathison, 1988, p. 14).

The late seventies and eighties brought a different understanding of the purpose of triangulation. Fielding and Fielding (1986) suggested that we should combine theories and methods, but with the intention of adding "breadth and depth" to our findings rather than for pursuing "objective" truth (p. 33) or eliminating bias (Mathison, 1988; Jick, 1979). Rossman and Wilson (1985) provided what they call a "common-sense case for
the power of combining quantitative and qualitative methods” (p. 628). They suggested, simply, that three distinctive perspectives for combining methods are identifiable: 1. the purist, who usually focuses at the paradigm level and holds that qualitative and quantitative approaches are so epistemologically and ontologically different in their assumptions about nature and society that they can never be combined; 2. the situationalist whose main focus is on research methods that maintain both approaches have value, and who believes that although both approaches may be used in a single study, one or the other approach will be dominant. (Referring to Vidich and Shapiro’s study (1955), Rossman and Wilson pointed out that situationalists adhere to the notion that the two approaches are “complementary” (p. 33), but represent distinct universes). 3. The pragmatist, on the other hand, tries to “tap the relative strengths and to make the most efficient use of both in attempting to understand social phenomena” (p. 631). As such, Rossman and Wilson advanced three analytic functions—corroboration, which brings together data collected through more than one method to see if there is convergence in the findings; elaboration, which provides a different perspective on the same phenomenon; and initiation, which searches for areas of divergent findings which “set up dissonance, doubt and ambiguity” (p. 633) much like Jick’s (1979) description of “holistic triangulation” (p. 603). Making sense of contradiction and paradox is key to this function.

Mathison (1988) extended this pragmatist view of integration and also provided two rich alternative conceptions to the original value of triangulation. Mathison argued that, though tempting to believe that triangulation will result in a reduction in bias and convergence whereby data collected from different sources or different methods will
agree and establish a single proposition about some social phenomenon, it is a "phantom image" (p. 17). Such a belief about triangulation is suspect in that "rarely does it provide a clear path to a singular view" (p. 15). Rather, suggested Mathison, two other more frequently occurring outcomes are possible. First is inconsistency among data, when multiple sources, methods and so on are used resulting in an unclear concluding proposition about a social phenomenon. The other alternative is contradiction, where not only are the data inconsistent, but actually the findings contradict each other and result in "opposing views of the social phenomenon being studied" (p. 15).

Mathison further clarified this thinking by suggesting that triangulation does indeed have a purpose in research, that the outcomes are not ends in themselves, but rather that the researcher is left with the dubious task of making sense of the evidence, "regardless of what the outcome is" (p. 15). Such attempts at making sense of inconsistent or contradictory results require that we embed the empirical data within a holistic understanding of the social phenomenon, whereby a shift is made from viewing triangulation as a technological solution for ensuring validity and eliminating bias to placing the responsibility on the researcher for constructing reasonable explanations of the phenomenon being studied.

Other pragmatic perspectives began appearing in the literature. Perhaps the most substantive contributions in the area of combining/integrating qualitative and quantitative approaches came in 1989 by Greene, Caracelli, and Graham who not only clearly outlined "five purposes," but also suggested that all phases of the design process, including the introduction, the literature and theory, the purpose statement, and the research questions, could be drawn from different paradigms. According to Greene et. al,
(building on Rossman & Wilson, 1985; Mathison, 1988), besides triangulation, there are four other purposes for combining methods which include: *complementarity*, which seeks elaboration, enhancement, illustration, clarification of the results from one method with the results from the other method; *development* which seeks to use the results from one method to help develop or inform the other method where development is construed to include sampling and implementation as well as measurement decisions; *initiation* which seeks the discovery of paradox and contradiction, new perspectives of frameworks, the recasting of questions or results from one method with questions or results from the other method; and lastly, *expansion* which seeks to extend the breadth and range of inquiry by using different methods for different inquiry components (p. 258).

Since so much of the decision about whether or not to integrate approaches lies in the philosophical underpinnings of each, a deeper look at the assumptions and predispositions of qualitative and quantitative paradigms is in order.

**Ontological and Epistemological Assumptions**

Decisions surrounding which research method to choose is often times made at the level of methods. Usually the decision is made based upon time, money, resources, staff and those requesting the study. However, often these decisions do not take into consideration the ontological and epistemological assumptions underlying the research methods (Hathaway, 1995; Patton, 1991). Because this present study integrated/combined the two approaches, an explanation of the underlying assumptions and predispositions of each paradigm is necessary to understand the debate held by the purists and situationalists and the attempts to integrate held by the pragmatists (Rossman
Quantitative approaches to empirical inquiry are based on a positivist understanding of knowledge and reality, whereby variables can be identified and relationships measured. Qualitative inquiry, on the other hand, is based on the interpretivist (Patton, 1991; Hathaway, 1995) mode where reality is socially constructed, and where variables are complex, interwoven and difficult to measure. (It should be noted here that other terms are also used to describe the qualitative researcher, such as, constructivist (Guba & Lincoln, 1994) and post-positivist (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996). Though there are differences within each approach (Schwandt in Denzin & Lincoln, 2000), the terms are unified in "their opposition to positivism and their commitment to study the world from the point of view of the interacting individual" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 158). For purposes of this study, the terms will be used interchangeably depending upon the term used in the source.

According to Merriam (1988), qualitative researchers are (a) concerned with process rather than products or outcomes, (b) interested in meaning—how people make sense of their lives, experiences and structures of their world, (c) the primary instrument for data collection and analysis, (d) involved in fieldwork to observe or record behavior in a natural setting (in Creswell, 1994, p. 145). See Table 3.1 (from Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996, p. 30) which further highlights the differences between quantitative and qualitative research.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Quantitative Researchers</strong></th>
<th><strong>Qualitative Researchers</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assume an objective social reality</td>
<td>Assume social reality constructed by participants in it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assume that social reality is relatively constant across time and settings</td>
<td>Assume that social reality is continuously constructed in local situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>View causal relationships among social phenomena from a mechanistic perspective</td>
<td>Assign human intentions a major role in explaining causal relationships among social phenomena</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take an objective, detached stance toward research participants and their setting</td>
<td>Become personally involved with research participants, too the point of sharing perspectives and assuming a caring attitude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study populations or samples that represent population</td>
<td>Study cases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study behavior and other observable phenomena</td>
<td>Study the meaning that individuals create and other internal phenomena</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study human behavior in natural or contrived settings</td>
<td>Study human actions in natural settings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyze social reality into variables</td>
<td>Make holistic observations of the total context in which social action occurs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use preconceived concepts and theories to determine what data will be collected.</td>
<td>Discover concepts and theories after data have been collected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generate numerical data to represent the social environment.</td>
<td>Generate verbal and pictorial data represent the social environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use statistical methods to analyze data.</td>
<td>Use analytic induction to analyze data.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use statistical inference procedures to generalize findings from a sample defined population.</td>
<td>Generalize case findings by searching for other similar cases.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepare impersonal, objective reports of research findings.</td>
<td>Prepare interpretive reports that reflect researcher’s construction of the data and an awareness that readers will form their own constructions from what is reported.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The purists claim that in terms of such assumptions about the world, truth and reality, there should never even be a consideration to combine qualitative and quantitative (Guba, 1987). However, others have just ignored the underlying assumptions and focused only on the benefits of combining both approaches (Donmoyer, 1985; Howe, 1992, Creswell, 1994; Hathaway, 1995).

Situationalists argue that "...certain methods are most appropriate for specific situations" (Rossman & Wilson, 1985, p. 630). The choice lies partly in the questions to be answered. Situationalists go so far as to alternate between qualitative and quantitative methods within the research process (Patton, 1991; Creswell, 1994; Hathaway, 1995; Rossman & Wilson, 1985).

Pragmatists, however, believe that quantitative and qualitative methods are capable of informing each other "throughout the research process" (Hathaway, p. 539). Unlike the situationalist who alternates, the pragmatist considers that the two approaches can simultaneously answer a research question. "Using interviews, surveys, questionnaires and observation techniques within one study is an example of a pragmatist approach to integrating or combining research methods" (Hathaway, p. 539).

The switch, however, from the primarily descriptive quantitative studies in the 70's and 80's to multi-method studies in the 1990's has been slow (Peterson, 1985; Peterson & Spencer, 1993; Hathaway, 1995) for both educational and institutional researchers. Further, concerns exist around this notion of understanding and recognizing the philosophical grounds upon which the selected approach is based. Especially problematic is research done on college campuses that focus on only statistical analysis of survey results which may not reflect the reality as experienced by those who
answer the survey (Patton, 1991; Hathaway, 1995).

The empirical paradigm, (as positivism is sometimes referred), is further characterized by researcher detachment derived from the assumption that the object under study is separate from the researcher (Eisner, 1981; Hathaway, 1995). In contrast, the interpretive paradigm, (as qualitative research is sometimes referred), is derived from the assumption that the researcher can best come to know by being there (Howe, 1985; Hathaway, 1985). Knowledge comes from human experience, which is continuous and non-logical (Hathaway, 1985; Howe, 1985). The fundamental reality of the world is in the mind of the individual (ontological assumption) and that knowledge is “a matter of the world being presented to the individual and then cognitively re-presented” (Brentano, 1955 in Patton, p. 391). In a word, the participants guide the qualitative researcher. Universal law and generalizability is limited because reality is different for everyone in the researcher's "field of vision" (Hathaway, p. 545).

Quantitative research begins with an hypotheses phrased in terms of categories and only that data pertaining to them is collected (Howe, 1985; Hathaway, 1985). In contrast, qualitative research has no intentional categories, but rather is generative and elicits emerging themes (Eisner, 1981). Such research may end in theorizing or hypothesis formulation (Hathaway, 1985). This process is particularly suited to early inquiry into new research territory (Firestone, 1987).

Underlying assumptions always guide the paradigm. In qualitative research, the assumption that reality is constructed directs documentation of how the participants understand and experience their reality. The quantitative researcher would, in contrast, assume a "true" reality and would determine patterns of relationships among variables,
for example, race, gender, course grades, etc. (Hathaway, p. 551). One of the major differences is in the implementation of assessment instruments and surveys. The empirical paradigm researcher would construct the survey beforehand, using the researcher's ideas, whereas, focus group discussions prior to the design of the instrument would guide the qualitative researcher. Further, analysis of findings for the empiricist would identify whether or not there is statistical significance; however, the qualitative researcher might provide a description of the participants' understanding (p. 552). It should be noted here that the empiricist might note no significant difference as an outcome and dismiss the hypotheses, whereas the interpretivist might suggest that different understandings by different participants might still be important in terms of the in-depth knowledge gained (p. 555).

Kenneth Howe (1992) added significantly to this literature by suggesting that "human beings are neither wholly passive and determined, nor wholly active and self-creating... they exhibit these characteristics in varying degrees" (p. 243). Building on this notion, he suggested that both the "positivistic technical control" approach to research which assumes a passive characteristic of human nature, (quantitative), and the interpretivist facilitation (qualitative), when viewed in isolation, have limitations. The positivist approach has a means/end framework where the investigation of the means presupposes the values of those who determine the ends. Such an exclusive approach is non-democratic by prohibiting participation on the part of the individuals involved in the research. However, Howe (1992) clearly suggested that there are limitations of being confined to an insider's perspective as well. He claimed that according to Fay (1975) the problem with such an assumption is that it is relativistic and does not take into
consideration that the participants in question may not have been exposed to certain external criticism of the social order, which might thus alter their perspective. Howe further stated that even Guba and Lincoln, seemingly qualitative purists, have, in their more recent work (1989) modified their view of the importance of the "insider perspective."

In sum, Howe contended that an alternative compromise must be reached, one which he labeled “critical social research” (not to be confused with critical theory). In this type of research, Howe stated, "researchers work in active collaboration with citizen interlocutors" (p. 249). Though, he conceded, such an approach is more like interpretivism than it is like positivism, the "citizen interlocutors" are in the “game” to challenge (expert) social research findings. However, Howe expressed that such integration would “provide a better philosophical account— in terms of a conception of explanation, a conception of human nature and a conception of the relationship between research and practice and as providing a better account of various current types of educational research practice—in terms of what researchers do and what worries them—than the “‘incompatibility thesis’” (p. 254). Such research, he suggested, helps to "make educational research serve a democratic society" (p. 255).

### Purpose of the Study

In light of the above discussion, this study combined quantitative and qualitative research approaches (Howe, 1992, Petersen, 1985; Rossman & Wilson, 1985; Greene, Caracelli, & Graham 1989; Creswell, 1994; Hathaway, 1995) designed to investigate the success of college students with disclosed disabilities and self-determination (as defined by Wehmeyer) to determine: a. if there is a relationship between the success outcomes of
students with higher and lesser degrees of self-determination; b. how students with varying degrees of self-determination describe the outcomes of their post-secondary experience within the construct of Wehmeyer’s self-determination framework.

**Research Site**

The college, (as it will be referred to throughout the study for confidentiality purposes) founded in 1900, is a private, primarily two-year, open access career-oriented, post-secondary institution. It is representative of other private junior colleges and many public ones as well. Its founder believed in providing individual encouragement and assistance to all students, and this tradition is still part of the college’s mission today.

The college consists of one "traditional" day division campus in a small urban area. It serves primarily traditional age college students (recent high school graduates). 3/4 of the population resides in a three floor dormitory setting above two floors of classrooms in a renovated mill building. The remaining students commute from area suburban communities. The college also has five continuing education campuses located in and around the state. Though each campus has its own director, all locations are dedicated to the principle that all students are individuals and have a right to learn and evolve academically and personally in a supportive environment.

Records of documented disabilities are housed in the office of the teaching and learning center, as are Basic Skills Assessments, mandatory for incoming day division students. Accordingly, these records were accessed in order to identify students who disclosed either formally or informally since 1993.

**Research Methods**

A two-phase Quantitative/Qualitative framework was designed as follows:
Phase One: Quantitative

Question

1. How do the measurable success outcomes (in terms of retention, GPA, and full-time employment—if graduated or departed)* of two-year college students with disclosed disabilities and higher degrees of self-determination compare with students with lower degrees of self-determination?

*For purposes of the quantitative phase, retention success (S) is defined as: graduated, still enrolled in an Associate Degree Program, or transferred to a bachelor program; no success (NS) is defined as dropping out or suspension; GPA success (S) is defined as 2.0 and above (S), below 2.0 is described as (NS); and Employment success (S) (if the individual is not enrolled in college due to graduation or departure) is defined as having a full time job, with no success (NS) defined as unemployed or having only a part-time job.

Hypothesis

Students who achieve positive post-secondary success outcomes possess higher degrees of self-determination than those with less positive success outcomes.

Selection of Sample

From 1993 to February, 2002, the total population of students accepted at the college who either formally or informally disclosed a physical, emotional or learning disability was 303, (282 Day, 21 Continuing Education-CE). Table 3.2 below shows the increases in the numbers of students with disabilities over the years, as well as increases in formal (documented) disclosures. The Basic Skills Assessment (BSA), given to all
incoming freshmen in day division, helped to identify the approximate number of
students accepted each year in the day division. Currently the BSA is not administered
in CE, except to those students who disclose a disability and request accommodations
and therefore percentages could not be computed.

Table 3.2: Formal/Informal Disclosures
1993-2002

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>Approx. # of BSA</th>
<th>FORMAL</th>
<th>INFORMAL</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>513</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>489</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>4.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>648</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>4.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>609</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>4.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>633</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>7.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>555</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>5.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>596</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>542</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>7.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>460</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>7.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002*</td>
<td>NA**</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.E.</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>4585</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>303</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Formal disclosures received for Fall, 2002 starts as of 2/02
**Not available

Although 303 students disclosed a disability to date, only 255 students were
selected to be part of the original mailing, which included all those who had disclosed
between 1993 and Spring 2001 (for CE). The 35 students disclosing in 2001 had only just begun their post-secondary program and there were no outcomes to analyze for this population. Of interest is that as of February, 2002, 13 students submitted formal documentation for the fall semester. At no other time had there been so many formal disclosures so early. This is more evidence that the number of students with disabilities entering college continues to increase each year.

Initial mailers, which included an Invitation to Participate (Appendix A)/Consent Agreement (Appendix B), were mailed to addresses found on the Basic Skills Assessment to 255 individuals, representing 151 females and 104 males; 83 (48 F/35 M) formal disclosures and 172 (103F/69M) informal disclosures.

After many of the initial invitations were returned as undeliverable, five had been returned as "not interested," one person had died and one went into the service due to the September 11, 2001 attack on the World Trade Center, a second package was mailed to 138 students (whose addresses were verified through a combination of phone calls and thorough investigation of the registrar's updated database). These students represented 89 females and 49 males; 65 (43 F/22 M) formal disclosures and 73 (46 F/27 M) informal disclosures. This time the mailing included a revised Invitation to Participate (Appendix C), Procedural Instructions with a section indicating Interest in Participating in Qualitative Phase, (Appendix D), as well as the Arc Self-Determination Scale (Wehmeyer, 1995), (Appendix E), and the Demographic and Outcomes Survey (researcher developed), (Appendix F). Follow-up phone calls were made to each of the 138 possible participants. Final returns resulted in 48 completed scales and surveys - 34 Females and 14 Males. These returns represented 27 (21 F/6 M) formal disclosures and
21 (12 F /9 M) informal disclosures. Figure 3-1 below depicts the two mailings and the final returns:

Figure 3.1: Comparison of Gender Differences within Formal/Informal Disclosure Data

It should be noted that although the literature suggested more male than females represent the population of students with disabilities (Rossi et al, 1997), in this study more females disclosed a disability and eventually participated. A possible explanation for this could be that in studies that include volunteer subjects, such as this one, the subjects are likely to be female rather than male (Gall et. al, 1996).

Instrumentation

The Arc Self Determination Scale (Wehmeyer & Kelchner, 1995) is a 72 item self-report scale with 148 possible points within the 4 self-determination domains. Some items are weighted more than others. Table 3.3 below includes domain and sub-domain categories and possible points within each.
Table 3.3: The Arc Self-Determination Domains/Sub-Domains

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Raw Score</th>
<th>Possible Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Global (Total) Self Determination Score</strong></td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Domain 1: Autonomy</strong></td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-domain: Independence 1: Acting Independently</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-domain: Independence 2: Acting on Basis of Preferences, Beliefs, Values and Abilities</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-domain: Choice: Leisure and recreation</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-domain: Choice: Community Involvement</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-domain: Choice: Post School Direction</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-domain: Choice: Personal Expression</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Domain 2: Self-Regulation</strong></td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-domain: Interpersonal Cognitive Problem Solving</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-domain: Goal Setting and Task Performance</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Domain 3: Psychological Empowerment</strong></td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Domain 4: Self-Realization</strong></td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The scale provides data on a total self-determination score, as well as each of the four essential characteristics (called domains) of self-determination and their sub-domains. Below is a review of each major domain of the scale. A more thorough description can be found in Chapter II: Review of the Literature.
Domain 1: measures autonomy, which involves an individual's independence and degree to which he or she acts on the basis of personal beliefs, values, interests and abilities; more specifically self- and family care activities, self-management activities, recreational activities, and social and vocational activities.

Domain 2: measures individual self-regulation and is composed of two subdomains: a. interpersonal cognitive problem solving and b. goal setting and task performance.

Domain 3: measures psychological empowerment that involves the various dimensions of perceived control and whether the individual has an internal locus of control (an understanding of the relationship between actions and outcomes, as opposed to an external locus of control (fate, luck, chance) (Snell, 1977 in Wehmeyer, 1995, p. 30.)

Domain 4: measures student self-realization and a basic understanding of one's strengths, weaknesses, abilities and limitations, as well as the ability to utilize these attributions to positively influence one's quality of life.

Validity and Reliability of the Arc Scale. There are a total of 148 points available on the Arc Scale and higher scores represent higher self-determination. The Arc's Scale was normed with 500 students with and without cognitive disabilities in rural, urban, and suburban school districts in five states. Wehmeyer, Kelchner, and Richards (1996) empirically validated the definitional framework used in this scale with a sample of 408 adults with mental retardation and developmental disabilities, and found that self-determined individuals were significantly different from individuals who were not (indicated by performance or non-performance of behaviors generally agreed upon to
reflect self-determination) on measures of each of the four essential characteristics. The scale's concurrent criterion-related validity was established by showing relationships between the *Arc's Self-Determination Scale* and conceptually related measures. It had adequate construct validity established by factor analysis and discriminative validity as well as adequate internal consistency.

For purposes of this study, a few minor adaptations were made to the scale with the permission of Dr. Michael Wehmeyer (June 14, 2001). The main revisions included a change in some of the wording and phrases that were geared toward a more adolescent population. This was problematic for this study since the scale was administered to several adult students as well. Appendices G/H/I include the cover letter sent to Dr. Wehmeyer to obtain approvals (G), his response letter, (H), and a signed consent form (I), agreeing that the changes do not affect the validity or reliability of the tool. The revised version of the Arc Scale can be found in Appendix E.

*The Demographic and Outcomes Survey.* The *Demographic and Outcomes Survey* (Appendix F) was developed for the purposes of this study. It was the intent of the demographic section of the survey to identify background information about the participants. Questions included: year applied to the college, major, gender*, age*, ethnic origin*, high school diploma or GED, financial concerns about college financing*, motivation for attending college*, assignment to a developmental writing and/or math class, and type of disability. (The starred information has been shown to predict retention (though not necessarily for students with disabilities) at four year colleges and universities (Astin, 1993)).

(It should be noted here that the "age" question was inadvertently omitted from
the survey sent to all participants. A short follow-up note was sent to each of the 48 participants indicating that I would obtain information regarding their age from school records. If they did not want me to use their age they were advised to notify me by a certain date (see Appendix J).

The Outcomes section of the survey was designed to gain information about the following success outcomes:

Retention status: still enrolled in Associate program, graduated from Associate Program, transferred to Bachelor Program (all positive outcomes) or dropped out of college (negative outcome).

Self-reported cumulative GPA: at time of graduation or departure, or, if still enrolled present cumulative GPA. The self-reported GPA was verified with official records in the registrar's office. A GPA of 2.0 or higher was considered a positive outcome; below 2.0 was considered a negative outcome.

Employment and salary status (if no longer enrolled due to graduation or departure). Full-time employment (either in major or non-major) was considered a positive outcome. Questions regarding part-time employment and salary were also asked for descriptive analysis only.

Procedure

The Invitation to Participate was mailed to 255 individuals described above. When it was identified that a large number of the mailings were returned as undeliverable with no forwarding addresses, phone calls were made to all individuals and a thorough investigation of the registrar's updated addresses was performed. A second mailing was

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administered to 138 individuals. This mailing included a revised cover letter and form which combined their consent to participate in the study, their selection to a choice of three restaurants in appreciation for participating, and an invitation to participate in the Qualitative Phase of the design. In addition, the *ARC Self-Determination Scale* and the *Demographic and Outcomes Survey* were included with a postage-paid return envelope. This fairly aggressive mailing strategy was taken in light of the terrorist attack of the World Trade Center and the Anthrax attack on the U.S. Postal System that was happening at the time. All individuals received a follow-up phone call to verify that they had received their package. Final returns yielded 48 competed scales and surveys.

A Thank-You letter (Appendix K) was mailed to each of the 48 participants along with a $15.00 gift certificate to one of three restaurants (which they selected and mailed back with their scale and survey).

**Treatment of the Quantitative Data**

All *Arc Scales* were corrected using the extensive scoring guidelines in *The Arc's Self-Determination Scale: Procedural Guidelines* (Wehmeyer, 1995). The researcher attached the *Arc Scoring Sheet* (Appendix L) to each of the 48 scales returned. The results of each section of the test were color coded to identify different domains set forth in Wehmeyer's framework. The corresponding color codes are as follows: Maroon: Global Self-Determination; Orange: Autonomy and its sub-domains; Red: Self-Regulation and its sub-domains; Blue: Psychological Empowerment; Green: Self-Realization.

Once all *Arc Scales* were corrected and analyzed, scores for all domains and sub-
domains were organized into an Excel database. It is important to note that scores were recorded, using tables supplied by Wehmeyer, to reflect a raw score, a percentile score (to allow for comparison with the normed sample), and percentage scores which represented percentage of positive responses. Only the raw scores and the percentage scores were used in this study.

Next, the data obtained from the outcomes section of the *Demographic and Outcomes Survey* were organized into Excel as well. The results were then sorted according to the three success outcomes: Successful (S)/Not Successful (NS) Retention; Successful (S)/Not Successful (NS) GPA; and Successful (S)/Not Successful (NS) Employment. These categories, as well as the total self-determination raw scores were extracted from the Excel Database and imported into SPSS statistical software system. Independent sample T-tests were performed using each category of success. This enabled the researcher to examine whether the mean of the self-determination scores was higher for the group who experienced positive success outcomes in any of the three categories of success.

Further, data were analyzed descriptively (e.g., means and self-determination scores) based upon the information received from the participants on the *Demographic and Outcomes Survey*. These results were added to the already established Excel Database. Each category of demographic information was sorted and printed to aid the researcher in seeing the whole picture for each category. Analysis of all of the above is described in detail in Chapter IV: Data Analysis.
Phase Two: Qualitative

Once data were obtained and analyzed in Phase One, the qualitative phase (follow-up interviews) was designed and carried out:

Question

How do two-year college students with disclosed disabilities and varying degrees of self-determination describe their post-secondary experience within the construct of Wehmeyer’s framework?

Research Hypothesis

The qualitative phase does not lend itself to the development of a research hypothesis due to the inductive nature of such research. Rather, this phase reflects a non-directional orientation that will lead to an emergent theory of understanding (Creswell, 1994, pp. 71-73).

Selection of Participants

Using only the Success Outcome - Retention, students were placed, based upon self-determination scores, into the following four categories. (GPA was not used for this phase because it yielded results similar to Retention as found in a cross-tabulation analysis (see Chapter IV, p.96), nor was the Employment Outcome used because it was limited in population size to only 30 of the 48 participants).

The four categories identified:

- High Self-Determination with success (HSD w/ S)
- High Self-determination with no success (HSD w/ NS)
- Low Self Determination with success (LSD w/ S)
- Low Self-Determination with no success (LSD w/ NS)
Given the results of the previous phase, it was recognized that there was not only a need to attempt to tap into what students with high and low self-determination understood about their degree of success, but also to gain an understanding of those participants who could be described as low self-determination with success (LSD w/ S) and high self-determination with no success (HSD w/ NS).

Within the two High Self-Determination groups, the students with the highest scores were selected for an interview. Within the Low Self-Determination groups, the students with the lowest scores from each were selected, taking into consideration the participants from the quantitative phase who said they were interested in participating in the qualitative phase. All four individuals selected initially had expressed interest in taking part in an interview. (Table 3.4 below shows the percentage of interview interest of all participants)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interest in Interview (N=48)</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Percentage (rounded)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Interest</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This participant selection process within the groups was designed to understand how two people experiencing relative success make sense of that success, given that one has the highest degree of self-determination and the other the lowest degree. Additionally, in terms of those not experiencing success, an understanding of how the participant with the highest degree of Self-Determination, and alternatively, the one with the lowest, makes sense of a lack of success with regard to retention in higher education.
Once selected, each individual was contacted. The individuals consisted of three females and one male. One female (LSD w/S) was easily contacted and agreed immediately. She was still currently enrolled and on campus. The male (HSD w/S) was also contacted easily and agreed. The other two females (HSD w/NS) and (LSD w/NS) proved to be more of a challenge. The (HSD w/NS) had recently moved back to her parents’ home in a neighboring state. After leaving a message, she returned the call and agreed to an interview. The fourth selection (LSD w/NS) no longer had an in-service phone number, so a brief note was mailed to the P.O. Box to which the quantitative package had been mailed. Within a day she had called back and agreed to an interview. The next day she left a message stating that she would not be able to participate.

The next lowest SD score, a male, was immediately contacted, and an interview was agreed to and scheduled for the next day. Follow-up phone calls were made to each willing participant the night before the interview to confirm the appointment.

Pseudonyms were given to each participant for confidentiality reasons. Table 3.5 identifies each final interview participant. The participants are organized in the order in which they were interviewed and will be analyzed in that order because such an organization framed a better understanding of the participants. Carol was interviewed on a Tuesday in the Office of the Center for Teaching, Learning, and Assessment. Mary was interviewed the following day, Wednesday, at her home in another state. Harry was interviewed on Thursday morning at a library in a town 45 minutes from the college. Ed was interviewed on Thursday afternoon at his home in a town close to Harry’s.
Table 3.5: Pseudonyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Selections</th>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LSD/S</td>
<td>Carol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HSD/NS</td>
<td>Mary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HSD/S</td>
<td>Harry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSD/NS</td>
<td>Ed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Interview Structure

Seidman (1998), in *Interviewing as Qualitative Research*, presented what he referred to as the "Three Interview Series." This series represents a model of in-depth phenomenological interviewing which is conducted in three separate interviews:

- **Interview One: Focused Life History**
- **Interview Two: The Details of the Experience**
- **Interview Three: Reflection on Meaning**

The model is open-ended in nature but has a structure, in that the researcher must keep the interviewee focused on that particular series, because each interview may provide details that could illuminate the next one. "There is a logic to the interviews and to lose control of their direction is to lose the power of that logic and the benefit from it (p. 13).

Seidman recommended doing the three separate interviews on three separate days for 90 minutes each. However, he also suggested alternatives to this structure, such as conducting the three interviews in the same day. He stated that such alternatives are possible because "as yet there are no absolutes in the world of interviewing...the
governing principle in designing interviewing might well be to strive for a rational process that is both repeatable and documentable...it is almost always better to conduct an interview under less than ideal conditions than not to conduct one at all" (pp. 15-16).

As such, Seidman's structure was adapted to three 30-45 minute intervals (approximately), with 3-5 minute breaks in an attempt to maintain the integrity of a separate interview series.

Interview Questions

The following questions guided the interview series:

Interview One: Focused Life History

1. Reconstruct your early educational experience as it relates to your disability. Give as many details and tell as many stories as possible.

2. How did this all lead you to enroll in college?

Interview Two: The Details of the Experience

1. What is/was your college experience like as a college student with disabilities? Give as many details and tell as many stories as possible.

Interview Three: Reflection on the Meaning

1. Given what you have said in these last two responses, how do you understand where you are now in terms of your experience as a college student with a disability and your feelings of success in your present life?

Follow-up and clarifying questions within each interview by the interviewer, maintained the integrity of the above questions and stayed within the structure of the interview. It should be noted that the term self-determination, nor any of its domains or sub-domains, was not introduced directly at any time throughout the interview by the interviewer.
All interviews were tape-recorded using two separate tape-recorders. One tape-recorder broke during the last interview and the back-up proved to be invaluable. This tape-recording process "reduces the tendency of interviewers to make an unconscious selection of data favoring their biases" (Gall et al, 1996, p. 320). All participants appeared comfortable with the tape recorder and did not show any "...reluctance to express their feelings freely..." (p. 320). Each participant signed a consent form (Appendix M). Each interview ran approximately 90 minutes, with three 3-5 minute breaks between each series.

Treatment of the Qualitative Data

Each interview was transcribed verbatim (Creswell, 1994; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Miles & Huberman, 1984; Seidman, 1998; Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Wolcott, 1994) using a tape-recorder with a foot pedal for facilitation of a process that is estimated to take 4-6 hours for each 90 minute tape (Gall et al, 1996, Seidman, 1998). Such word for word transcription was decided upon because according to Vygotsky (1987) each word a participant speaks reflects his/her consciousness. No attempts to analyze data were made during the interviews nor during the transcription phase so as to reduce bias. Once transcriptions were complete, the researcher read them several times and then carefully color-coded responses in each interview that related to any of the domains and sub-domains of self-determination. The color-coding matched the coding in the quantitative section: Orange: Autonomy; Red: Self-Regulation; Blue: Psychological Empowerment; Green: Self-Realization. As Seidman suggested, all coding was first done on paper, rather than from the computer, because there can be "...significant difference between what one sees in text...on paper and the same text shown on screen..." (p. 108).
The researcher then read the interviews again, though this time on the computer, and began the "winnowing out" process in order to craft a profile of each participant's story (Seidman). These stories were used as a way of understanding the individuals, their behavior, and finally their understanding of their post-secondary experiences within the construct of Wehmeyer's self-determination framework. The three series interview structure was used in crafting the profiles to tell the participants' stories. This structure helped in understanding the early experiences of these individuals. This is particularly important to research on self-determination because as Wehmeyer suggested, the development of a person's ability to act in a self-determined manner cannot happen overnight or in only one environment. "... changes across time result from very robust changes in environments, circumstances, learning or development which is affected by input variables across multiple environments, such as home, school and community, and across the life span." (Wehmeyer, 1997, p. 7). This interview structure, then, allowed for an understanding of the individual's behavior, as it related to self-determination and success, through the years, not just one moment in time, as would have been the case had the research design ended at the quantitative phase, or if the interview questions related only to present circumstances or actions.

Each of the four profiles is situated in Appendices N-Q. Analysis of the profiles in Chapter IV begins with a brief overview of the participant's results from the quantitative phase of the design and the reason why the participant was selected for an interview. Following this overview, analyses of the participants' profiles are presented within Wehmeyer's framework: Autonomy, Self-Regulation, Psychological Empowerment, and Self-Realization. Discussion includes references to actual text in the profiles.
Integrated Data Analysis

This section of the analysis sought to combine the results of both the quantitative and the qualitative phases of the design to determine if there had been either complementarity, which seeks elaboration, enhancement, illustration, clarification of the results from one method with the results from the other method; development which seeks to use the results from one method to help develop or inform the other method where development is construed to include sampling and implementation as well as measurement decisions; initiation which seeks the discovery of paradox and contradiction, new perspectives of frameworks, the recasting of questions or results from one method with questions or results from the other method; or expansion, which seeks to extend the breadth and range of inquiry by using different methods for different inquiry components (Greene et. al, 1989, p. 258).

In order to determine the above, the quantitative results for each interview participant were weighed against their interview profiles, especially their description of their post-secondary success outcomes. These combined results were descriptively analyzed in Chapter IV and conclusions, though limited to this study, were made in Chapter V.
CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF DATA

This study sought to determine whether there was a relationship between the success of students with disabilities in higher education and self-determination. Success was defined in three ways: Retention (graduation, still enrolled, or transferred to a bachelor program), GPA (2.0 and above would constitute success); and/or Full-time employment (if not enrolled in college due to graduation or departure.) Further, the study intended to explain how students with varying degrees of self-determination describe their understanding of their post-secondary experience within the construct of Wehmeyer's framework. An integrated quantitative/qualitative approach was used to "...tap the relative strengths and efficient use of both..." in an attempt to understand this "...social phenomena..." (Rossman & Wilson, 1985, p. 631).

In this chapter, data were analyzed in four sections: A. Descriptive Analysis of the Results of the Demographic and Outcomes Survey; B. Analysis of the Results of the Quantitative Phase; C. Analysis of the Results of the Qualitative Phase; D. Integrated Data Analysis (within the construct of Wehmeyer’s self-determination framework).

A. Descriptive Analysis of the Results of the Demographic and Outcomes Survey

This first section will begin with a descriptive analysis of the demographic and outcome information obtained from the Demographic and Outcomes Survey (Appendix E/F) in order to better understand the population of students taking part in the study, as
well as to understand possible implications for future research.

**Analysis of the Demographic Section.**

Of the 48 respondents who participated in this study, the majority (44) were white, non-Hispanic. 34 were female and 10 were male. As discussed in Chapter III, the majority of female respondents could be associated with the fact that it was a voluntary sample, which tends to attract more females than males (Gall et. al, 1996). The respondents ranged in age from 19 to 50 with the majority (28 participants) between the ages of 20-24. 38 of the participants were also single and without children. Although they chose a variety of disciplines in which to major, 7 participants had majored in Communications, 6 in Business, 4 in Early Childhood and 4 in Criminal Justice. 47 of them had received a high school diploma and 46 of the 48 responded that their reasons for attending college were career advancement and higher pay.

In terms of disabilities disclosure, 38 had entered the college between 1997-2001 and 33 had submitted formal disclosures of their disabilities. Learning Disabilities (LD) topped the list with 12 of the 48 disclosing just a learning disability and 16 more disclosing LD, with another or multiple disabilities. Table 4.1 shows individual breakdowns. It is difficult to separate out totals because of the number of students reporting more than one disability. Of the 48, 13 reported having an emotional disability (ED), either alone or with another disability. Additionally, 14 participants presented with ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder), again, either alone or with another disability.
Table 4.1: Type of Disability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disability (N=48)</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Percentage (rounded)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LD</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LD w/ADHD</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LD w/ED</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LD w/ multiple</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LD w/ Other</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADHD</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADHD w/ED</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADHD w/ other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ED</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ED w/ other</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hearing Impaired</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orthopedic</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech &amp; Lang. (S &amp; P)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Analysis of the Outcomes Section.

In terms of the Outcomes Section of the Demographic and Outcomes Survey with regard to Retention Status, Cumulative GPA and Employment, the following descriptive analysis helps to understand the general outcomes of the respondents. It should be noted that although this study did not quantitatively investigate salary, participants who were working had an opportunity to release that information on the survey.

Retention Success. Retention success (S) was based upon whether the student graduated from an Associate Degree program, transferred to a Bachelor Degree Program, or was currently enrolled in either program. Dropping out was defined as no success (NS). Of the 48 participants, 36, approximately 75% had retention success (15% graduated with an Associate Degree; 21% graduated with a bachelor degree; the remaining 40% were still enrolled at the time of the survey—percentages rounded up). Approximately 25% of the respondents had dropped out of college and had no retention success. (See Table 4.2).
Table 4.2: Retention by Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status (N=48)</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percentage (rounded)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Currently Enrolled-Ass.</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currently Enrolled-B.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grad. Associate</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grad. Bachelor</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total S</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total NS</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grade Point Average (GPA). Table 4.3 identifies the breakdown of successful (S) and not successful (NS) GPA’s. 2.0 or above was defined as successful for this study; anything below that would place a student on probation or suspension. 39 of the respondents had successful GPA’s.

Table 4.3: GPA Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GPA (N=48)</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percent (rounded)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.0-1.0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1-1.5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6-1.9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.0-2.5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6-2.9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.0-3.4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5-4.0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Employment. Employment Outcomes for those students who had departed from college either by graduating or dropping out are listed below in Table 4.4. It should be noted that this study did not differentiate between employment due to degree completion or other departure because the purpose of the quantitative phase was simply to identify if a relationship existed between full-time employment for the thirty participants who could be employed full time and self-determination. 27% of the participants were unemployed; 47% were working full-time, with 20% working full-time in their major. Salaries of those
working full time ranged from $8,000/year to $35,000/year.

Table 4.4: Employment Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment (n=30)</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percentage (rounded)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FT in Major</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FT-Non-major</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PT-Major</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PT-Non-major</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B. Analysis of Quantitative Data

Once all Arc Self-Determination Scales were corrected and analyzed, scores for all domains and sub-domains were organized into an Excel database. It is important to note that scores were recorded, using tables supplied by Wehmeyer, to reflect a raw score, a percentile score (to allow for comparison with the normed sample), and percentage scores which represented percentage of positive responses. Only the raw scores were used in the quantitative phase.

Next, the success (S)/no success (NS) data obtained from the outcomes section of the Demographic and Outcomes Survey were organized into Excel. The results were then sorted according to the three success outcomes: Successful (S)/Not Successful (NS) Retention; Successful (S)/Not Successful (NS) GPA; and Successful (S)/Not Successful (NS) Employment. These categories, as well as the total self-determination raw scores were extracted from the Excel Database and inserted into SPSS statistical package.

Separate T-tests were then performed for each Success Outcome (Retention, GPA, Full-time Employment) and the Total Self-Determination Scores to determine whether the differences in the means for each outcome were statistically significant. Results were recorded as follows:
### Retention

**Table 4.5: Retention - Group Statistics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Retention</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SD Score</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>90.42</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>110.78</td>
<td>14.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 4-6: Retention - T-test for Equality of Means**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SD Score-Equal Variances</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2 tailed)</th>
<th>Mean Diff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assumed</td>
<td>-3.263</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>-20.36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### GPA

**Table 4.7: GPA - Group Statistics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GPA</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SD Score</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>86.22</td>
<td>30.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>110.18</td>
<td>14.57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 4.8: GPA - T-test for Equality of Means**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SD Score Equal Variances</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2 tailed)</th>
<th>Mean Diff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assumed</td>
<td>-3.512</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>-23.96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Full-Time Employment

Table 4.9: Full-Time Employment - Group Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SD Score</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NS</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>91.79</td>
<td>26.45</td>
<td>7.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>118.38</td>
<td>14.19</td>
<td>3.55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.10: Full-Time Employment - T-test for Equality of Means

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SD Score Equal Variances</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2 tailed)</th>
<th>Mean Diff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assumed</td>
<td>-3.493</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>-26.59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on the above results, statistical significance was determined in all cases. The p value used was p < .01, more stringent than the common p value of p < .05. (Gall et. al, 1996). The research hypothesis was confirmed based upon P values of .002 (Retention), .001 (GPA), and .002 (Full-time Employment).

The effect size of each success outcome is also important in that it strengthens the practical significance of the data (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996). Cohen (1988) suggests cut-offs for small, medium and large effect sizes, .20, .50, and .80 respectively. Given the effect sizes in the table 4.11, it is clear there is a significant difference in the self-determination groups in each success category. There is a fairly large effect size for the outcome Retention and GPA and a very large effect size for Employment. To calculate effect size the following equation was used:

\[
\text{Effect size} = \frac{\text{Mean of } S - \text{Mean of NS}}{\text{St. Dev. of NS}}
\]
Table 4.11: Effect Size

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean S (rounded)</th>
<th>Means NS (rounded)</th>
<th>St. Dev. NS (rounded)</th>
<th>Effect Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Retention</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>0.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPA</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>0.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.12 shows a summary of both significance tests:

Table 4.12: Summary of Significance Tests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Significance</th>
<th>Effect Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Retention</td>
<td>0.002 0.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPA</td>
<td>0.001 0.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>0.002 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Important to note also is the Success Outcome: GPA which was shown to be similar to the Success Outcome: Retention based on cross-tabulation analysis below:

Table 4.13: Cross Tabulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GPA*Retention</th>
<th>Valid N</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Cases Missing</th>
<th>Total N</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPA</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>39</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>48</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Only 1 of those with success in Retention had no success in GPA and 4 with no success in Retention had success in GPA, thus identifying, at least in this study, that GPA and Retention yield a similar success outcome.
C. Analysis of Qualitative Data

Once data from the quantitative phase were analyzed, the qualitative phase (follow-up interviews) was designed and carried out to answer the following question:

How do two-year college students with disclosed disabilities and varying degrees of self-determination describe their post-secondary experience within the construct of Wehmeyer’s framework?

Raw Total Self-Determination scores as obtained from the Arc Scale ranged from 27 to 140. Using the data from the Retention Success Outcome, the 48 participants were placed into four categories: High Self-Determination with retention success (HSD/S); High Self-Determination with no Retention Success HSD/NS; Low Self-Determination with Retention Success (LSD/S) and Low Self-Determination with no Retention Success (LSD/NS).

It was the intent of the qualitative phase to better understand not only how an individual with high self-determination and retention success described his/her post-secondary experience, but also a participant with low self-determination and no retention success and alternatively, low self-determination with retention success and high self-determination with no retention success.

Tables 4.14 below shows scores and retention outcomes of the final selection of interviewees who agreed to participate in the study based on the purposeful process described above. Included are Global (Total) Self-Determination and major domain scores (both raw and percent of positive responses) on the Arc Scale, as well as Retention Success Outcomes as reported on the Demographic and Outcomes Survey. Individuals
are organized in the order that they were eventually interviewed as this helped frame an understanding of the participants for the researcher.

Table 4.14: Self-Determination Scores/Retention Outcomes of Interview Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Raw Scores</th>
<th>% of Positive Responses</th>
<th>Retention</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>GLOBAL (Total) SELF-DETERMINATION</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carol LSD/S</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary HSD/NS</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>NS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harry HSD/S</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ed LSD/NS</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>NS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>AUTONOMY</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carol</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harry</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ed</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SELF-REGULATION</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carol</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harry</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ed</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PSYCHOLOGICAL EMPOWERMENT</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carol</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harry</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ed</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SELF-REALIZATION</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carol</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harry</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ed</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All interviews of the above participants were tape-recorded and then transcribed verbatim in order to reduce bias on the part of the researcher in analyzing the qualitative data. Although "the researcher's consciousness will inevitably play a major role in
interpretation of interview data," (Seidman, 1998, p. 97), taping and transcribing every word of the participant’s interview forces the researcher’s consciousness to interact at all times with the actual words of the participant (Seidman).

It should be noted here that there are varying opinions on the point of tape-recording interviews (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 1989). Seidman (1998) suggests, however, that rather than "...inhibiting participants..." and affecting "...the responses...," they "...soon forget the device..." (p. 97). This seemed to be true in the four interviews for this study. At one point in one of the interviews, the tape-recorder shut off momentarily without either the knowledge of the participant or the interviewer because both were so immersed in the interview.

Once transcriptions were complete, the researcher read them several times and then carefully color coded responses in each interview that related to any of the domains and sub-domains of self-determination. The color-coding matched the coding in the quantitative section: Orange: Autonomy; Red: Self-Regulation; Blue: Psychological Empowerment; Green: Self-Realization. As suggested by Seidman, all coding was first done on paper, rather than from the computer, because there can be "...significant difference between what one sees in a text presented on paper and the same text shown on screen..." (p. 108).

The researcher then read the interviews again, though this time on the computer, and began the “winnowing out” process in order to craft a profile of each participant’s story. These stories were used as a way of understanding the individuals, their behavior, and finally their understanding of their post-secondary experiences within the construct of Wehmeyer’s self-determination framework. It became clear that too much
"winnowing out" would “jeopardize a presentation of the participants' intentions” (p. 102). “We interview in order to come to know the experience of the participants through their stories. We learn from hearing and studying what the participants say... by crafting a profile in the participant's own words the interviewer allows those words to reflect the person's consciousness” (p. 102). (Note: the four profiles are situated in Appendix N-Q).

The three series interview structure was also useful in crafting the profiles to tell the participants’ stories:

**Interview One: Focused Life History**

1. Reconstruct your early educational experience as it relates to your disability. Give as many details and tell as many stories as possible.

2. How did this all lead you to enroll in college?

**Interview Two: The Details of the Experience**

1. What is/was your college experience like as a college student with disabilities? Give as many details and tell as many stories as possible.

**Interview Three: Reflection on the Meaning**

1. Given what you have said in these last two responses, how do you understand where you are now, in terms of your experience as a college student with a disability and your feelings of success in your present life?

This three series structure helped in understanding the early experiences of these individuals. This is particularly important to research on self-determination because as Wehmeyer suggested, the development of a person's ability to act in a self-determined manner cannot happen overnight or in only one environment. “… changes across time result from very robust changes in environments, circumstances, learning or development which is affected by input variables across multiple environments, such as home, school and community, and across the life span” (Wehmeyer, 1997, p. 7). This interview
structure, then, allowed for an understanding of the individual’s behavior, as it relates to self-determination and success, through the years, not just one moment in time.

It should be reinforced here that at no time during any of the interviews was there direct mention (by the interviewer) of the self-determination framework or any of its domains/sub-domains. Only the term, success, was brought up in series three of the interview, in terms of the participants’ understanding of their post-secondary experience/s.

Other researcher rules established relate to Seidman’s suggestion that though it is important to “stay faithful to the words of the participants” (p. 194), there are times when unneeded text may be deleted or minor transitional words are added (p. 194). A system of notation was established in this study, as recommended by Seidman, to use ellipses in the case of deletions of words or whole bodies of text and to use brackets around text that has been added by the researcher “to make transitions between passages” (p. 104). Also it should be noted that language like “ums,” and “ahs” and also coughs, laughs, giggles, etc., have remained as part of the text when they seem to have significance to the overall story being told.

In addition, in any case where a person’s name or the name of a town, city, state, or workplace was mentioned in the interviews by the participants, a first letter abbreviation is used in the profile in order to not only protect the anonymity of the participants, but also to keep confidential the names of the other individuals and places.

Finally, in keeping with the “key to the power of the profile” (p. 103), each participant’s story is told in the first person rather than a third person transformation of that individual. Seidman pointed out that according to Kvale (1996) this helps the researcher guard against falling into the trap of inappropriately using their participant’s
experience for their own purposes.

The analysis of each participant’s profile begins with a brief overview of the participant’s results from the quantitative phase of the design and the reason why the participant was selected for an interview. This overview is followed by an analysis of the participant’s stories presented within the construct of Wehmeyer’s self-determination framework: Autonomy, Self-Regulation, Psychological Empowerment, and Self-Realization.

### Analysis of Carol’s Profile

**Overview:**

Carol was the first person interviewed. The interview took place in the office of the Center for Teaching, Learning and Assessment. Carol was the only one of the interview participants who is still currently enrolled at the college. Results of the Demographic and Outcomes Survey revealed that Carol is a 22-year-old Caucasian female who began her college experience in the day division in September of 2000. She checked “career” as the reason she decided to go to college and her major at the time the survey was completed was Graphic Design. Carol also indicated in the survey that she had both a learning disability and an emotional disability. Carol was selected for an interview because her global (total) self-determination score on the Arc Scale (see Table 4.22 above) of 80 placed her in the low range of the self-determination scores, yet she had retention success, in that she was still currently enrolled and reported a successful GPA above a 2.0. She was the first purposeful selection with the LSD/S characteristic. She expressed interest in participating on her survey package and she immediately agreed when verbally asked. The quantitative phase of the design told us only that she did not
seem to fit with the statistically significant results of the T-test that found that individuals with post-secondary success have higher degrees of self-determination. So how does Carol understand and describe her post-secondary experience within the construct of Wehmeyer’s framework? A look at her profile (Appendix N) might give more insight into what is really going on for Carol.

Carol’s profile was crafted from the original 33 single-spaced pages of text transcribed from her interview. As discussed above, the entire interview was separated into three distinct interviews (although all were given on the same day). In the first series of the interview, Carol briefly shared her overall experiences from elementary school through high school as they related to her disability, but it wasn’t long into the interview that she shared glimpses of her troubled past. Through her profile it became clear that “multiple environments” and changes across the “life span” may be factors that have contributed to Carol’s low self-determination and perceptions of success. It should be noted that although most of the material in the profile was presented in the order in which it came in the interview, some of the material was transposed to another part of the interview series. As Seidman suggested, “if material in interview three…fits with a part of the narrative based on interview two…” transposing that material is acceptable “…if doing so does not wrench it out of context and distort its meaning.” In all cases of transposing the question was asked “…whether each is fair to the larger interview” (p. 104). This was an issue only for Carol’s profile in that she had a more difficult time than the others keeping to the structure of the three interview series.

It should also be noted that because Carol’s boyfriend and her resource room teacher have the same first initials, her boyfriend was given the pseudonym Matt.
Analysis:

Carol's responses on the Arc and on the success outcomes questions in the Quantitative Phase of the study categorized her as having low self-determination with retention success (LSD/S). Her profile supports the findings of low self-determination on the Arc Scale. The details of her past life reflect how influential "environment" and the "lifespan" have been in the limited development of Carol's self-determination. Even Carol suggested in the first interview that "any good teacher or counselor would know what kind of behavior that is...." Later in the third series of the interview, she wondered if her academic difficulties during her life were due to learning problems or the "...PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Syndrome) from the traumatic causes of my life...." She pointed out that she wants to "just get over depression; that is just the one thing I fought with my whole life and I am sick of it." "I get things; it's not that I'm dumb... it's just that if I don't understand something, it's not that I don't understand it; my body is too tired and withdrawn to care and I'll fight with myself actually."

Carol's profile added more depth than the quantitative phase of the study. How else could knowledge be gained about the abusive family life in which Carol grew up and her strong determination to escape it. However, Deci (1980), like Wehmeyer, suggested that "external, initiating and regulatory events" which because of their "controlling external nature" can lead the individual to a feeling of being "out of control" and not able to effect outcomes. This certainly seems to be the case for Carol. Further, Carol's constant desire to change her environment by initiating and regulating events and her "interest in the activity, task involvement and ego involvement," eventually rendered her efforts as "self-defeating" because she is "too self-critical" (p. 38).
A closer look at Carol's story showed her continually alternating between statements of high self-determination and low self-determination. In terms of autonomous behavior (which involves an individual's independence and degree to which he or she acts and makes choices on the basis of personal beliefs, values, interests and abilities, more specifically self- and family care activities, self-management activities, recreational activities, and social and vocational activities), Carol chose to remove herself from her "abusive" and "violent" family situation, which she stated was "a very unsafe environment."

However, despite making such a choice, she continually finds herself choosing similarly abusive situations, for example, her "abusive relationship" with her boyfriend. Though we don't get many details about her life at home or with Matt, we do see that the intensity of those environments through the years caused her finally to "breakdown." Certainly she made a negative choice in the way she dealt with the fact that her ex-boyfriend was dating her friend, but with the help of E and M she pulled herself back together and made a decision to "work (her) butt off to get back into school." Further her choice to go to a high school in a better environment and to work with Catholic Charities to obtain an apartment of her own are worthy of being called autonomous behavior. Yet, Carol is constantly falling apart, and then attempting to regroup by looking to change what she perceives is broken. Her struggle to gain control over her life comes up again and again with her stories of trying to organize herself. "I moved my room around a lot....I didn't like it the same....I feel that if things are in place...I feel more organized myself...I write things down....I have a notebook....It has all my to do's in there."

Unfortunately for Carol, though, her struggle for autonomy seems to be impacted by the
"PTSD (Post-traumatic Stress Syndrome) from the traumatic causes of my life."

In looking at Carol’s self-regulated behavior (which includes a person’s ability in interpersonal cognitive problem solving and goal setting /task performance), it is evident again that she was tremendously affected by her past environment. She knows she doesn’t have enough money for her “meds,” and yet instead of protecting what remains of her prescription, she “drinks it away.” She hated the lifestyle of her parents and yet she went home “over break” and behaved in a very similar manner. She knows she needs to get a driver’s license, and yet she cannot figure out a way to do it. “It’s impossible.” She knows she needs to get at least a part-time job, but again, she has an excuse for every opportunity that comes her way.

She has changed her major four times, and though she continually states that “her heart” is in Early Childhood, she searches for other possible career opportunities with little direction. Her goals are clouded by her inability to “figure” things out. She is hoping that the psychology classes she is taking right now will help her do that, as well as a "compare/contrast paper" that is due soon. One can’t help but envision a person struggling to get out of a paper bag that has an opening at the top, but the person doesn’t know the opening is there. “I’d like to be successful, but I don’t have a plan and I don’t find myself successful.”

Psychological Empowerment deals with various dimensions of perceived control and whether the individual has an internal locus of control (an understanding of the relationship between actions and outcomes), as opposed to an external locus of control (fate, luck, chance). Again, we see Carol vacillating between the two. There is no doubt that she understands there is a relationship between what she does and the outcomes. That
was evident in the many stories she shared about changing her negative environments to more positive environments, for example, her family, her high school, her friends. Yet even though Carol effects change, she is not capable of maintaining the momentum of the change and controlling herself within the change. Sadly, she sees it too: “I’m a quitter basically;” I have a fear of commitment. I mean, I can’t hold a job longer than three months. I haven’t been in a long term relationship for two years…and I changed my major four times.” Carol actually has taken positive steps in attempting to control her life, yet her past environment appears to have a hold on her and she continually allows herself to be persuaded by anyone who takes any interest in her, for example when the controller at the college mentioned the graphic design major, she immediately switched her major.

Lastly, in terms of Self-Realization, (a basic understanding of one’s strengths, weaknesses, abilities and limitations, as well as the ability to utilize these attributions to positively influence one’s quality of life), Carol told story after story of her understanding of who she is and what she is dealing with, especially emotionally. Though she said she was diagnosed with both a learning and an emotional disability, she has come to think that it is mostly emotional; “I think it’s more emotional takes over and makes me overwhelmed and makes it hard for me to learn. I always thought that when I was young that I was a very depressed kid, so it was hard for me to comprehend… because there was always so much other stuff going on in my life that took a toll on my education…;” and “I think if I finally break through the depression I’ll be able to learn easier. I have emotions that I usually hide everyday and they come out when I am reading…. It’s just a big mess.”

Carol’s ability to understand her own strengths and weaknesses, yet her continual
inability to utilize this understanding to positively influence her life is what makes her story so disturbing. This contradiction was further emphasized by the number of times she sarcastically laughed, coughed, cleared her throat, and said “whatever” whenever she told a story of the negative outcomes of her behaviors. There is no doubt that Carol’s way of knowing is often in direct contrast to her way of behaving.

The quantitative phase of this study suggested that college students with disabilities and more positive success outcomes have higher self-determination. Yet, with Carol, we have a case of a seemingly positive success outcome, in terms of retention in college, and low self-determination (LSD/S). Whether Carol will indeed be successful in graduating is yet to be seen, though according to her, she believes “college is probably the only thing I am going to complete;” and given the extensive support system offered at the college, she may be right. Yet whether or not Carol will perceive that accomplishment as success and actually utilize it to positively influence other areas of her life is less clear. And so though it appeared from the quantitative phase that Carol’s story was a clear-cut confirmation of the research hypothesis, this profile revealed the complexity of understanding what success truly means to a college student with disabilities within the construct of Wehmeyer’s self-determination framework.

Analysis of Mary’s Profile

Overview:

Mary was interviewed the day after Carol. The interview took place in her parent’s home in a neighboring state. Results of the Demographic and Outcomes Survey reveal that Mary is a 20-year-old Caucasian female who began her college experience the same time that Carol did, day division, Fall 2000. She, too, checked career as the reason
for attending college and her major at the time of the survey was reported as Criminal Justice. She also indicated in the survey that her disabilities were ADHD and LD. Mary was selected for an interview because she had the second highest score on the Arc Scale overall (134) and yet she had dropped out of college. She was the first purposeful selection in the category of HSD/NS. She had expressed interest in the survey in participating in the second phase and as soon as she was contacted, she quickly agreed to an interview. As with Carol, the quantitative phase of this research only told part of the story, for, on the surface, Mary did not have Post-Secondary success. However, Mary told quite a different story. So how did Mary understand and describe her post-secondary experience within the construct of Wehmeyer’s framework?

Her profile (Appendix O) was crafted from 20 original pages of single-spaced text transcribed from her interview and presented in a three interview series as was Carol’s. As her story unfolds it again becomes clear that “multiple environments” and changes across the “life span” may have contributed to Mary’s high self-determination.

Again, all of the “rules” established previously for presenting a profile will be similarly followed in Mary’s. Mary’s father is from Greece and it may be that Mary’s usage and pronunciation of words, like “wit” for with, doin’ for doing, may be due to the fact that her father speaks with an accent and perhaps in “broken English.” In any case, her pronunciation of words is respected in the profile.

Analysis:

Mary’s responses on the Arc and on the success outcomes questions in the Quantitative Phase of the study categorized her as having high self-determination with no retention success (HSD/NS). Her profile supports the findings of high self-determination
on the Arc Scale. After reading her profile, it is clear to see a difference between Mary’s behavior and attitude and Carol’s. One comes away from Mary’s profile feeling more positive about her future, despite the fact that she dropped out of college. Though we don’t get many stories about the details of her past life, there is evidence that her family life was fairly positive as compared to the details offered by Carol. Her respect for her father, “He’s the smartest man I know,” and the support she felt from her mother, “She’s excited about it” again give us a glimpse at the possibility of how “environment” and the “lifespan” can influence self-determination. Certainly Mary expressed some mixed emotions about dropping out of college and on several occasions wondered about the level of her parent’s disappointment in her, but we never feel that they have rejected her because of it. She has gone back home, after dropping out of college and after having surgery, to regroup. Other than normal “rites of passage” statements like “I want to live on my own...be independent,” Mary seems very comfortable and happy in her present environment. This is clearly quite the opposite of Carol who makes it clear that she has no home.

As with Carol’s profile, Mary’s story gives us more depth of understanding than the quantitative phase of the study. Many post-secondary studies today focus on the importance of retention to graduation success; similarly, studies of college students with disabilities also focus on the same outcome. However, Mary’s understanding and description of what it means to be successful raises some questions about post-secondary education that cannot be ignored.

A closer look at Mary’s story shows that all was not always well for Mary either. She, like Carol, discussed episodes of depression, especially during the period when she
was first being diagnosed with AD/HD. She very briefly mentioned an attempt at suicide, yet the way she chose to self-manage her medication during that period exemplifies autonomous behavior even for one so young. "I stopped taking them, because they were supposed to be anti-depressants and every time I took them, that’s all I’d be was depressed. I’d want to stay to myself....I didn’t want anybody talkin to me...so I stayed off...” This is clearly in direct contrast to Carol’s understanding of the effects of her medication. One cannot help but wonder if medication has anything to do with Carol’s desire to be alone and the negative outcomes of her interpersonal relationships. She admitted she was on Prozac prior to her “mental breakdown” in the bathroom. Nonetheless, Mary made a decision, early on, that the medication was not in her best interest. And even in college, when she tried it again, she realized that the only reason she could concentrate better was because it made her more introverted, “I’d concentrate more cuz I didn’t want to talk to anybody....so obviously if I’m not talking to anybody or jokin wit anybody, I’m obviously going to concentrate on my work better.”

In many of Mary’s other stories, autonomous behaviors were evident. She knew that her choice to stay and graduate from high school was a good one, despite the fact that we can hear her frustration and struggle throughout her academic years. In high school, she chose to do an internship at the police station, even though no one had ever before done one in such a setting. She seemed quite proud of the fact that now when she “goes back there,” many others have followed in her footsteps. Most significantly, her choice to make attempts to do something with her life, despite the fact that she quit college, shows her ability to manage her own self-interest despite set-back. “I’d like the training if I could do it in college...but right now I am not in college, so I feel like I am making steps
toward it....”

In looking at Mary’s **self-regulated behavior**, it is evident that her strong cognitive problem solving ability and her goal to be a police officer were driving her to make positive choices in her present life. There is no doubt that second semester in college she knew she had a decision to make. In not attending classes, she began to make that decision, albeit at the expense of “wasting money and time.” And even after the decision to leave school was made, it took some time to solve the problem of her unhappiness with living in the town of H. Perhaps her surgery gave her the push she needed to go back home and regroup, but clearly, when she did, she moved quickly in the direction of pursuing her goals in a different way. She began her own “hands on” training program for policing by getting experience as a security guard. And she crafted an entire plan for herself to help her reach her career goals. “As of right now I’m sending out an application for the firefighter’s exam….that way the police exam isn’t until next year and I figure if I do firefighter now…then I can slide my way into being on the police force…they’ll pay for me to take a course in EMT, so I kinda have the best of both worlds, firefighter, EMT…and then…take the police exam.”

One cannot help but be amazed how thoughtful her plan was. Certainly, there can be no predictions as to whether or not it will all play out as planned, but her ability to self-regulate her behavior does suggest that even if it doesn’t, she will come up with a new plan to replace it. This type of thinking is so very different from the way Carol handled problems, and the many excuses she had for not planning for her future. Mary would not allow for excuses. Mary’s attitude was - this is the way it is, now figure out how to move on.
With respect to Psychological Empowerment, again Mary’s behavior was in total contrast to Carol’s. Though they both seemed to have an understanding of their own power over the relationships of actions and outcomes, Mary was more capable of acting upon that understanding and then following through with those actions. “I don’t let my disability hold me back...you know, if I want to do it...if I put my mind to it, I’m gonna do it.” In terms of her present job she perceived that she had control in any given situation, and would speak up to actually get and maintain that control. “At my job, it’s not really sexist, but a lot of people think guys can do the job better. You know, when we’re going to the Psych. Ward the guys will check it out and stuff. I get into arguments with people like ‘who are you to say you’re better than me in situations...you may be stronger than me, but I may be the one to go up there and calm a situation down where there is not even going to have to be a fight...’”

Finally, in terms of self-realization, Mary clearly understands who she is with regard to her strengths, weaknesses, abilities and limitations. Further, her ability to utilize these attributions to positively influence her quality of life is admirable. She, like Carol, understands her disability, in this case, AD/HD and how it affects her life, but she has chosen not to let it get her down, and rather describes herself as a “hands-on” type of person. Some might suggest that she is in denial; however, her actions suggest that she is actually accepting her limitation and then moving forward with what she knows are her strengths. The fact that she could be a spokesperson for others like her, “I think I could speak for all of us when I say that we all felt kinda slow...” further exemplifies her acceptance of her disability. What was most impressive about Mary was her ability to, unlike Carol, positively plan and take steps to positively influence her life. “To me, it’s
just I am more of a person who needs hands-on experience. It’s not that I have a learning
disability. I mean I know I do...I’ve seen myself, like I can’t sit there and learn writing,
typing, and stuff. I really don’t think of it as I have ADD, I learn better hands-on, getting
in there and doin it.... I needed to get some experience in the field, so I’m doing that.”

The quantitative phase of this study suggested that college students with
disabilities and more positive success outcomes have higher self-determination. Yet, with
Mary, we have a case of a negative success outcome in terms of retention in college and
high self-determination (HSD/NS). The way Mary perceives it, however, is “As of right
now I’m doing other things with my life and just because I’m not goin to college doesn’t
mean that I’m not goin to be something in life, you know.” Whether Mary will indeed be
successful in her goal to become a police person is yet to be seen, though according to
her, she states the only thing that will stop her is if she “dies” or if “they tell me there is
no possible way I could do it or I get sick...have cancer...”

And again we are left to wonder about the complexity of what success means to a
college student with disabilities within the construct of Wehmeyer’s self-determination
framework.

Analysis of Harry’s Profile

Overview:

Harry was interviewed the morning following Mary’s interview. The interview
took place in the local public library in a small community about 45 minutes from the
college. Results of the Demographic and Outcomes Survey revealed that Harry is a 36-
year- old Caucasian male who had applied to the college in the fall of 1996. He reported
that he had graduated from not only a Bachelor Degree Program at a state college (prior
to that date), but that he also had graduated with an Associate Degree as a Physical Therapy Assistant from a college other than the research site. He, like Carol and Mary, had checked career as the reason for attending college. He indicated in the survey that his disabilities were Dyslexia and LD. Harry was selected for an interview because he had the highest score on the Arc Scale overall (140) and fit the description of a purposeful selection in the category of HSD/S (in retention). He had expressed interest in his survey in participating in the second phase and as soon as he was contacted, he agreed to an interview. As with Carol and Mary, the quantitative phase of this research only tells part of the story, for on the surface, Harry has Post-Secondary success. So how does Harry understand and describe his post-secondary experience within the construct of Wehmeyer’s framework?

His profile (Appendix P) was crafted from 28 original pages of single-spaced text transcribed from his interview and presented in a three interview series as was Carol’s and Mary’s. As his story unfolds we again see that “multiple environments” and changes across the “life span” may have contributed to Harry’s high self-determination. Further, given that Harry was the oldest of the group, he had many more environments to which he had been exposed, as well as a longer “life span.” His story showed even more the complexities involved in understanding what it means to be successful.

Harry was extremely articulate throughout the entire interview and therefore few idiosyncrasies needed to be omitted. Nonetheless, the “rules” for crafting the profile remain the same as for Carol and Mary. It should be noted that Harry began the interview with the first question. When he was given the consent form to sign, he asked “Do you want to tell me what this is?” It took a moment for the interviewer to understand what he
meant by the question, but soon it was realized that he could not read the words on the form. He also stated, once the first series of the interview began, that “I do want to go a little further than that.” He was informed that the structure of the three interviews would take him right up to the present. He seemed pleased with that response. These immediate reactions to the interview demonstrated right up front his “self-determined” behavior.

**Analysis:**

Harry’s responses on the Arc and on the success outcomes questions in the Quantitative Phase of the study categorized him as having high self-determination with retention success (HSD/S). His profile supports the findings of high self-determination on the Arc scale. Further, striking similarities to some of Mary’s behavior and attitude become evident after reading the profile. But where Mary suffered a setback in her college success, Harry hit a roadblock in employment success. What becomes clear, too, is that unlike Carol’s past, Harry, like Mary, had more positive support from significant others through the years, again reinforcing the notion that “environment” and the “lifespan” might influence self-determination.

Harry’s profile, like Carol’s and Mary’s, gives us a more in-depth look into the notions of opportunity and college success for students with disabilities that the quantitative phase could not do alone. Harry believes that his determination has helped him achieve the successes he has experienced so far, yet, despite these successes, he cannot achieve the ultimate goal of his purpose for going to college in the first place, full-time employment in his second chosen major (PTA). Again, Harry’s understanding and description of what it means to be successful raises yet other questions about post-secondary education that cannot be ignored.
Like Carol and Mary, his past life was not without problems and obstacles to overcome. He felt ostracized by his peers for many years, was denied admission to colleges that were intended for individuals with disabilities because he was considered “too disabled,” and he was divorced by his first wife because “she found someone better.” Yet, like Mary, he made an effort to continually step back and re-group.

Harry told many stories about his life with “severe dyslexia.” In terms of autonomy, his story resembles that of Carol’s, in a small way, in that he did not always have a handle on his own “personal interests.” He, like Carol, had gone in many different directions throughout his college experience, from psychology, to physical therapy, to sports management, back to physical therapy, and now he is considering a Masters in psychology. However, through it all, he, unlike Carol, made choices that continued to move him forward. And that is perhaps the biggest difference. In a way, Harry is blazing trails for others in his position. “I was the one who brought up the adaptive technology piece and got some information and ... got the ball rolling and if I hadn’t pushed I wouldn’t have had that.” This story is similar to Mary’s internship story when she had to go to the headmaster at her high school and told her that she wanted to intern at the police station even though no one else ever had in the past. Harry, like Mary, expresses a sense of pride in these accomplishments. In any case, Harry, even as a child, struggling through the academics of elementary school, middle school and high school, described an ability to grab on to any opportunities that came his way and that were in his best interest. He made choices to always “grab the bull by the horns.” His support system in high school certainly helped motivate him in positive directions, for example, the wrestling team, going to college, connections with Vocational Rehabilitation. And once encouraged,
Harry chose to make the best of those opportunities. Like Mary, he took help/advice when he needed it and then continued to move forward from that point. Carol, on the other hand, seemed to be consistently in regression.

Harry prides himself in his cognitive ability to solve problems and push through roadblocks. He describes his self-regulatory behavior throughout many of his stories. "I have pushed through every obstacle that has been in my way so far." "I push when I need to push, and re-group and move on..." This is very similar to the style of cognitive problem solving used by Mary, especially in terms of the re-grouping and the moving on. Mary, unlike Harry, decided that college was not for her, and perhaps she was right.

Harry decided it was, because of his "intellectual abilities." He does not see himself as a "hands- on" person, but rather an intellect seeking a professional career. Nonetheless, they both considered re-grouping and moving on to be essential when roadblocks and setbacks occurred. Harry stated that he finds he hits roadblocks and comes to crossroads "every five years." However, he has come to the conclusion that after four years of trying to "push" through this one, the roadblock of discrimination may require more than his own sheer "determination." "I've been beating down the door for four years now to get a good full-time job in PT and it hasn't happened...so maybe it's time for me to go another avenue...a counseling (career) would help with some of my strengths..." or "...the obstacle is going to have me require my wife's help to do some litigation..." Yet through all this Harry queries as to whether or not he was "thoughtful" enough in his goals. "I really think someone with a disability needs to say... 'OK, this is what I am; this is what I am going to do and I need to get as much information and be the best at this that I can'...don't go here and there and...." It seems that young Mary is farther along in her
thinking than Harry has been these past years. Nonetheless, his self-regulatory behavior rebounds with, “I know I’ll make the right decision.”

Perhaps Mary, too, will have similar roadblocks to face. Her “life span” is too short right now to know. Yet, armed with these self-regulatory characteristics, Mary and Harry both appear to have a better chance at more positive outcomes than does Carol.

In looking at Psychological Empowerment, Harry, like Mary and Carol, seems to understand his own power of his actions and the outcomes that can be achieved. It is unclear that without the external support services in place to help Harry through his difficult academic endeavors whether he would have been as empowered as he is today. Nonetheless, each new venture that has proved successful for Harry has been followed by a desire to move forward yet again. In a sense, success breeds success. Carol has had so many experiences in her life that have left her feeling powerless and thus not successful, it is no wonder she is in the position that she is in today. And for Mary, again, it may be too early to tell. Certainly, she has proven to be capable of acting and following through on her understanding of the power of her actions. Even Harry would do well to listen to the stories of young Mary, for at least twice during the interview he suggested that, “I’ve been very, very lucky…there’s got to be “someone looking out for me because I made those connections that I needed to;” and he commented about passing his state Physical Therapy licensing test, “By the Grace of God, I passed it (licensing test),” giving the impression that he is not sure if fate, luck, chance, some other external power had something to do with his success.

Lastly, in terms of self-realization, Harry has an understanding of his strengths, weaknesses, and abilities. It is unclear at the present time whether he understands his
limitations. Despite her young age, Mary seems to have realized the depth and implications of her limitations, Harry, however, believes on the one hand that he can do the job he needs to do as a Physical Therapist Assistant given the right tools, yet on the other hand, he stated that he is "very labor intensive." He even acknowledged the fact that PTA is a business that focuses on "How long is it gonna take you to do this? How much money can we make from you?" Perhaps Harry has not thoroughly taken into account his limitations in this chosen major. Further, he clearly stated that he has only read a bit about his disability because, "It is very painful...I would read a bit...and it would very much upset me...so I would sort of stay away from it and then I would read more...and I think what I want to do now is grab the bull by the horns and realize this is what I have, because I was trying to live a normal life..." He further has just recently come to realize that, "What I'm looking for is my niche where I can be accepted and work and ...accept my disability...cuz sometimes I don’t accept it; sometimes I do."

The quantitative phase of this study suggested that college students with disabilities and more positive retention success outcomes have higher self-determination. This is certainly corroborated with the story of Harry. Yet Harry is experiencing negative outcomes at another level. Though the reasons for this are unclear, what is clear is that complexities abound in attempting to understand what success really means to a college student with disabilities within the construct of Wehmeyer’s self-determination framework.

Analysis of Ed’s Profile

Overview:

Ed was interviewed on the afternoon following Harry’s interview. This interview
took place in Ed’s grandmother’s home, where he now resides, not far from the library where Harry’s interview took place. Results of the Demographic and Outcomes Survey reveal that Ed is a 21-year-old Caucasian male who had applied to the college in the fall of 2000. He, like Carol, Mary and Harry, had checked career as the reason for attending college. He reported Communications as his major at the time of the survey. He indicated in the survey that he had an Orthopedic Disability. Unlike Carol, Mary and Harry, Ed was not the first selected in the purposeful category (LSD/NS). A woman had a lower self-determination score (27) and no retention success. However, when she decided not to take part in this phase of the study, although she had expressed interest in her survey response, Ed (with the next lowest score of 63 and no retention success) was contacted. After some hesitation, Ed agreed to an interview. Ed had just recently been dismissed from the college. So how does Ed understand and describe his post-secondary experience within Wehmeyer’s framework?

His profile (Appendix Q) was crafted from 20 original pages of single-spaced text transcribed from his interview and presented in a three interview series as was Carol’s, Mary’s and Harry’s. As Ed’s story unfolds we again see those “multiple environments” and changes across the “life span” which may have contributed to Ed’s low self-determination. But there seems to be other contributing factors for Ed that neither Carol, nor Mary, nor Harry had to deal with. His story, perhaps, more so than anyone else’s, represents a truer picture of what it means to have low self-determination and no success.

The “rules” for crafting the profile remain the same as for Carol, Mary and Harry. Interestingly, Ed began the interview by answering my question with a question, thus setting the tone for what was to follow. It should be noted that the interview was
scheduled to take place at the local library. However, upon arrival at Ed’s home, his grandmother encouraged him to stay there, in their kitchen, to do the interview. In retrospect, this may not have been the best situation for Ed, as his grandmother, aunt, and father periodically and apologetically “needed” something in the kitchen.

Analysis:

Ed’s responses on the Arc and on the success outcomes questions in the Quantitative Phase of the study categorized him as having low self-determination and no retention success (LSD/NS). His profile supports these findings. After reading his profile, it seems that Ed’s low self-determination may, in part, be due to his past life. We know his mother left, but there were no details as to why or how; we know he feels that he is doted upon. But there is the sense that the intensity of his low self-determination has to do with the fact that he “has no legs.” In a way, the fact that the interview took place in Ed’s home was somewhat beneficial to the researcher’s understanding to Ed’s present position. It appears that Ed has support from his family, unlike Carol; however, he periodically praised his father for “kicking his ass” while hinting at the fact that his mother left them several years ago. He blamed his grandmother and aunt, the women in his life, for enabling and doting on him, but suggested that his brother was very helpful to him in that he doesn’t “do stuff” for him. Though Ed perceived it as “doting,” his aunt and his grandmother certainly seem to care for Ed, both physically and emotionally. Perhaps the fact that his mother left has something to do with his negative feelings toward women, or perhaps it is his feelings of inadequacy that come out in very negative and opinionated responses. In any case, his attitude, like his disability, is easier to understand. His is not a hidden disability as is Carol’s, Mary’s, and Harry’s; it is right
there in your face, as is Ed. Ed seemed to be behaving in a manner that represented his perception of how he believes others perceive him. Ed questions little. He says it like it is, at least to him, "People either like me or they hate me." "I either like you or I hate you."

Ed's profile, unlike Carol's, Mary's, and Harry's, gives us insight into the world of an individual with a physical handicap, whose feelings and attitudes about his disability could not have been realized from the quantitative phase of this study.

There is no doubt, in terms of Autonomy, that Ed has interpersonal issues with others... even the researcher. He described a "chip on his shoulder" that won't go away. Ed doesn't always make good choices and he does not always act in an "independent" manner when it comes to self-management, but his personal expression is clearly something that he is not about to give up. From "Ted Nugent T-shirts" to loving "All in the Family," Ed certainly exhibited more autonomy in his thinking and expression than any of the other participants.

It is evident, through his profile, that Ed also made many choices that are true to his own personal beliefs. Unfortunately, they tend not to be politically correct and thus get him in trouble. A closer look at Ed's story showed him commenting on his lack of tolerance for "rap music," "black people" and "women." There is no vacillating for Ed, as there is for Carol, and sometimes for Harry. Ed is Ed. Either love him or leave him.

Also disturbing about Ed's profile is his inability to care for himself. He can do laundry now, but he still can't cook. He says that it is "his fault" because he "never put his foot down on that." He hates the fact that the women in his life, his grandmother and his aunt "dote" on him too much. He is hoping that Easter Seals will provide more
independent living opportunities for him, yet he has made no strides to actually act upon this hope.

In terms of self-regulation, Ed, like Carol, has plenty of excuses for his inability to solve problems. Although he regrets not doing his homework in college and flunking out, he believes he cannot get a job presently either because of the “September 11th attack on the World Trade Center...‘they’re not hiring;’” or because places are “trying to trip me up,” by asking the same question on a computerized application. He has, since elementary school, refused to use tutoring services, his I.E.P., computers, his eye glasses, or any other service or tool that could assist him in becoming more independent and successful. There was no “pushing through obstacles” here, as Harry continually tried to do. Ed looks at the world quite differently.

For Ed, like Carol, driving is an issue that interferes with independent living. Yet, like Carol, excuses abound for not driving. Ed’s reasons, though, can be better understood, because his physical disability makes driving extremely difficult, if not impossible. Ed did not express many goals. Currently, his only goal is to find out what Easter Seals has to offer him in terms of employment possibilities and primarily “independent living.” He may also try to connect with Vocational Rehabilitation, even though they “move way too slow for me.” Yet there does not seem to be any immediacy in his quest for answers. He was not even the one who found out about the Easter Seals Program. It was, instead, his aunt whom he rejected because of her supposedly constant doting on him.

There is little doubt that Ed knows all too well that there is a relationship between his actions and the outcomes of those actions. Unfortunately for Ed and for those around
him, he doesn’t seem to care. Ed does not believe in fate, luck or chance, but neither does he act in a psychologically empowering manner where adherence to an internal locus of control will affect positive outcomes. On the surface, Ed really doesn’t seem to care. “It’s not that I’m a ‘know it all,’ but once I get something set in my head, nobody can tell me anything different…. My way is my way and that’s it; That’s me and this is my life, as I said.” Yet, beneath the surface of these comments is someone who recognizes that he does have some control over many things in his life and the choices he has made have resulted in negative outcomes: “It’s not a case of being a young adolescent, it’s just a case of being Ed…that’s how I am…It’s hurt a lot of things for me…it’s hurt a lot of relationships.” And in terms of college: “I failed myself. This is my fault.”

Finally, in terms of Self-Realization, Ed admitted that, “I understand what I wanna understand, what I don’t wanna understand, I kinda ignore. There are just things I don’t want to know…. If I think about it too much it does get in the way, cuz I get depressed.” Unlike, Mary who stated that her disability “doesn’t get in the way,’ Ed’s disability is of a physical nature and his negative and defensive comments on many subjects throughout his profile make one wonder if he has ever come to accept his disability and its limitations. He contended that he wouldn’t have even gone to college if he could have pursued his life’s ambition of “a manual labor job…back breaking labor…because I felt that was a more honorable job than wearing a suit and tie every day.” He said he would not have chosen to go to college if not for that, but despite the fact that he did go and “could have been an A student,” he said he lacked the desire to “do homework and go to classes.” He considers himself a failure to date; however, he believes that flunking out of college has helped him see he has to get assistance with
"independent living" and plans to "get affiliated with Easter Seals" and maybe, now, even "VR." His hopes of finding a job have been put off until spring "because Sept. 11 really screwed things up."

His refusal to seek or even utilize any support services, including a computer, which has been an invaluable tool for Harry in the pursuit of his goals, suggests that Ed may have been in denial of what he needs to be successful, both in college and in life. He recognizes that he had become a "social outcast" with a "chip" on his shoulder and a "mouth." He knows that many people do not like him, especially the opposite sex.

Perhaps most significant in Ed’s new found self-realization is that "flunking out of college" has made him realize that he has to "try and figure something out" and to "start doing things" for himself...to "get the ball rolling" and not sit there and "sip wine all night." His reference to "getting the ball rolling" is a reminder of Harry’s similar statement: "I was the one who brought up the adaptive technology piece and got some information and ...got the ball rolling" and also Harry’s continual usage of the metaphor "taking the bull by the horns." Ed further suggests that he might need to take "anger management classes." Finally, and most poignant, is his statement that although he hasn’t quite figured it out and as low as his "...self-esteem can get...there is always this little part of me, this stubborn part of me that won’t let it get too low...this spark deep, deep, deep in the recesses of my mind that won’t let me do anything detrimental to my own life...cuz in high school I thought about suicide many, many times. I was that miserable. I felt like a fly in the spider web of a black widow. But ...things just get old...you get sick of being sick...It’s good that things get old...I might not be sitting here right now.

But, "I do...I feel success coming."
Ed’s story, like Carol’s, touches us with its sadness and honesty. There is little doubt that Carol and Ed have low self-determination, one seemingly successful in college, but certainly not in her past life, one not feeling successful in any areas of life to date. They both feel like social outcasts, one because of a history of abuse and violence that has resulted in an extreme lack of self-esteem, the other because of a physical disability that also has resulted in a lack of self-esteem. “Smashing mirrors” so as not to see one’s face and feeling like a “fly in the spider web of a black widow” does not paint a picture of success or self-determined behavior. The interesting thing, though, about both Carol and Ed is that they are both “sick of it.” Carol suggested that she wants to “just get over depression; that is just the one thing I fought with my whole life and I am sick of it.” Ed related that “…things just get old…you get sick of being sick…” Whether or not they will be able to use this newfound attitude to effect real change in a positive direction remains to be seen. What is clear, however, is that the profiles of Mary and Harry have a much more positive tone, overall, despite the fact that they, too, have experienced negative success outcomes. There is a feeling that these two will be able to go forward to effect positive outcomes.

D. Integrated Data Analysis

This section of the analysis sought to combine the results of both the quantitative and the qualitative phases of the design to determine if there has been either complementarity, which seeks elaboration, enhancement, illustration, clarification of the results from one method with the results from the other method; development which seeks to use the results from one method to help develop or inform the other method where development is construed to include sampling and implementation as well as
measurement decisions; *initiation* which seeks the discovery of paradox and contradiction, new perspectives of frameworks, the recasting of questions or results from one method with questions or results from the other method; or *expansion,* which seeks to extend the breadth and range of inquiry by using different methods for different inquiry components (Greene et. al, 1989, p. 258).

Using the philosophical underpinnings of this framework, data were combined (below) to identify what the “insider’s perspective” has to say about the “outsider’s perspective” and what the “outsider’s perspective” has to say about the insider’s” (Howe, 1992, p. 243).

The quantitative phase of this study corroborated the research hypothesis. In short, the study found that college students with disabilities and more positive success outcomes have higher self-determination. There is complementarity of results on varying levels in the stories of the participants. Further, in all cases, where the participant had a higher self-determination score on the *Arc Scale,* the participant’s profile related behaviors that could be described as highly self-determining. Conversely, for those students with low self-determination scores, their stories have characteristics of low self-determination based upon the framework established by Wehmeyer. Yet the profiles crafted tell us a lot more about the complexity of the issue of self-determination and success. First, a positive success outcome within the framework of low self-determination may not necessarily be as it seems. Second, though the ability to behave in highly self-determined ways appeared to be positive, it didn’t guarantee success for all participants in this study in the same way or at the same time. Finally, though there was not statistical evidence gathered from this study that students with negative success for all three
outcomes (as defined in this study) have lower degrees of self-determination, one of the participants, Ed, selected for an interview fell into this category, the results of which are compelling and cannot be ignored.

Based on the findings in the Demographic and Outcomes Survey and the Arc Scale, Carol had retention success, but very low self-determination, (LSD/S), thus representing a negative case in terms of the results of the quantitative analysis. However, by looking deeply into the analysis of the qualitative phase, there is, instead, on another level, complementarity of the findings to the quantitative phase in that the outlook for potential future positive success for Carol, despite her present surface retention success, seems bleak. Additionally, it becomes clear that what looked like retention success in the quantitative phase was not perceived as that by Carol. She has had the worst semester ever, thinks that her GPA has recently fallen below a 2.0, and that she should be on probation. In addition, she stated that she does not "feel successful" at all. This further demonstrates that if we are going come to a better understanding of whether a relationship exists between self-determination and success outcomes, there may be a need to study both over time because of the importance of "multiple environments...across the lifespan."

Further analysis of the quantitative findings revealed that Mary did not have college retention success, but did have high self-determination (HSD/NS), again representing a negative case in terms of the results of the T-test on retention. That finding complements the qualitative findings; Mary related that she did not experience success in retention; she dropped out of college. Nor did Mary describe herself as successful in college. However, in terms of the quantitative findings on employment, Mary did have
positive success outcomes. A closer look at her profile revealed many stories about the success she feels in her present full-time job and about her plans for pursuing a “career” as a police officer, despite the fact that she dropped out of college. Again, there is a complementarity of findings.

Harry, had both success in college and high self-determination (HSD/S) as found in the Survey and the Arc. Again there was complementarity with the results of the qualitative phase in that Harry reported success in his college experiences. He graduated with a Bachelor’s Degree in Sports Management and an Associates Degree in Physical Therapy. He reported on his Outcomes Survey that he was working full-time; however, his profile suggests that he was experiencing negative success outcomes in employment. He explains that his full time job was not in his P.T. major, and thus, according to him, he was not successful. It is difficult to determine if it was discrimination or a lack of understanding of the limitations of his disabilities that was holding him back from experiencing successful employment outcomes. Whatever the case, Harry’s profile does not demonstrate complementarity of findings, nor initiation of findings. Rather, it represents an expansion of the findings of the quantitative phase, as it adds to the breadth and range of the inquiry by showing the complexities of what it means to be successful within the construct of Wehmeyer’s framework.

Finally Ed, with low self-determination and no college success (LSD/NS) has experienced negative success throughout most of his young life. The quantitative phase of the design did not clearly investigate this relationship; however, using the results of the Outcomes survey and the Arc, there exists complementarity with the qualitative phase. Ed clearly expressed his lack of success in all areas of his life to date, from “flunking out
of college," to being unable to obtain a job, even part-time. Further in the many stories that he told to describe his life and his post-secondary experiences, Ed’s behaviors reflect what Wehmeyer would describe as characteristic of low self-determination.

In sum, the integrated data analysis of the quantitative and the qualitative phases shows that in all cases there has been complementarity of findings and in one there has been elaboration of findings. What the qualitative phase accomplished was to help to depict a better understanding of the relationship between self-determination and success outcomes, as well as to explore the complexities of success for college students with disabilities. The integration, then, has provided “... a better philosophical account – in terms of a conception of explanation, a conception of human nature and a conception of the relationship between research and practice ... (Howe, 1992, p. 254) “so as to serve a democratic society”(p. 255).
CHAPTER V

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

In this study it was the primary goal to investigate the success of college students with disclosed disabilities accepted at a two-year, open access institution and whether or not "self-determination" might be linked to "positive success outcomes" (Wehmeyer, Winter, 1997). A two-phase quantitative/qualitative design sought to answer two questions:

Phase One: Quantitative:
How do measurable success outcomes (in terms of retention, GPA, and full-time employment—if graduated or departed) of two-year college students with disclosed disabilities and higher degrees of self-determination compare with students with lesser degrees of self-determination as determined by the Arc Self-Determination Scale?

Phase Two: Qualitative:
How do two-year college students with disclosed disabilities who possess varying degrees of self-determination describe their post-secondary experience within the construct of Wehmeyer’s self-determination framework?

The literature review first examined the political and philosophical underpinnings driving the increased numbers of students with disabilities in higher education as they
relate to equal educational opportunity in a democratic America. Further, the self-determination movement was examined through a similar lens of freedom, opportunities, and choice, not always afforded to communities of persons with disabilities.

Once the framework was established, studies, though limited, significant to both movements were reviewed and analyzed. The studies most significant to this research were: a. in terms of success of students with disabilities, three studies published by the National Center for Education Statistics: "Profiles of Students with Disabilities as Identified in NELS: 88" (National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988), published in June, 1997 (Rossi, Herting, Wolman & Quinn), "Students with Disabilities in Post-secondary Education: A Profile of Preparation, Participation, and Outcomes published in June, 1999 (Horn & Bobbitt), and "An Institutional Perspective on Students with Disabilities in Post-Secondary Education," published in August, 1999, (Lewis & Greene); b. the self-determination projects funded by the Arc of the United States in cooperation with the work done by Dr. Michael Wehmeyer and others in establishing a definitional framework for self-determination which identified four elements that were recognized as characteristics of self-determined individuals: 1. The individual acts autonomously; 2. The behaviors are self-regulated; 3. The person initiates and responds to events in a psychologically empowered manner; and 4. The person acts in a self-realizing manner (Wehmeyer, 1996).

Perhaps the most significant study informing this research was the research done by Wehmeyer and Schwartz (1997) in “Self-Determination and Positive Adult Outcomes: A Follow-up Study of Youth with Mental Retardation or Learning Disabilities,” which investigated whether positive adult outcomes were linked to self-determination. In this
study Wehmeyer and Schwartz used the Arc Self-Determination Scale to determine a relationship. Overall, the results showed that there was a "consistent trend characterized by self-determined youth doing better than their peers 1 year out of school" (p. 250). This was true despite two facts: that the degree of success relative to adult outcomes varies over time and this study used only a single data collection time.

This, combined with the belief that "... students who leave school as self-determined young people should achieve more positive adult outcomes" (Wehmeyer, 1997, p. 246), and that though this had considerable "face validity," it remained largely "an untested hypothesis" (p. 246) helped to guide the direction of this study.

Findings

The findings presented below are organized according to the format used in Chapter IV: A. Findings of the Demographic and Outcomes Survey; B. Findings of the Quantitative Phase; C. Findings of the Qualitative Phase; D. Findings of the Integrated Data Analysis (within the construct of Wehmeyer's self-determination framework).

A. Findings of the Demographic and Outcomes Survey

In order to better understand the 48 students who took part in the study, findings of the demographic section and the outcomes section are presented separately below:

Demographic Section

➢ The majority of the respondents were white (44), female (34), between the ages of 20-24 (28), single (38) and without children.

➢ Though the participants reported a variety of majors, the most commonly sought after majors were Communications (7), Business (6), Early Childhood (4) and Criminal Justice (4).
> 38 had entered college between 1997-2001 and 33 had submitted formal disclosures.

> Learning Disability (LD) was the most commonly reported disability with 12 reporting LD alone, and 16 more disclosing LD with ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) or ED (Emotional Disability), 5 reported ADHD alone, 3 ADHD with ED or other, 5 with ED (Emotional Disability) alone and 2 ED with other, 2 with Orthopedic, 2 S & P (Speech and Language), and 1 HI (Hearing Impaired).

Outcomes Section

> Of the 48 participants, 76% had retention success with 15% graduated from an associate program, 21% graduated from a bachelor program and 40% still currently enrolled. 24% had dropped out.

> 81% of the 48 had successful GPA’s above a 2.0

> Of the 30 possible participants who could be working full-time (FT), approximately 47% were FT, 27% were PT (part-time) and 27% were unemployed.

> Though salaries were not included in the quantitative analysis, of those who were working full-time salaries ranged from $8,000/year to $35,000/year.

B: Findings of the Quantitative Phase

How do the measurable success outcomes (in terms of retention, GPA, and full-time employment—if graduated or departed) of two-year college students with disclosed disabilities with higher degrees of self-determination compare with students with lesser degrees of self-determination?
In the quantitative phase of this study, 48 participants who had been accepted at a two
year open access post-secondary institution returned the Arc Self-Determination Scale
and the Demographic and Outcomes Survey. T-Tests were performed using SPSS
Statistical Software Package to answer the above question. P value was set at p<.01.
Findings are as follows:

➢ Retention Success Outcome: statistical significance with p value of .002
➢ Cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA): statistical significance with p value of
  .001
➢ Full-time Employment: statistical significance with p value of .002
➢ These findings confirmed the research hypothesis
➢ Effect sizes of each outcome were as follows with Retention and GPA having a
  fairly large effect size and Employment very large:

  Retention: .72
  GPA: .78
  Employment: 1

➢ Retention and GPA were found to yield a similar success outcome based on a
  Cross Tabulation Analysis.

C. Findings of the Qualitative Phase

How do two-year college students with disclosed disabilities and varying degrees of
self-determination describe their post-secondary experience within the construct of
Wehmeyer’s framework of self-determination?

The Qualitative Phase was designed after the data from the Quantitative Phase
were analyzed. This phase was conducted as a three-interview series adapted to reflect Seidman’s (1998) presentation of the “Three Interview Series: Focused Life History, The Details of the Experience, Reflection on the Meaning.” The three 30-45 minute interviews allowed the four participants, selected from the 48 above, to describe their:

a. earliest educational experiences with respect to their disability, b. their present experiences, especially those that relate to post-secondary education, c. their reflection on the meaning of those experiences with respect to where they are now in terms of understanding their post-secondary success outcomes.

Selection of the participants was based on the following four categories. Success (S) for this phase was defined as Retention Success only:

- Low Self Determination with success (LSD w/ S)
- High Self-Determination with no success (HSD w/ NS)
- High Self-determination with no success (HSD w/S)
- Low Self-Determination with no success (LSD w/ NS)

Each participant’s profile included: an introduction describing the participant’s results from the quantitative phase of the design, presentation of the profile; analysis of the profile within the construct of Wehmeyer’s self-determination framework.

Findings: LSD/S (Carol):

Carol is a 22-year-old Caucasian female who began her college experience in the day division in September of 2000. On the survey she checked “career” as the reason she decided to go to college and her major at the time the survey was completed was Graphic Design. Carol indicated in the survey that she had both a learning disability and an emotional disability. Carol’s abusive past became evident immediately. Despite the fact
that she was still enrolled, Carol described herself as “not successful.”

In terms of autonomous behavior, Carol seemed to alternate between behaviors that are characteristic of high and low self-determination. On the one hand she acted independently in her choices to remove herself from “abusive” and “violent” environments, yet once done, she found herself choosing similarly abusive relationships, for example, her “abusive relationship” with her boyfriend. Her choice to go to a high school in a better environment and to work with Catholic Charities to obtain an apartment of her own was characteristic of highly autonomous behavior, yet her choice to smash mirrors in the bathroom when she found out that her ex-boyfriend was dating a friend of hers was not. Carol is constantly falling apart, and then attempting to regroup by looking to change what she perceives is broken.

With respect to Carol’s self-regulatory behavior, Carol’s problems appear to have no solutions. She knew she didn’t have enough money for her “meds,” and yet she drank away what was left of her medication. She hated the lifestyle of her parents; yet she went home “over break” and behaved in a similar manner. She knows she needs to get a driver’s license, yet she suggested it is “impossible.” She knows she needs to get at least a part-time job, but has an excuse for every opportunity that comes her way. Her goals are clouded by her inability to “figure” things out. She suggested her only hope was the psychology classes she was currently taking, as well as a “compare/contrast paper” that was due soon. “I’d like to be successful, but I don’t have a plan and I don’t find myself successful.”

In terms of psychological empowerment, again Carol vacillated between understanding the relationship between her actions and outcomes and behaving totally
“out of control.” She shared many stories about changing her negative environments to more positive environments, for example, her family, her high school, her friends. Yet she failed to maintain the momentum of the change and told stories of not being able to control herself within the change. She saw it, too: “I’m a quitter basically;” “I have a fear of commitment. “I changed my major four times.” “Not having a father figure I tend to latch onto any older male figure who wants the best for me…”

Finally, self-realization for Carol was demonstrated in her understanding of her primarily emotional disability: “I think it’s more emotional takes over and...makes it hard for me to learn.” “…that is just the one thing I fought with my whole life and I am sick of it.” To date, her stories do not show that she has an ability to allow this understanding to positively influence her life. “It’s just a big mess.”

Findings: HSD/NS (Mary)

Mary is a 20-year-old Caucasian female who began her college experience in the day division in September of 2000. On the survey she checked “career” as the reason to go to college and the major reported was Criminal Justice. Mary indicated that she had ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder).

Mary’s respect for her parents was evident throughout her stories: “He (father) is the smartest man I know.” It became clear she didn’t want to disappoint her parents by dropping out of college. Though Mary said she won’t feel successful until she gets “her career,” but she feels like she is moving toward her goals despite the fact she dropped out of college.

In terms of autonomous behavior, Mary told many stories of independent thinking and good decision-making. Despite her academic struggles in high school, she chose to
stay and graduate, utilizing all the support systems in place to help her do that. She independently set out to do an internship at the police station although no one else had done one there from her high school in the past. And finally, she chose to quit college because she is a “hands-on” type of person and learns better when she gets out there and “does it.” She feels her decision to get training “on the job” as a security guard rather than in college was a good one for her.

With respect to Mary’s self-regulatory behavior, her strong capacity for cognitive problem solving was evident in her stories, as was her goal to be a police officer. She has crafted an entire plan of action to get the training she needs, without a college education, in order to reach her goals.

In terms of psychological empowerment, Mary’s attitude is “I don’t let my disability hold me back...if I want to do it...if I put my mind to it, I’m gonna do it.” Unlike Carol, she is not a “quitter.” She claims that nothing will stop her from reaching her goals “unless I die.”

Finally, self-realization for Mary was evidenced in her discussion of her strengths and weaknesses and how she was able to move forward despite her limitations. “I mean I know (I have a disability) but I really don’t think of it as I have ADD; I learn better hands-on, getting in there and doin it...I needed to get some experience in the field, so I’m doing that.”

Findings: HSD/S (Harry)

Harry is a 36-year-old Caucasian male who was accepted at the college in the fall of 1996 in the Physical Therapy Assistant Program. On the survey he checked “career” as the reason he decided to go to college. Harry indicated that he had severe dyslexia and
LD. Harry’s stories showed that he had support and encouragement through the years from significant others, including, to some degree, his parents, especially his mother, all of which Harry willingly accepted. Harry described his post-secondary outcomes as “very successful,” despite the roadblocks he had to face along the way. However, he had not been “successful” in full time employment outcomes in his chosen major (PTA) despite his “determination.”

Harry’s detailed stories demonstrated autonomous behavior. Though he had difficulty choosing a major, like Carol, the choices he has made have afforded him two degrees, a Bachelor Degree in Sports management and an Associate Degree in Physical Therapy. Further, he described that his determination to obtain a college degree, despite the fact that he cannot read and write beyond the third grade level, has led him to become a trail-blazer of sorts. “I was the one who brought up the adaptive technology piece…and got the ball rolling…” Through the years he not only chose to “grab the bull by the horns,” but also to hold on to whatever opportunities and supports were offered to him that he considered were in his best interest.

In terms of self-regulatory behavior, Harry made strong statements like, “I have pushed through every obstacle that has been in my way so far….I push when I need to push and re-group and move on…” Mary’s goal was to become a police officer, but when faced with the problem of not being able to be happy in college because she was a “hands-on” person, she decided to pursue her dreams in another way. Similarly, Harry’s goal was to have a professional job, and because he knew his strengths lay in his intellect and his strong verbal abilities, he chose to solve the problem by arming himself with two college degrees. But his determination was not enough to push through the four-year
roadblock of not being able to get a position in his chosen field of PTA. At this point, Harry suggested that having what Carol might refer to as a “clear path,” could have helped. “...Someone with a disability needs to say, ‘Ok, this is what I am going to do and I need to get as much information and be the best at this that I can...’” Yet, despite setbacks, he like Mary, has devised yet another plan to move him forward toward what he perceives as employment success. “I know I’ll make the right decision.”

For the most part, Harry behaved in a psychologically empowered manner. His stories made it clear that he has perceived control over many of his outcomes by “pushing...and re-grouping.” However, Harry also had tremendous support systems throughout his life, and encouragement from others to move forward. Twice he suggested some of his success was due to “luck... and someone looking out for him” and the “grace of God.”

Lastly, in terms of self-realization, Harry showed that he understands his strengths, weaknesses and limitations to some extent. Yet he admitted that he has “tried to live a normal life” and doesn’t always “accept” his disability. The crossroads he is at right now is forcing him to re-look at his strengths and limitations as he never had to before. “What I am looking for is my niche where I can be accepted and work and...accept my disability...”

Findings: LSD/NS (Ed)

Ed is a 21-year-old Caucasian male who began his college experience in the day division in September of 2000. On the survey he checked “career” as the reason he decided to go to college and he majored in Communications. Ed was the only interview participant who indicated in the survey an orthopedic disability. Ed’s stories reflected a
fairly supportive family, although he claimed they dote on him. He also related that his mother left years ago, but gave no details of the experience. Further, through his stories we learned that he has rarely utilized any support systems that have been put in place for him, nor has he sought any out. Ed’s was the only disability that is not a “hidden” disability in that he is in a wheelchair. In story after story Ed discussed the negative outcomes of his behavior, but concluded with “I feel success coming.”

In terms of autonomous behavior, Ed’s choice in personal expression was very high. However, the way he “chose” to express his opinions, the “chip on his shoulder” that he claims to have, combined with the political incorrectness of his comments renders him incapable of obtaining and maintaining positive relationships with others. Further, his refusal to obtain “independent living skills” has also affected his autonomy, which has put him in a position of having to depend on others, which he “hates.”

Ed’s self-regulatory behaviors are also limited. At times he blamed himself for his problems, at other times he blamed others. Now that he has flunked out of college, he is looking for a job. He blamed himself for flunking out, yet he blamed the September 11, 2001 attack on the World Trade Center and the notion that places are “trying to trip him up” on not being able to gain employment. He has only one goal presently, and that is to try to connect with Easter Seals to get help with primarily independent living skills, and maybe Vocational Rehabilitation (which he has “avoided in the past because they are too slow…”). However, there did not seem to be any sense of immediacy to act upon this goal. Further, his excuses, like Carol’s, abound for not learning how to drive, one goal, if achieved, might help them both become more independent.

In terms of psychological empowerment, Ed has an understanding of the
relationship between his actions and outcomes. He recognizes his behaviors have alienated others, yet he fails to effect any changes within himself to control his actions and perhaps obtain more positive outcomes. “My way is my way and that’s it.” “I failed myself. This is my fault,” ...(but)... “it’s just a case of being Ed... that’s how I am.”

Finally, Ed demonstrated self-realization in his understanding of his physical disability. However, until most recently, Ed’s stories suggested that he had not yet accepted his limitations. This is demonstrated in his past refusals to utilize any support services, including a computer, Vocational Rehabilitation, tutoring, or anything that could assist him in being more successful. However, he stated that “flunking out of college” made him realize he has to “try and figure something out...to get the ball rolling...” He, like Carol, expressed that he is “sick of being sick.” But unlike Carol, he concluded with, “I feel success coming.”

Summative Findings: Qualitative Phase

The following section combines the above individual findings into findings of a broader scope as they relate to the qualitative research question that asked how college students with disabilities and varying degrees of self-determination describe their post-secondary outcomes within Wehmeyer’s self-determination framework:

**Autonomy** involves an individual’ independence and degree to which he or she acts on the basis of personal beliefs, values, interests and abilities, especially in terms of self- and family care activities, self-management activities, recreational activities and social and vocational activities.

Both Carol and Ed, despite having very different types of disabilities and being a different gender, were identified as having low self-determination (by the *Arc Scale*) and
described their post-secondary experiences in negative terms. Their profiles and the above findings suggest that though they think about and know what the right choices should be to obtain more positive success outcomes in their post-secondary lives, they find themselves unable to consistently follow through on those choices. The negative outcomes of those choices feed more feelings of failure, which in turn seem to feed decisions to make additional negative choices. They described a vicious cycle of negative choices and negative outcomes.

In contrast, both Mary and Harry, despite having different disclosed disabilities, being the opposite gender and having a large gap in age, described more positive post-secondary outcomes than Carol and Ed. They not only seem to know what choices will yield more positive results, but they are also able to follow through on those choices and learn from them. For them, the cycle of independent choice, despite the outcomes, provides opportunity to make and follow through on additional independent choices to reach their goals the next time around.

Self-regulatory behavior is composed of interpersonal cognitive problem solving and goal setting/task performance.

The findings of Mary’s and Harry’s profiles clearly show us what sets them apart from Carol and Ed. Their stories about being able to identify problems, think through those problems, craft a plan to solve those problems and then follow through on their plan are in sharp contrast to the stories told by Carol and Ed. Though Carol and Ed seemed able to identify the problems and even to think through those problems, they seemed less able to craft a plan to solve them, and even when they did, they were unable to follow through on the plan. And within the context of the research question, Carol and Ed
further described post-secondary experiences that lack such problem solving and goal setting components.

**Psychological Empowerment** involves dimensions of perceived control and whether the individual has an internal locus of control - an understanding of the relationship between actions and outcomes - as opposed to an external locus of control, such as fate, luck or chance.

Again we find Carol and Ed, who, though on the surface recognize that their actions have outcomes, albeit negative, but whose stories suggest they lack the control or feelings of empowerment to change those actions. Mary and Harry, on the other hand, generally believe that if they put their “mind to it” or keep pushing” and “re-grouping,” they will have positive outcomes As such, they described their post-secondary experiences as fairly positive.

**Self-realization** is a basic understanding of one’s strengths, weaknesses, abilities and limitations, as well as the ability to utilize these attributions to positively influence one’s quality of life.

Carol and Ed, both with low self-determination, have a general understanding of the problem, in this case, their disability and its limitations. This was also true for Mary and Harry. What seems to be the biggest difference here is Mary’s and Harry’s ability to make attempts to utilize such understanding to effect positive outcomes. Further, despite her young age, Mary described a more positive post-secondary experience than not only Ed and Carol, but also, to some extent, Harry. Although Harry described college success despite his disability, his last story told of an inability to accept the limitations his disability placed on him in terms of full time employment in one of his chosen majors,
thus keeping him at bay for more than four years. However, it appears that his overall ability to behave in self-determining ways finally allowed him to take a better look at his strengths and weaknesses so that he might move forward. Carol and Ed, perhaps because of their general lack of self-determination, do not seem to be at that point with their final stories.

Overall, these broader findings, which combine all four individuals within Wehmeyer’s framework and in the context of the research question, show that Carol and Ed, with low self-determination, shared stories of behavior that were less autonomous, less self-regulating, less psychologically empowering, and less self-realizing than do Mary and Harry, with high self-determination. As a result, Carol’s and Ed’s post-secondary experiences were generally described negatively and without much hope, while Mary’s and Harry’s were described in more positive, hopeful terms.

D: Integrated Quantitative/Qualitative Findings

This section sought to combine the findings of both the quantitative and qualitative phases to determine if there has been either complementarity, which seeks elaboration, enhancement, illustration, clarification of the results from one method with the results from the other method; development which seeks to use the results from one method to help develop or inform the other method where development is construed to include sampling and implementation as well as measurement decisions; initiation which seeks the discovery of paradox and contradiction, new perspectives of frameworks, the recasting of questions or results from one method with questions or results from the other method; or expansion, which seeks to extend the breadth and range of inquiry by using different methods for different inquiry components (Greene et. al, 1989, p. 258). The
following summarizes the integrated findings:

In all cases, where the interview participants had a higher self-determination score on the Arc Scale, the participant’s profile related behaviors that could be described as highly self-determining. Conversely, for those students with low self-determination scores, their stories have characteristics of low self-determination based upon the framework established by Wehmeyer.

The study found in the quantitative phase that college students with disabilities and more positive success outcomes have higher self-determination. The profiles crafted tell us a lot more about the complexity of the issue of self-determination and success.

Based on the findings in the Demographic and Outcomes Survey and the Arc Scale, Carol had retention success, but very low self-determination, (LSD/S), thus representing a seemingly negative case in terms of the results of the quantitative analysis. However, the qualitative phase tends to complement the findings of the quantitative analysis in that the outlook for potential future positive success for Carol, despite her present surface retention success, seems bleak. Additionally, what looked like retention success in the quantitative phase is not perceived as that by Carol. She has had the worst semester ever, thinks that her GPA has recently fallen below a 2.0, and that she should be on probation. In addition, she stated that she does not “feel successful” at all.

Based on the findings in the Demographic and Outcomes Survey and the Arc Scale, Mary did not have college retention success, but did have high self-determination (HSD/NS), again representing a negative case in terms of the results of the quantitative analysis on retention. However, Mary did have success in the quantitative findings regarding full-time employment. There is complementarity of results with the qualitative
findings; Mary did not experience success in retention; she dropped out of college. Nor did Mary describe herself as successful in college. However, in terms of employment, Mary did have positive success outcomes and thus she did “fit” with the research hypothesis. She does have a full-time job and is pursuing positive goals toward her chosen career, despite the fact that she did not have retention success.

Harry had both success in college and high self-determination (HSD/S) as found in the Survey and the Arc. Again there is complementarity of results with the analysis of the qualitative phase. Harry reported success in his college experiences. He had graduated with a Bachelor’s Degree in Sports Management and an Associates Degree in Physical Therapy. Yet, his profile showed that he was experiencing negative success outcomes in employment. Although he was able to find a full-time job in something other than his major, he was not experiencing success, at least according to him, in his chosen profession. In terms of employment then, Harry’s profile does not complement the findings of the quantitative results, nor does it initiate the findings. Rather, expansion of the findings of the quantitative phase adds to the breadth and range of the inquiry by showing the complexities of what it means to be successful within Wehmeyer’s framework.

Ed, with low self-determination and no college success (LSD/NS) has experienced negative success in all three outcomes. Though the quantitative phase of the design did not clearly investigate this relationship, the fact that there was a relationship between high self-determination and success leads us to speculate that the reverse could be proven. In any case, the findings of this phase, using just the results of the survey and the Arc, show there exists complementarity of results in the qualitative phase. Ed clearly expressed his lack of success in all areas of his life to date.
Conclusions

A. Demographic and Outcomes Survey

➢ The sample of 48 students was too small to draw any conclusions and make any generalizations about the demographic profile of the participants as did the longitudinal studies published by the National Center for Education Statistics.

B. Quantitative Phase

➢ The use of only one research site, the small number of respondents, and the fact that the study was not experimental in nature, made generalizability on any large scale limited, in part, to implications for further study.

➢ However, within the context of this study, the findings of the quantitative phase found that college students with disclosed disabilities and more positive success outcomes have higher degrees of self-determination.

C. Qualitative Phase

Qualitative research does not lend itself to large scale generalizability; however, within the context of this present study and within the construct of Wehmeyer’s self-determination framework, some “naturalistic generalizations…conclusions arrived at through personal engagement in life’s affairs or by vicarious experience so well constructed that the person feels as if it happened to themselves,” (Stake, 1995, p. 85) can be made. The researcher believes that the in-depth “three interview series” and the extensive methods used to craft and analyze each participant’s profile lend themselves to such naturalistic generalizations/conclusions:

Wehmeyer suggested that the development of a person’s ability to act in a
self-determined manner cannot happen overnight or in only one environment. "... changes across time result from very robust changes in environments, circumstances, learning or development which is affected by input variables across multiple environments, such as home, school and community, and across the life span." (Wehmeyer, 1997, p. 7). Looking carefully at the findings of the profiles of each participant, “input variables across multiple environments... and across the life span” seem to be evident in the development of the participants' self-determination and the way they understand and describe their success.

This phase of the design demonstrated the complexity associated with understanding “positive success outcomes.” And finally, the combined findings of the four participants suggest that despite the age, gender and type of disability of each participant, the two individuals with low self-determination described more negative post-secondary experiences than the two individuals with high self-determination within the framework established by Wehmeyer.

D. Integrated Conclusions

Again, generalizations to other studies are limited; however, the following conclusions within the context of the findings of this study are as follows:

The interview participants with high and low degrees of self-determination as identified by the raw scores on Wehmeyer’s Arc Scale, demonstrated similar characteristics of self-determined behaviors through their profiles.

The profiles crafted tell us a lot more about the complexity of the issue of self-determination and success than the qualitative phase. First, a positive success outcome within the framework of low self-determination may not necessarily be (positive).
Second, though the ability to behave in highly self-determined ways appeared to be positive, it didn’t guarantee success for all participants in this study in the same way or at the same time. Finally, though there was not statistical evidence gathered from this study that students with negative success for all three outcomes (as defined in this study) have lower degrees of self-determination, one of the participants selected for an interview fell into this category, the results of which are compelling and should not be ignored.

In sum, the results of the integration of phases suggest that in all cases there has been complementarity of findings and in one there has been elaboration of findings. What the qualitative phase accomplished was to help demonstrate a better understanding of the relationship between self-determination and success outcomes, as well as to explore the complexities of success for college students with disabilities. The strength of the integration, then, lies in the fact that it has provided “… a better philosophical account – in terms of a conception of explanation, a conception of human nature and a conception of the relationship between research and practice … (Howe, 1992, p. 254) “so as to serve a democratic society”(p. 255).

**Recommendations**

As a result of these findings and conclusions the following recommendations are made:

**Recommendations**

- Based on the findings of the Quantitative phase, an educational program could be created to directly address the attributes of self-determined behavior. However, if there is an adherence to the belief that development of self-determination is based upon multiple environments across the life span, such programs need to begin in
elementary school, continue through middle, high school and post-secondary environments and include all aspects of the students' with disabilities environments, for example, family, friends, school, work, etc.

Based on the findings of the Qualitative phase, in terms of strengths and limitations, goals and “clear paths” for the future of students with disabilities, American schools and society in general should look at:

- Whether or not success outcomes must be contingent on obtaining a college degree
- Whether better advising programs in high school could be developed to assist students with disabilities in crafting a clear path for their future based upon their strengths and limitations (as did Mary and as suggested by Harry).

Implement better advising programs for students with disabilities in higher education to address the above.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

- A study to determine if the type and severity of disability has any correlation to the success outcomes of college students with disabilities despite degrees of self-determination.

- A study to determine if having a clear “path” or goal prior to enrolling in college (for example, appropriate choice of major), which takes into account the individual’s strengths and limitations, affords more opportunity for successful post-secondary outcomes.

- A study focusing on parents of college students with disabilities to determine if...
there is a relationship between the home environment and the success outcomes of their children with disabilities within Wehmeyer's self-determination framework.

➢ A longitudinal study of elementary students with disabilities and varying degrees of self-determination (as analyzed periodically throughout the years) to determine any relationship to positive adult outcomes.

➢ A longitudinal study beginning with freshmen college students with disabilities and varying degrees of self-determination to determine any relationship to positive adult outcomes.

➢ A qualitative follow-up study to the qualitative phase of this study to determine how these four interview participants understand and describe their success outcomes a year from now; five years from now; ten years from now, within Wehmeyer’s self-determination framework.

It is recommended, based on the findings, that all of the above studies be designed as integrated qualitative/quantitative research.

Final Thoughts

Quantitative purists believe that statistical power lies in the notion that the variables of knowledge and reality can be identified, separated out and measured in such a way so as to give us truth. Yet it is hard to ignore the power of the profiles crafted from the in-depth interviews of the four participants who took part in this research. Even though many of the findings from this phase complemented the findings of the quantitative phase, the depth of understanding gained from these individuals’ stories could not have been achieved from the quantitative alone. From the depiction of the
power of multiple environments in Carol's story, to the questions raised about America's obsession to afford everyone the opportunity of a college education (based on the notion that it is the only avenue to success) in Mary's story, it becomes clear that we may be missing the bigger picture of how individuals with disabilities can become empowered and successful in a democratic America. Harry's story took us deeper into an understanding of the real inequities that still exist within the framework of equal opportunity, to the point where he questioned whether what had been afforded as an opportunity may have really been a "...financially burdensome mistake." Although he saw his degrees as "positive success outcomes," he has yet to reap the positive employment and salary outcomes that were intended, it seems, to go along with educational opportunity: "...education is a key to unlocking the promise of American life, a way to move from the back of the line to the front" (Manno, 1995, p. 45).

This integrated study suggests that self-determination may be a missing piece to the puzzle of "opportunity and success." However, the fact that "America, as a democratic society, has set for itself the goal of ensuring that as many of its youth as possible should graduate from high school and continue on to college" (Lucas, 1994, p. 290) leads us to wonder if there are yet other pieces missing which must be identified in order to gain a real understanding of what success means to individuals with disabilities.
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Dear ______________________________ Date: ________________

You have been selected as a possible candidate to participate in a doctoral study by Project Director Deborah A. Jameson, which involves an integration of qualitative/quantitative methods to study a possible link between success outcomes of two year college students with disabilities and self-determination. Your selection is based on the fact that, as a former or present student of Hesser College, you either formally disclosed a disability by providing the learning center with documentation of your disability or informally disclosed through your incoming freshmen writing sample.

As you know, the Disabilities Movement has afforded increased opportunities for students with disabilities to go to college. There has also been a Self-Determination Movement in the disabilities community of which you may be aware. Yet there is little information available about the success outcomes of college students with disabilities or the possible link to self-determination. Therefore, a study such as this one could have important implications for individuals with disabilities who have an interest in going on to post-secondary education.

Your participation is purely voluntary. If you do agree to participate, you will be mailed two instruments: 1. The ARC Self-Determination Scale by Dr. Michael Wehmeyer and 2. Demographic and Outcomes Survey by Deborah Jameson (researcher). Your responses on both instruments will be kept strictly confidential and used solely for the purpose of the research. Further, your name, though known by the researcher, will also be held in strict confidence.

Please respond within two weeks on the form on the next page and mail back to Deborah A. Jameson in the enclosed Hesser College pre-paid envelope. Feel free to contact the Center for Teaching, Learning and Assessment at 603-668-6660 if you have any questions or concerns at all about this important disabilities research for college students. A copy of the results will be made available to all participants.
Name:________________________________________

Date:__________

Current Address (or address to which we should mail the surveys to you in Sept.)

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

(If you will be living in the dorms at Hesser or another college in Sept. please list that address if you plan on participating in the study).

Current Phone: __________________________________

Current E-mail Address: ____________________________

_______ I am interested in participating in the disabilities research on success outcomes for college students with disabilities. I understand that I will need to answer questions on the ARC Self-Determination Scale and the Demographic/Outcomes Survey, both of which will be mailed to my current September residence for my convenience. I further understand that my responses will be kept strictly confidential and used solely for the purpose of the doctoral research of Deborah A. Jameson, PHD Candidate.

_______ I am not able to or am not interested in participating in this research.
Dear ______________________________ Date: ________________

You have been selected to participate in a doctoral study by Project Director Deborah A. Jameson, which involves an integration of qualitative/quantitative methods to study a possible link between success outcomes of two year college students with disabilities and self-determination. Your selection is based on the fact that, as a former or present student of Hesser College, you either formally disclosed a disability by providing the learning center with documentation of your disability or informally disclosed through your incoming freshmen writing sample.

Attached please find the following two instruments: 1. *The ARC Self-Determination Scale* by Dr. Michael Wehmeyer and 2. *Demographic and Outcomes Survey* by Deborah Jameson (researcher). Your responses on both instruments will be kept strictly confidential and used solely for the purpose of the research. Further, your name, though known by the researcher, will also be held in strict confidence.

Your participation is purely voluntary, but would be much appreciated in that it will help us to better understand how college students with disabilities can achieve success in college. It should only take about 30 minutes of your time and to thank you a complimentary $15.00 restaurant gift certificate will be mailed to you (see attached choice of restaurant). Feel free to contact the Center for Teaching, Learning and Assessment at 603-668-6660, ext. 2108 with any questions. A copy of the results will be made available to all participants in the spring once data has been analyzed.

Thank you in advance for your time and interest.
APPENDIX D
Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research entitled:

Self-Determination and Success Outcomes
of Two-Year College Students with Disabilities:
An Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches

PROCEDURAL INSTRUCTIONS

Please follow the four easy steps below:

1. Follow the directions on the ARC Self-Determination Scale and the Demographic/Outcomes Surveys.

2. In appreciation for taking the time to participate in this study, please select restaurant of your choice below for which you will be sent a $15.00 gift certificate.
   ________ Applebee's   ________ Ninety-nine   ________ Chili's

3. Mail the completed ARC Scale, the Surveys and this form back to me in the enclosed pre-paid envelope within the next two weeks (if possible).

4. Please check below if would be willing to participate in an individual follow-up interview (either in person or over the phone) as part of the qualitative phase of the research. No more than 6 individuals will be randomly selected for this phase. More details will follow if you are selected.
   ________ Yes, I am interested in participating in an individual follow-up interview.
   ________ No, I am not able to participate in an individual follow-up interview.

If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject please contact Julie Simpson in the UNH office of Sponsored Research @ 603-862-2003 or julie.simpson@unh.edu.

Thank you again,

Deborah A. Jameson, Assoc. Dean
603-668-6660
# Section One

**Autonomy**

**Directions:** Check the answer on each question that BEST tells how you act in that situation. There are no right or wrong answers. Check only one answer for each question.

## 1A. Independence: Routine personal care and family oriented functions

### 1. I make my own meals or snacks.
- □ I do not even if I have the chance
- □ I do sometimes when I have the chance
- □ I do most of the time I have the chance
- □ I do every time I have the chance

### 2. I care for my own clothes.
- □ I do not even if I have the chance
- □ I do sometimes when I have the chance
- □ I do most of the time I have the chance
- □ I do every time I have the chance

### 3. I do chores in my home.
- □ I do not even if I have the chance
- □ I do sometimes when I have the chance
- □ I do most of the time I have the chance
- □ I do every time I have the chance

### 4. I keep my own personal items together.
- □ I do not even if I have the chance
- □ I do sometimes when I have the chance
- □ I do most of the time I have the chance
- □ I do every time I have the chance

### 5. I do simple first aid or medical care for myself.
- □ I do not even if I have the chance
- □ I do sometimes when I have the chance
- □ I do most of the time I have the chance
- □ I do every time I have the chance

### 6. I keep good personal care and grooming.
- □ I do not even if I have the chance
- □ I do sometimes when I have the chance
- □ I do most of the time I have the chance
- □ I do every time I have the chance

**1A. Subtotal [ ]**

## 1B. Independence: Interaction with the environment

### 7. I make friends with others.
- □ I do not even if I have the chance
- □ I do sometimes when I have the chance
- □ I do most of the time I have the chance
- □ I do every time I have the chance

### 8. I use the post office.
- □ I do not even if I have the chance
- □ I do sometimes when I have the chance
- □ I do most of the time I have the chance
- □ I do every time I have the chance

### 9. I keep my appointments and meetings.
- □ I do not even if I have the chance
- □ I do sometimes when I have the chance
- □ I do most of the time I have the chance
- □ I do every time I have the chance

### 10. I deal with salespeople at stores and restaurants.
- □ I do not even if I have the chance
- □ I do sometimes when I have the chance
- □ I do most of the time I have the chance
- □ I do every time I have the chance

**1B. Subtotal [ ]**
1C. Acting on the basis of preferences, beliefs, interests and abilities: Recreational and leisure time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ID</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>I do not even if I have the chance</th>
<th>I do sometimes when I have the chance</th>
<th>I do most of the time I have the chance</th>
<th>I do every time I have the chance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>I do free time activities based on my interests.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>I plan weekend activities that I like to do.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>I am involved in school-related activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>My friends/family and I choose activities that we want to do.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>I write letters, notes or talk on the phone to friends and family.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>I listen to music that I like.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1D. Acting on the basis of preferences, beliefs, interests and abilities: Community involvement and interaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ID</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>I do not even if I have the chance</th>
<th>I do sometimes when I have the chance</th>
<th>I do most of the time I have the chance</th>
<th>I do every time I have the chance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>I volunteer in things that I am interested in.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>I go to restaurants that I like.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>I go to movies, concerts, and dances.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>I go shopping or spend time at shopping centers or malls.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>I take part in group activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
IE. Acting on the basis of preferences, beliefs, interests and abilities: Post-school directions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Option 1</th>
<th>Option 2</th>
<th>Option 3</th>
<th>Option 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22. I do school and free time activities based on my career interests.</td>
<td>I do not even if I have the chance</td>
<td>I do sometimes when I have the chance</td>
<td>I do most of the time I have the chance</td>
<td>I do every time I have the chance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. I work on school work that will improve my career chances.</td>
<td>I do not even if I have the chance</td>
<td>I do sometimes when I have the chance</td>
<td>I do most of the time I have the chance</td>
<td>I do every time I have the chance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. I make long-range career plans.</td>
<td>I do not even if I have the chance</td>
<td>I do sometimes when I have the chance</td>
<td>I do most of the time I have the chance</td>
<td>I do every time I have the chance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. I work or have worked to earn money.</td>
<td>I do not even if I have the chance</td>
<td>I do sometimes when I have the chance</td>
<td>I do most of the time I have the chance</td>
<td>I do every time I have the chance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. I am in or have been in career job classes or training.</td>
<td>I do not even if I have the chance</td>
<td>I do sometimes when I have the chance</td>
<td>I do most of the time I have the chance</td>
<td>I do every time I have the chance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. I have looked into job interests by visiting work sites or talking to people in that job.</td>
<td>I do not even if I have the chance</td>
<td>I do sometimes when I have the chance</td>
<td>I do most of the time I have the chance</td>
<td>I do every time I have the chance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1F. Acting on the basis of preferences, beliefs, interests and abilities: Personal expression

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Option 1</th>
<th>Option 2</th>
<th>Option 3</th>
<th>Option 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>28. I choose my clothes and the personal items I use every day.</td>
<td>I do not even if I have the chance</td>
<td>I do sometimes when I have the chance</td>
<td>I do most of the time I have the chance</td>
<td>I do every time I have the chance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. I choose my own hair style.</td>
<td>I do not even if I have the chance</td>
<td>I do sometimes when I have the chance</td>
<td>I do most of the time I have the chance</td>
<td>I do every time I have the chance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. I choose gifts to give to family and friends.</td>
<td>I do not even if I have the chance</td>
<td>I do sometimes when I have the chance</td>
<td>I do most of the time I have the chance</td>
<td>I do every time I have the chance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. I decorate my own room.</td>
<td>I do not even if I have the chance</td>
<td>I do sometimes when I have the chance</td>
<td>I do most of the time I have the chance</td>
<td>I do every time I have the chance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. I choose how to spend my personal money.</td>
<td>I do not even if I have the chance</td>
<td>I do sometimes when I have the chance</td>
<td>I do most of the time I have the chance</td>
<td>I do every time I have the chance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please check Section One, A thru F, to make sure there is only one answer for each question.
Section Two
Self-Regulation

Directions: Each of the following questions tell the beginning of a story and how the story ends. Your job is to tell what happened in the middle of the story, to connect the beginning and the end. Read the beginning and ending for each question, then fill in the BEST answer for the middle of the story. There are no right or wrong answers. Remember, fill in the one answer that you think BEST completes the story.

2A. Interpersonal cognitive problem-solving

33. Beginning: You are sitting in a planning meeting with your family and your advisor. You want to major in Marketing and obtain an Associate Degree. Your family wants you to major in Early Childhood Education and get a certificate. You can only major in one.

M iddle: ---------------------------------------------------------------------

Ending: The story ends with you majoring in Marketing to get your Associates Degree. Story Score ________

34. Beginning: You hear a friend talking about a new job opening at local book store. You love books and want a job. You decide you would like to work at the book store.

M iddle: ---------------------------------------------------------------------

Ending: The story ends with you working at the bookstore. Story Score ________

35. Beginning: Your friends are acting like they are mad at you. You are upset about this.

M iddle: ---------------------------------------------------------------------

Ending: The story ends with you and your friends getting along just fine. Story Score ________

36. Beginning: You go to your English class one morning and discover your English book is not in your backpack. You are upset because you need that book to do your homework.

M iddle: ---------------------------------------------------------------------

Ending: The story ends with you using your English book for homework. Story Score ________
37. **Beginning:** You are in a club at school. The club advisor announces that the club members will need to elect new officers at the next meeting. You want to be the president of the club.

**Middle:**

**Ending:** The story ends with you being elected as the club president.

Story Score

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38. **Beginning:** You are at a new college and you don't know anyone. You want to have friends.

**Middle:**

**Ending:** The story ends with you having many friends at the new college.

Story Score

---

2B: Goal setting and task performance

Directions: The next three questions ask about your plans for the future. Again, there are no right or wrong answers. For each question, tell if you have made plans for that outcome and, if so, what those plans are and how to meet them.

*(You may use the back side)*

39. Where do you want to live after you graduate?

- [ ] I have not planned for that yet
- [ ] I want to live ____________________________

List four things you should do to meet this goal:

---

40. Where do you want to work after you graduate?

- [ ] I have not planned for that yet.
- [ ] I want to work ____________________________

List four things you should do to meet this goal:

---

41. What type of transportation do you plan to use after graduation?

- [ ] I have not planned for that yet.
- [ ] I plan to use ____________________________

List four things you should do to meet this goal:

---

2A Subtotal

2B Subtotal
### Section Three
**Psychological Empowerment**

Directions:
Check the answer that BEST describes you.

Choose only one answer for each question. There are no right or wrong answers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Option 1</th>
<th>Option 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>□ I usually do what others want...or</td>
<td>□ I tell others if they are doing something I don't want to do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ I tell others when I have new or different ideas or opinions...or</td>
<td>□ I usually agree with other peoples' opinions or ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>□ I usually agree with people when they tell me I can't do something...or</td>
<td>□ I tell people when I think I can do something that they tell me I can't.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>□ I can make my own decisions...or</td>
<td>□ Other people make decisions for me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>□ I tell people when they have hurt my feelings...or</td>
<td>□ I am afraid to tell people if they hurt my feelings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>□ Trying hard at school doesn't do me much good...or</td>
<td>□ Trying hard at school will help me get a good job.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>□ I can get what I want by working hard...or</td>
<td>□ I need good luck to get what I want.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>□ It is no use to keep trying because that won't change things...or</td>
<td>□ I keep trying even after I get something wrong.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>□ I have the ability to do the job I want...or</td>
<td>□ I cannot do what it takes to do the job I want.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>□ I don't know how to make friends...or</td>
<td>□ I know how to make friends.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>□ I am able to work with others...or</td>
<td>□ I cannot work well with others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>□ I do not make good choices...or</td>
<td>□ I can make good choices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>□ If I have the ability, I get the job I want...or</td>
<td>□ I probably will not get the job even if I have the ability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>□ I will have a hard time making new friends...or</td>
<td>□ I will be able to make friends in new situations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>□ I will be able to work with others if I need to...or</td>
<td>□ I will not be able to work with others if I need to.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>□ My choices will not be honored...or</td>
<td>□ I will be able to make choices that are important to me.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Section 3 Subtotal**
**Section Four**

**Self-Realization**

Directions: Tell whether you think each of these statements describes how you feel about yourself or not. There are no right or wrong answers. Choose the answer that BEST fits you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Don't agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Don't agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>58. I do not feel ashamed of any of my emotions.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59. I feel free to be angry at people I care for.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60. I can show my feelings even when people might see me.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>61. I can like people even if I don't agree with them.</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>62. I am afraid of doing things wrong.</td>
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<tr>
<td>63. It is better to be yourself than to be popular.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>64. I am loved because I give love.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>65. I know what I do best.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>66. I don't accept my own limitations.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67. I feel I cannot do many things.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68. I like myself.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69. I am not an important person.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70. I know how to make up for my limitations.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71. Other people like me.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72. I am confident in my abilities.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Section 4 Subtotal
Demographic and Outcomes Survey

The following survey has two sections: 1. Demographic Information, 2. "Outcomes" Information. Please respond as accurately as possible.

1. Demographic Information

1. Name: ______________________________
2. Date applied to or started at Hesser: ________(To be confirmed with registrar if unknown)
3. Major: ____________________________
4. Gender: Male ________ Female ________
5. Single (no children) ______ Single (with children) ______ Married (no children) ______ Married (with children) ______ Divorced (no children) ______ Divorced (with children) ______
6. Ethnic Origin: _______Caucasian (white); _______African-American; _______Native American; _______Asian-American; _______Hispanic; _______Other (explain): ___________
7. High school diploma or GED? ________
8. Did/Do you have concerns about college financing? Yes _______ No _______
9. Main reason for attending college (choose one):
   _______a. Get a better paying job,
   _______b. Career opportunity
   _______c. Everyone goes to college today
   _______d. My parents/family wanted me to go
10. Were you assigned to a developmental math or English class when you attended Hesser? ______
    If "yes" select appropriate response.
       _______College Writing,
       _______Math Concepts and Computation
       _______Both
11. What is your disability? (Check as many as appropriate)
       _______a specific Learning Disability
       _______Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD or ADD)
       _______Speech or Language impairment
       _______Mental Retardation
       _______Emotional Disability (i.e. bi-polar disorder, depression, etc.)
       _______Multiple Disabilities
       _______Hearing Impairment
       _______Deafness
       _______Orthopedic impairment
       _______Other health impairment
       _______Visual impairment or blindness
       _______Autism
       _______Traumatic Brain Injury
       _______Other (explain) ________________________________
"Outcomes" Information

I. Retention Status
Are you still enrolled in an Associate Degree Program? _______Yes _______No
(at Hesser or another school)
Did you graduate from an Associate Degree Program? _______Yes _______No
(at Hesser or another school)
Did you transfer to a Bachelor Program? _______Yes _______No
(at Hesser or another school)
Did you drop out of an Associate Program? _______Yes _______No
(at Hesser or another school)

II. Self-reported cumulative GPA
What was/is your cumulative GPA at time of graduation, departure or if still enrolled? ____ 0.0-
1.0; ____ 1.1-1.5; ____ 1.6-1.9; ____ 2.0-2.5; ____ 2.6-2.9; ____ 3.0-3.4; ____ 3.5-4.0
(Your GPA will be verified with official records in the registrar's office if unknown)

III. Employment and salary status (answer if no longer enrolled due to graduation or "dropping out")
1. Employment Status
_______ Hold full time position in chosen major.
_______ Hold part-time position in chosen major (Explain below if due to extenuating circumstances, ie. caring for a child).
_______ Working full time in position other than chosen major
_______ Working part-time in position other than chosen major (Explain below if due to extenuating circumstances, ie. caring for a child)
_______ Unemployed (Explain if due to extenuating circumstances, ie. caring for a child)
Comments_____________________________________________________________

2. Salary Range
_______ $8,000-$10,000 per year
_______ $11,000-$15,000 per year
_______ $16,000-$20,000 per year
_______ $21,000-$25,000 per year
_______ $26,000-$30,000 per year
_______ $31,000-$35,000 per year
_______ $36,000-$40,000 per year
_______ $41,000 and above per year
Do you have a two family income? _________
Do you have children who are dependent on you? _______ If yes, how many? _______
To: Michael Wehmeyer  
From: Deborah A. Jameson, PHD Candidate  
Re: Minor Adaptations to ARC Self-Determination Scale  
Date: 5/14/01

Michael,

I would like to request your permission to use the revised scale (attached) in my doctoral work on students in post-secondary education with disclosed disabilities and the possible relationship of different degrees of self-determination on student success outcomes. I have also attached your scale and identified all the areas that were revised.

The biggest difference is the front cover. I was concerned that the language might suggest that the students tested should be "adolescents with cognitive disabilities." I also thought the sections explaining the purpose and the scoring were more applicable for those administering the scale and not necessarily needed for the students who were taking it. I could certainly put any/all of this back in if you feel I have in any way affected the reliability and validity of the scale.

If you approve its use the way I have adapted it and if you feel the scale will maintain reliability and validity with the changes, would you please sign the attached form. (Will Kathy Kelchner's signature be needed on this as well?)

If you do not feel that you can give permission for administering the scale as is and that any/all of my adaptations do affect reliability and validity, please let me know any areas that I should change back to the original version in order to approve its use. In that case please identify those areas and sign the second half of the form.

For your convenience I have included a self-addressed stamped envelope for the return of the form. Any other thoughts or ideas are also certainly welcome.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter.
June 14, 2001

Deborah A. Jameson
Associate Dean
Hesser College
3 Sundial Avenue
Manchester, NH 03103

Dear Deborah:

The attached consent form details my agreement that your modifications to The Arc’s Self-Determination Scale are minor and, in my opinion, will not alter the Scale’s validity or reliability. We made similar adjustments to the adolescent version of the Scale when creating the adult version, and found that those changes did not alter the psychometric characteristics of the Scale. I feel confident that this is the same for the minor changes you have made to the adolescent version to be more applicable for community college students.

This letter will also indicate my consent for you to use this version (and to make copies of that version) in the context of your doctoral work with students in post-secondary education with disabilities. You may only reproduce the Scale in this context (e.g., that of your doctoral research) and under the condition that you inform me of your results with the Scale, which I will, in turn, share with The Arc of the United States.

Good luck in your research.

Michael L. Wehmeyer
Associate Professor, Department of Special Education
Associate Director, Beach Center on Disability
Consent Form

As the author/authors of the ARC's Self-Determination Scale, Adolescent Version, it is my/our opinion that the adaptations made by Deborah Jameson do not affect its reliability and validity, and I/we consent to the administration of the scale as adapted.

Signatures/Date: [Signature] 6/14/07

As the author/authors of the ARC's Self-Determination Scale, Adolescent Version, it is my/our opinion that the adaptations made by Deborah Jameson may affect its reliability and validity. In order to re-establish reliability and validity and to consent to the administration of the scale, the following should be changed to reflect the original version:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Signatures/Date:

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Please note that a demographic question regarding "Age" was missing from the Demographic Survey. I can obtain that information from the registrar's office. Please call me (before Dec. 12) at 603-668-6660, ext. 2108 or 1-800-526-9231, ext. 2108 if you DO NOT want me to add that information to the data you provided. Please know "age" will be used only for a descriptive analysis and will be held in strict confidence.

Thank you,

Deb Jameson
Dear ____________________,

Thank you for participating in the study entitled:

"Self-Determination and Success Outcomes of Two-Year College Students with Disabilities."

Please be aware that the data analysis of the quantitative stage should be completed by the end of January. At that time you will be contacted if you are randomly selected for the qualitative interview phase of the study. You will be informed of the results when all data are analyzed.

Again, thank you, and enjoy your meal!
(Gift certificate enclosed)

Should you have any questions, feel free to contact me at (603) 668-6660, Ext.2108

Sincerely,

Deborah Jameson
Associate Dean-CTLA
Scoring Step 1:
Record the raw scores from each section:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Autonomy</th>
<th>1A</th>
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Scoring Step 2:
Sum each Domain Total for a Total Score:

| Self-Determination Total |    |

Scoring Step 3:
Using the conversion tables in Appendix A, convert raw scores into percentile scores for comparison with the sample norms (Norm Sample) and the percentage of positive responses (Positive Scores):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Norm Sample</th>
<th>Positive Scores</th>
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Scoring Step 4:
Fill in the graph for the percentile scores from the norm sample. From the appropriate percentile down, draw a line upward to complete bar graph (See example in Scoring Manual).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scoring Step 5:</th>
<th>Fill in the graph for the percentile scores indicating the percent positive responses.</th>
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Scoring Step 5: Fill in the graph for the percentile scores indicating the percent positive responses.
Interview Consent Form

I, ________________________________, consent to be interviewed by Deborah Russo Jameson for research entitled:

Self-Determination and Success Outcomes of Two-Year College Students with Disabilities:
An Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches

I understand that the interview will be tape-recorded for accuracy and will be separated into a series of three short interviews, each lasting approximately 15-30 minutes with a 3-5 minute break between each. I also understand that the data will be anonymous and my name will be held in strict confidence.

Signature/Date

__________________________________________
Carol's Profile

Interview One - Focused Life History: Carol

Starting from elementary school I was always in... I wouldn't say special ed, but an extra reading class or an extra math class to help me just catch up. I don't remember being told that I had a disability then, but I just remember having extra classes.... In middle school I think I took an extra reading, yah, actually I did.... I think it was like a reading workshop. And again I wasn't told that I had a disability. I just knew that I was very slow in reading and in math, but I was never told why. In high school it wasn't till my senior year after I had a.... after I had a mental breakdown almost, they noticed I was having difficulties with work and again I think I was going down to the learning center to get extra help on work and stuff.... I was 17 when I moved out, so after I turned 18, I went and got everything that was entitled to me.... I could sign all my papers and I was like my adult person, whatever, whatever you want to call it. I was pretty much an adult in the eyes of the school.... So at that point I took the responsibility of finding out about my learning and about my records.... I found out that I needed extra help and I ended up going to speech therapy.... I remember going to speech therapy.... I remember when I was younger I guess I used to...mumble and stutter and whatever; so I took speech therapy which the results I don't remember.... They're in the file.

That was when I was moving from place to place, coming out of an abusive relationship, and being on Prozac all mixed into one (laugh).... I think it kinda just pushed me overboard.... I had to fight to get back in school...cuz I got expelled cuz I damaged school property. I had to fight.... I had to see a tutor for two weeks every other day at the library and I had to work my butt off to get back into school.

I also was in counseling. They took an IQ test and so I took a lot of testing
(laugh).... The school finally realized that I had a learning disability in my 12th year of high school.... and the exact disability I don't really know. I think it's comprehension....

The therapist diagnosed me with PTSD-Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome from the traumatic causes of my life...um...and that was basically what she (loud voice) diagnosed me with.... Last year when I went to counseling, one woman said I might be compulsive which I don't see that and I'm currently seeing the intern here.... She says I am a lot more co-dependent, which I read the book she let me borrow and it explains me to a tee....so (laugh)....so I really don't know what to think really, but I am currently on Zoloft medication which is seeming to help me.

I think it's more emotional that takes over and makes me overwhelmed and makes it hard for me to learn. I always thought that because even when I was a young kid in elementary school I always thought I was a very depressed kid, so it was hard for me to comprehend what was going on ...in school because there was so much other stuff going on in my life that it took a toll on my education and I kind of blocked it out.... I pretty much shut down (laugh).... See compared to my brother, my brother has ADD.... they say that boys get it but.... It is just whatever the depression is that lasts the longest cuz I had it ever since I can remember.... It's something that never really goes away. It's a feeling that never really goes away.

(In elementary school) I was a bully and I remember doing a lot of things that they said to do without thinking ...I don't really remember a lot.... The only thing that I remember is that in fourth grade I was diagnosed with scoliosis cuz the swim teacher told me...we had a pool and I dived crooked and they put that little measuring thing on my back and my curve was off.... So I wore a brace for four years and then I quit on that....

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I'm a quitter basically (laugh)...that's what I am.... I have been for pretty much my whole life because I blame other people, like when I was a kid and I had my back brace I kinda do blame my parents...well, my mother anyway... It's because when you're little like that I really didn't understand just how important your back needed to be and how important it was to wear the brace and all I cared about was that people looked at me like a robot and I feel like a boy and by the time I hit middle school I wasn't a tomboy anymore.... I wanted to be interested in boys and being pretty and everything and dressing up and wearing make-up and crap and wearing the back brace didn't make me look really pretty anymore. So I hid it and stored it and refused to wear.... I'll probably have to have surgery when I am older.

I just remember being really slow.... I don't ever remember my mother reading to me, which I think is really important.... But I don't remember her reading to me .... I don't remember like.... I remember acting out a lot when I was elementary school... but I changed when I went to middle school.... I was really a toughie, a bully, but any good teacher or counselor would know what kind of behavior that is so... um.

My 7th grade is when I turned around and really cared about school. For some reason I lost a lot of friends because of that.... I cared but at the same time I kinda didn't cuz I knew that school was really important and I started looking up to kids who kinda came from a better environment and just by looking at them I knew they were the kind of kids who thought that school was important...and the way they carried themselves I wanted to resemble them in some way.

(Through high school) I spent a lot of time in my room, moving my room around and spent a lot of time alone, but then I started thinking about (quiet)...and getting more involved in the bad stuff... cuz there wasn't any discipline in my life.... I obviously
thought I could do whatever I wanted...

I moved it (my room) around a lot... I didn't like it the same. I feel that things are in place... cleaned up and stuff... I feel more organized myself... I don't like to have a messy room; it drives me nuts (giggle). I think it has a lot to do when I was a kid... my parents very much liked to party... and every time they did and they left the house I would clean the house... cuz I couldn't stand a messy house... so I'd clean (giggle). I don't like things dirty... I like change... I like things different...

Actually I did a lot of things I enjoyed. I hung out with some friends. It was like a gang... it was cute... I started to go to... Pirates games and... we'd go rollerskating. So my social life was lifting, cuz I spent a lot of time in my room when I was a kid... I think the more I got older and the more I got out, the more I got my social skills better....

From 17 to almost 19 I was in an abusive relationship... actually. I had moved in with him... When things didn't get going good and we broke up finally, I moved in with a friend of mine and when I finally moved into my apartment I became more responsible and... cuz throughout all of high school... I went to D High School... I don't know if you know (the town) at all... it has two high schools... P High and D High. P High is downtown... where I grew up; D High is in like a... more suburban... more in a nice area... it's the suburbs... it's kind of like more preppy. I chose (louder tone) to go to D cuz I went to school with all the kids who go to P and they're all punks... and I wanted to change... I wanted something different, so I took a bus every day... the city bus. So I went to D High School and I'm glad I did cuz I met a lot of them and I think being around the kids... It turned me into a snob myself, so when I walked in my own neighborhood... I wouldn't talk to any kids and they considered me a snob cuz I would walk with my head up and not talk to them (grunt-laugh).
I stayed at D High until I moved to (another town) and I went to W High for about a month and then I went back to D. I was living at home first and then I moved in with M. (boyfriend) and then I moved in with my aunt... my aunt was a really nice woman and I ran the ice store on 98. A couple days before that I went to my sister's house; she lives in W too, well she's not really my blood sister, but I call her my sister.... Then I lived with her for a while and then I ended up moving back to Matt's mother's and then I moved to E's and then I lived in a boat.... And... I lived with E and then she moved out and then I moved back to my mother's (laugh) and that's when I got my apartment.

(Senior year) I went to J. Institute for a week.... It's an institution if you are going to commit suicide.... Its name may be different now.... I have always had a lot on my plate and my friend E, she was one of the ones who understood that and she knew how hard it was for me to be in the relationship I was in with Matt, and when we broke up one of my good friends was secretly seeing him for like three months. I thought that was really messed up because she was one of the first people I went to when things got really heavy with us and she took me in and let me stay at her house when she knew how he was treating me. But E was one of the ones who told me that they were doing it. And I flipped out on her at school (laugh) cuz she was in one of my classes... and I remember we had to separate ourselves in different classes and stuff. That was the first time at J. Institute. I spent a lot of time in the learning center after, whatever you call it... tutoring... in the Special Ed room. All the classes I was supposed to have with her, I spent in there and so that was the story with that.... So I was pretty much hysterical and stuff and they took me to the hospital, which was like where they took people if you have a mental breakdown.

But at that time I got out of there. The second time was when they were together
and I just couldn't take it... knowing with everything else that was going on in my
life... my family and stuff... it was like the tip of the iceberg... I was like really in love
with him and you know, it was just a break-up, it was a break-up, but then they chose to
rub it in my face so... um... I smashed like five mirrors in the school bathroom... They
were like tall, tall ones... I said I didn't want to see myself in the mirrors... so I smashed
them with a hole puncher cuz the chair broke (that I was using) and (quiet laugh) and I
didn't have enough force with my hands, so I used a hole puncher and when I said this I
think they thought I was crazy, but I needed the release of the broken glass... I like to
hear the broken glass and it kinda released some of my pain... I didn't feel any of the
cuts, like I cut myself and that's why they thought I was trying to kill myself. I was just
breaking glass cuz I was that mad. I was in rage and I needed something broken and I
remember bleeding in the hall and I was like in pure rage cuz I didn't feel anything and I
went into the bathroom and they had like a nurse in there, the social worker, the principal,
the vice-principal, and every head that you could think of in that room. And I just told
them to let me bleed cuz I didn't care (laugh) and the nurse was like holding me down
trying to cover my cuts and I remember I flipped over tables and I remember crying for
my (real) father and then crying for E... and E said 'if you do this to yourself you're not
going to go see your dad, you're going to go somewhere darker than that'... cuz she was a
good Catholic girl (laugh). So you know she was doing all that stuff but I just really
didn't care... So they took me to Jackson... that's when they put me on Remeron which
made me sleep... Of course I was on Prozac when this happened and that just made me
insane (laugh).

The second time... they actually gave me therapy. When I first got there I kinda
didn't know what was going on, but um... my mother called drunk and I was really upset
about that. I told the nurses if she calls do not give me the phone. And then my ex­
boyfriend shows up (loud) and gives me a picture of him and I…. He totally screwed my
head. “I want you to get better…I love you” and all that crap and then when I go to kiss
him, he pushes me away and says he has a girlfriend. E wanted to kill him. She says,
“What is he doing here? He’s the last person you want to see right now.”

(Anyway), I got expelled. I met Mary W…she was the special ed. person. She
came to visit me when I was in Jackson, and I mentioned to her that I wanted to get back
in school, and the social worker came to visit me, and they decided I should get back in
school, and I agreed too, and then we had to figure out what I had to agree to to get back
in. I don’t know who I met or anything, but I think it was F and M…. It’s kind of like a
blur….I was so drugged up. I remember going to meetings and stuff. I remember I
realized that I wasn’t as messed up as some of the people in there. One girl actually tried
putting a cigarette out on her wrist. She tried sneaking over the fence (laugh).

M went and got my work for me and we met at the library…. So I got all my
work done with her. And then that’s when I met with administrators at this big meeting to
get back in and the principal was there, and M was there and F was there and all my
teachers and they all discussed all my stuff, my testing that I had. And then they said
these are the agreements to get back to school… continue on seeing M, and stay in
special ed. I think I only had a half-day of classes; I didn’t have to be there all day…that
was how many credits I needed to graduate. I had to meet with M every day.

The end of my senior year I got my first apartment from the help of Catholic
Charities cuz I was moving from place to place…ever since I was 17. I moved like 7
different places (low laugh)… and I ended up moving back to my parents, which was an
unsafe environment and I went to Catholic Charities, and I told them my situation. I told

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them I was in the hospital. I told them my history, and they helped me get an apartment subsidized. It was my first apartment when I was 18 and I had that for a year... I was very excited... very happy... when I got the final ok... I remember I grabbed the keys when I finally got em and I slept on the floor... giggle... cuz I actually had a home. So I was happy and I was going to counseling every week and I was also taking Zoloft and I was carrying two jobs and I had two cats (laugh).... I actually enjoyed that life very much and then my lease was up and Sept. 2000 I was supposed to start school here.... I had a friend who lived here in M and I thought the best thing for me was to get up and leave at the end of my lease and move to M, stay with a friend for a couple months and then come to school.

I am a stubborn person and if I don't like the way people live, if I don't agree with it, then I don't associate myself with them and saying that... both my parents are alcoholics and party every day and every night.... I was sick of it, I was sick of the violence and I was sick of all the crap going on and it just wasn't helping me and stuff and so I moved out.... My brother... he'll probably be taking care of my mother for the rest of her life.... He accepted it because he parties with them and smokes pot with them and does whatever he wants with them... I was basically a mother to them for a while... I was a mother to my mother as well... I haven't talked to them in about 6 months... (low laugh). He accepts my mother for who she is and I just won't because I know that she deserves better than what she has and he just takes her for who she is... I mean... we just accept it totally differently. That's basically the difference cuz he does what my mother does and supports her in that. At the same time when I was home they tried to get me to go and visit my mother and stuff and I'm like disputing them and I said "Don't push me,
I'll do it when I am ready!" and I'm like... they just don't comprehend with that.... My father died 6 months after I was born, so it's my stepfather.

(So after lease was up...) I moved down here and I worked full time and I went to the gym every morning and I lived with (my friend) for a while and in September she moved to Maine and I moved here. I worked, but the thing that stopped me was that I stopped taking my meds because I didn't have the insurance and I didn't have the person down here so I couldn't refill it and ....It was really a mess.... I didn't know what I was doing...so I just basically gave up ...on Zoloft...and I totally regret it...

I didn't want to go to college in high school; I didn't really see myself in college. I was thinking about it, cuz I was told about it in my junior year when one of the representatives from H. came to my high school. I remember her coming in and talking about what they had to offer. And I remember talking to my ex and he was such a jerk. I remember him saying to me that even if I go to college he would still be smarter than me...and at the same time he'd say...well, go to college cuz no one would believe that Carol made it to college and that kind of stuck in my head. And he said, "I think you could do it cuz you're a nice person and everyone likes you" ...or something like that ...and everyone looked up to him and everything he said was taken to heart...but um, when I finally made it to college I ...no when I had my apartment, I remember talking to him and telling him "I'm going to college"...kinda like I was proving him wrong....

(laugh). I was just very naive when I met him.

Interview Two - The Details of the Experience: Carol

The only reason I chose this college was because of the small ratio of students and
the access of extra help if needed. That’s basically what I need sometimes to get through classes like math or sometimes English...cough...that I need extra help in.

I’m a very independent person and I usually like to do things on my own, at least try them on my own and it’s good to know there are places I can go if I need help...that’s probably one of the reasons I came here. But sometimes just carrying on as a child, my low self-esteem comes in and I don’t think that I’m smart enough to know the material, so I don’t try as hard as I could, cuz I’ll have an “I don’t care” attitude or I’ll sleep cuz I have a very deep sleeping disorder... and that has been hard here cuz of living on campus. It is very convenient to sleep through a class than to wake up and go to it. It’s very hard for me to get out of bed and to go to classes, so I missed a lot of classes because of that. I was hoping vacation would help that...um...(softly)...at least with my motivation because I find myself very lazy since I’ve been here.

I should be on Academic Probation (Giggle) (My GPA) is like 1.8....I’m not really sure...I know it’s 1. something. It’s the lowest I’ve ever had. My absences and my grades are all C’s. The beginning of every semester, even in school when I was younger, I always did very well in the beginning. I was very motivated. I still am. I can get very motivated and organized, but then as the class comes, I get behind and at the end and I’ll play catch up time.

I know that I have a hard time balancing school and work and socializing. I either do too much of one thing, it’s never school though, like with a job and stuff I’ve been unemployed for a month and a half. I just don’t have the ambition to work. I quit my (last job). I had an opportunity to work ...(over the break) and that was a disaster. It was an after school program.... it was up in W and I really wanted to see my friends and party and have a good time and stuff. I didn’t want to be responsible cuz I am responsible at

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school... My sister... she's like a sister... she was trying to act like a mother to me and making sure my clothes were all put away and everything else. And being on my own since I was 17, it was really hard listening to someone telling me what to do... cuz I'm 22 years old. Listening to someone remind me to put my stuff away, it kinda got aggravating and then of course I don't have my license because I have a fear of driving and she basically set the rules that you know, "you need to find yourself rides; I am not going to carry you around." And then I didn't know where I was going for Christmas and she was like, "you know we don't have much money so...."

You know, so she just set down a lot of rules. It was really hard for me to get used to that. So I acted out and I did a lot of drinking and a lot of partying and hung out with this guy who was very not good for me (sarcastic laugh)... I upset a lot of people I care about and never made it to work (laugh)... It was paid under the table, too, so I probably won't ever see the money.

I still felt the guilt of what I did.... I messed up and she's still mad at me now cuz I just got up and left the kids and left the house and she basically told me off and said I was irresponsible and going to college was supposed to better somebody, and she sees me going down hill. She accused me of only caring about partying and drinking and that I upset her kids and I embarrassed her and all that crap.

I mean, I was very irresponsible. Like she said my priorities weren't straight. I don't know, I just.... Ever since I stopped talking to my parents I pretty much stopped caring, cuz I kinda think of it this way and it's kinda weird, but this is how stupid my mind is. I am a very stubborn person, and I don't like the choices my mother has made in life, and I don't like my step-father, and I just don't like the life they live, and I refused to talk to them for like 6 months, and my mother was very upset about that; whatever and I
went and saw her for Christmas and stuff, whatever, but I think that break really hurt me and that’s why I was leaning to that drug dealer I had seen for a couple weeks, and you know the whole partying thing, and my priorities weren’t straight because I didn’t have a home…. I didn’t have anyone to turn to and the family that I had known since I was a kid …B’s family was throwing me all these rules which I wasn’t used to. So I think not caring about my family made me not care about anyone (cleared throat). I tried e-mailing her…explaining myself to her…why things happened the way they did. And usually she e-mails me everyday at least with one little e-mail and she hasn’t done that and so I know that she is upset with me. Her kid IM’d (Instant Messenger) me and said, “I don’t like the way you left us” and she’s like 8 years old and you know I’ve talked to them and stuff and I talked to their father and …

That was the first time I had seen my mother in like 7 months… and that was the day before Christmas, I didn’t even spend Christmas there… I spent it at someone else’s house…and slept over (low laugh). So I’m really stubborn when it comes to that…

(Anyway) It was supposed to be my last semester…but because I changed my major 4 times… I have a big fear of commitment (sarcastic laugh). I mean, I can’t hold a job longer than three months. I haven’t been in a long distance…long-term relationship for two years, and I changed my major like four times. I would rather just get school over with…. I’m Liberal Studies now… I have no idea where I am going to go from there. I really can’t do much with a liberal studies degree (sarcastic laugh). I was Early Childhood Development before. Then Travel and Tourism and then I went back to Early Childhood and then I went to Graphic Design. And then I went to Liberal. I liked Early Childhood, but I thought there was something else that I could do and plus when I worked at the Girls, Inc. it killed me. Working with those kids made me feel less and less
like a role model. It killed me. Cuz it’s…that is the place I should have went to when I was a kid. Like the elements they offer there for kids, I was taking in myself, not really being professional about it. I was being more, trying to get something out of it and while helping them and I just couldn’t do both (laugh). I just quit. I talked to the director and stuff. I cried on her shoulder and told her like I couldn’t be a role model and I wasn’t being helpful for them and…. They had enough heartbreak in their life and they didn’t need another person screwing with their head. She said, “I’m glad that you realize this now.” I mean I miss ‘em and stuff…. It’s not that hard to get connected to them cuz they have so many let downs in their life that they …anyone who wants to take the time to show them any kind of attention and affection…they just suck it in (laugh)…all girls, the youngest was five, the oldest was fourteen.

When I was working with the little kids it was a lot more easier. When I started working with the older ones it was kinda…it brought back a lot of memories (voice trails off). I just didn’t want to deal with… (laugh). I think if I am meant to work with kids then I’ll probably work with them, but I’d rather explore my horizons…cuz I worked with kids since I was younger. I babysat; I taught my nieces how to read. I mean I have always been with kids. But I just wanted to see if there was something else out there that I am better at. My big dream is to be financially secure because I have monster bills and I’d like to be able to pay them and have money and be able to afford a car someday and credit cards and all that other crap…. Being in Early Childhood Development I knew that you don’t go into that for the money. I mean my heart was in it but I just…

Travel and Tourism was just a hobby of mine. When I got into it I said, “This is not for me.” Then, J (controller of school) got me into Graphic Design. Because he was a…not having a father figure I kind of latch on to any older male figure who wants the
best for me, supports me, someone I can talk to and respect. The reason why I like J. is because he would take his time to talk to me and make sure I’m ok and if I need anything he’s always right there, and during the summer I mentioned to him that I didn’t know what I wanted to do and stuff... We talked for like an hour and a half, and he mentioned graphic design. I mentioned I had a creative side. He said he didn’t want me to just succeed, he wanted me to succeed well and you know like and crazy me said, “Well I’ll just give it a try.” I regret it cuz I gave up on that and left that (sigh). I didn’t like the beginning, it was kinda boring...I couldn’t get into it (laugh) cuz it wasn’t...

(laugh)...but now I am taking classes that are going to help me. They are helping, but they are a little more emotional, like I am taking Marriage and the Family which...psychology is another one...I’m taking Group Individual Counseling...(laugh)...My reading gets in the way, cuz I’ll be in class and I will pray to God that they won’t call on me to read. I just don’t like to read out loud. That was the reason why I didn’t go into Early Childhood, because of the fear that I had to read in front of the kids...like I was really good at it, with the toddlers, but when I got to Girls Inc. and they wanted me to read chapter books; they know the words and they just want me to read the book to them. It was an embarrassment and I was like ...uh... I didn’t want to read.

Interview Three - Reflection on the Meaning: Carol

I think if I finally break through the depression, I think I would be able to learn a lot more easier because, for example, if I was to read a book I have emotions that I usually hide everyday and they come out when I am reading.... I block ‘em out and when I open my mind up to reading the things, I open my mind up to emotions I had everyday ... So they get in the way and it's just a big mess from there (laugh).
I'm a big writer and if I don't write things down then I...like sometimes I plan out my days.... I try to go thru with them but.... I'm a forgetful person and if I don't write it down, I'll forget it (giggle). It's just some kind of structure for me to do that day. If I don't have my mind set of what I'm gonna do that day, then I'll forget and then when it comes to the time I go to bed, then I'll say, "Oh shoot, I was supposed to do that today" and I'll get mad at myself.

I don't feel like a success. I feel like I was more successful before I even came here. Going to college and living here has made me have to deal with a lot of things I never had to deal with...like I avoided and I didn't want to deal with...(cleared throat). Living here made me know myself more and know my problems...it's not a bad thing; it's just a little more difficult for me. It's more things that people dealt with when they were younger, more things that they didn't deal with alone, basically. Living on campus and living with a lot of immature people is very hard (sarcastic laugh). Cuz you're so old. Even before college I spent a lot of time alone, because when I am alone I feel more safe and more secure.... When I'm around people it gives me anxiety, like I can't be at the mall longer than an hour cuz I have a panic attack. So being around a lot of people, it makes you feel a lot insecure because I care too much what they think and how to act and all that crap. But the more I got to know myself living here, the more secure I felt around them, the more I didn't care what they thought.... at the same time I get this guilty obligation that when people have minor crises, I have to help them. So I try to avoid it. ... but it becomes a pain in the butt when you know you have things that you have to do and you feel obligated to help and it takes up your time to do stuff for yourself and then you feel selfish and it's an ongoing thing.

The only thing that really gets me is depression. That's the one thing I am finding
now...like I’ll get down to it if I don’t understand something... it’s not that I don’t understand it. My body is too tired and withdrawn to care and I’ll fight with myself actually. But some things I’ll study for, I get right off the bat, like oh I get it…some things I say, “Oh I don’t get this” and someone will tell me and then I’ll get it and then I’ll get an idea right after it and I’ll say "Oh, is it like this?” So I get things, it’s not that I’m dumb…it’s just that I don’t get things as quick as others….and then I’m like oh...(very quiet)...but yea the one thing I (mumble)...is depression.

I won’t be done with school until December. I am not sure if I can walk in May, but I find myself a little lost and confused….Before when I started school I had an ambition. I was going to go into childcare and I always had some kind of ambition that I was going for and now that I am in Liberal Studies, I go, "What am I going to do…I don’t know what I am going to do." No path in front of me and I am kinda stuck here. At the same time, I have opportunities that come my way and I just don’t take em…I had an opportunity to work at the Civic Center…and do the kid’s table. I wouldn’t get paid for it but I would get free tickets to the (hockey games)...and I didn’t live that up (sarcastic laugh).

I went for an interview first and I was trying to get the front desk where I could answer phones, but I guess she had somebody so she was all set with that, and then she mentioned the kid’s table and said that I wouldn’t get paid…and I would just get tickets and I really need the money, so I just said, “Well I am not sure about it…I’ll let you know.” Whatever and she understood. Then I was like …I’d like to do it because if I went and did it for a couple times, maybe I’d get a job in there…you know, but I just didn’t have the ambition to do it. I just didn’t...(quietly) I sleep too much...laugh...

I was given the opportunity to model for a clothing store…this was last...
Thursday. A guy that I knew from one of my old jobs and he runs a store and needed models to model his clothes in this bar. I asked him if he needed help in the store and he said to come down and see him and check it out. So I've been trying to get myself to go down there. (Laugh) But I would like to do it (clear throat) because it is something that I would enjoy doing.

I'd like to get a job...but I have no license... I have the hardest time finding someone that is reliable and that is patient. I just need a few hours of committed practice driving in someone's car and it's hard to find someone who is 25 years or older, who has a car that they don't mind me using who is reliable...and has time to practice at least an hour a day with me, for me to get comfortable driving in their car, and then using their car for my test. It seems simple, but it is the hardest friggin thing to do...it just irritates me...I've asked G S, but because of the great organization over there in student services ...(quietly) he doesn't have the time. And I don't want to sit in classes with 16 year olds. ... I just assume that's how old they are... the typical age is 15-16 years old. Plus I don't have $200 to go to driver's ed. It's impossible....

I have a book, like a notebook and it has all my to do's in there and I try to open it up every day, but I don't...louder...cuz it irritates me cuz half of them are like bills, and I need to pay those...I don't have any insurance... for my medication. I don't have enough money for medication so I need a job for it. For the past month and a half I have been bumming off my friends...it's pretty sad (quietly).(louder)...It's just if I am not here, (long sigh), if I am not living here, I'd be full time right now, I'd be working and I'd be walking to work. This friggin building. It's cuz I never leave, cuz I never go outside...

I have an opportunity now to live with my grandmother's best friend, who lives in town, but I don't have a car and I don't have money to take a cab or bus.... But I don't
have a job (very quiet....)

I don't feel successful unless I complete something, like after I graduated from high school I felt successful cuz I finally graduated. Then when I got an apartment I was successful because I had my own apartment, but right now there's nothing I could do if I am not in this building, I'm staying somewhere else, I am more motivated. I more want to do things because I don't like living here... it's always just the (mumble)... I just don't care.

I think college is probably the only thing I am going to complete (laugh).... That's the one thing about me that I have to learn how to do is congratulate myself on doing things. After finishing something I usually just say, "Ok what is the next thing" and I never stop to say you just completed something you know, to take that moment to pat myself on the back or something. So I think if I did that more, I'd want to be successful and I'd want to complete something else more bigger, because I don't. I just jump... (laugh). Because I don't really think it's a big deal.

Hopefully I'll be at another school (after this) so I can figure out what the hell I am doing.... That's why I am taking the classes now that I am taking because they are going to help me grow and figure out what I am going to do. Like I mentioned... Child Psych.... One of my English papers is the compare/contrast and I'm going to do majors to figure out what I am going to do.... I might just go back into Early Childhood.... but I really want to take photography. I like taking pictures....

I just want to get over depression; that is just the one thing I fought with my whole life and I am just sick of it.... I only have four pills left and I don't know when I am going to be able to afford more... in my head I'm like "you're not on Zoloft, you're not on Zoloft, you are not on anything, so, yes, you're depressed."... Unfortunately I like to drink
with medication... my whole break I drank away my medication (mumble).... It takes 30
days (to kick in) but I function better (knowing I have them) because I tell myself that I
am on medication and it makes me think even though it hasn't kicked in yet, I think I am
more focused and stuff...(very quiet). I have to get my butt in gear and get a job. I
actually had it all planned out today that I would get a job, but unfortunately, I told a
friend last night I would baby sit for her. I just want to get out of this building (laugh).

The friend of mine that I'm babysitting for I used to live with her...she moves a lot
but, if she moves here I'd like to move in with her, and just commute here. That would be
so much better for me.

I'd like to be successful, but I don't have a plan and I don't find myself successful.
...I have a plan for what I want and what I want to do but I don't see myself as
successful. I mean just graduating is successful on its own, but it doesn't get me anywhere
so I don't find it successful. I don't know.... I am a very hard pleaser...finding out what it
is I want to do... like my best friend from home who I would love to marry someday,
who kept me up all night...that's why I am tired today, is in Florida right now and he's
moving to Georgia and I (quiet) would really like to move down there to be with him
(laugh), but I don't know if he'd be ok with that.

(Not knowing what I'm doing)...It's making me choose bad choices (laugh)....

When I was in Early Childhood I was very committed to that because I knew the kids and
my heart is into that. I knew I could make a difference with them and I enjoyed doing
that.... I enjoyed going to work because I would walk in and they would be.... So if I
find something I enjoy and that I am good at I can...(commit)...but I don't like that word
(laugh).
Mary's Profile

Interview One - Focused Life History: Mary

I honestly cannot remember the first time I was diagnosed. It was sometime from Elementary School to Middle School. I know Middle School I was diagnosed so I am guessing…I really can't remember going back…. My boyfriend laughs at me cuz I have like the worst memory. I really can't remember being back in school (laugh)…not really you know…

I went to kindergarten…but for preschool and kindergarten. I went to a different school…it was like a private, catholic school…then I went to public schools from there. I remember some things but it's obviously not learning things…like learning to me hasn't been like a good. I can't …School is not for me; I never liked school. The reason why I stayed in school I wanted to make it through high school, I wanted to do it and especially my parents and I, and my parents always said "I don't care if you go to college as long as you finish high school." And I wanted to be able to do somethin' for myself, when I get older if I realize …if I didn't finish high school I obviously wouldn't do anything. You know I tried doin' college and I realized after that year that I wasn't really ready for it. I wasn't ready to just sit there and do all school work. You know, sometimes I think back and I think I could of made it if I put more effort into it, if I wanted to do it. But I was more into that I wanted to work and I wanted to pay off my bills and I wanted to you know…

All I can remember is… I mean I can remember back to fourth grade and I would be in like a social studies class and everybody was doin a test on the states and I couldn't do it; I could not remember any of the states. That's probably one of the earliest things I
could remember; that's probably one of the only things I can remember back that far. I remember studying with just quickly going thru it. I didn't want to sit there and study. I wanted to do whatever I wanted to do. So I remember like taking the test and I was the only one that didn't take it cuz I didn't know any of it.

I can't, I really can't remember (being diagnosed). I want to say that they did it in 6th grade. I want to say that... but I'm honestly not sure; they could have done it in elementary school and I just didn't realize it. But I can remember up until like middle school doing testing and everything. I did a lot of testing in middle school.... Well, actually in high school. I only did it once or twice cuz of the evaluations, but I remember doing testing in middle school.

I think it was probably my school that caught on to it, cuz my parents really didn't know anything about it and after I was diagnosed they started doing my brother cuz my brother also has ... he has ADHD and is bi-polar... He is 15. As far as I know I was diagnosed with ADD. Now as far as my mother and a lot of people say I have ADHD... some people think I have ADHD (with the hyperactivity). Depression they didn't diagnose me with, but I went to counseling and stuff... I don't know if they considered that depression... when I was younger, trying to commit suicide and stuff like that... obviously you could consider that depression. And they used to stick me on ... a lot of times they used to give me medication ... Ritalin... they kept on switching it... a couple of times they put me on Prozac. This was going through middle school and the beginning of high school. I just stopped taking them because they were supposed to be anti-depressants and every time I took them that's all I'd be was depressed. I'd want to stay to myself... I didn't want anybody talking to me... so ... I stayed off. I tried getting back on meds. During my first year in college... I started taking it.... so I could concentrate. I
really honestly didn't see a change...I mean sometimes I'd see a change...I'd go into school, in a way I'd concentrate more cuz I didn't want to talk to anybody...so obviously if I'm not talkin to anybody or jokin wit anybody I'm obviously going to concentrate on my work better.

I did kinda average (in high school) cuz I had a lot of teachers...well, not every class, but most of them were all special education classes...you know lower classes. So you know I had a lot of teachers’ help. You know I had one class...she was actually my liaison and she ...like I had one day maybe once or twice a day I have a class wit her and did my work and they help me do my work and she helped me tremendously...like I don't think I would of graduated if it wasn’t for her. So like when I’d be in history I was always in like lower math classes and then I’d go into those classes and then sometimes at the end of the day or beginning of the day I would sit there and do all my homework...they would help me do all my homework,

I mean like in a way I did feel like ...it was kinda like the people who were in my classes, especially with that special education class, they would help us with a lot of homework. I think that I could speak for us all when I say that we all felt kinda slow. I mean, these other kids were going on to higher classes or average classes and in a way they used to not make fun of us, but you know they used to joke around and stuff and obviously we used to take it as a joke cuz we used to do it to ourselves, just so you know we wouldn’t...I have to say we all felt like that ...we all felt kinda slow and behind.

I really honestly didn’t think about my ADD. I never thought about, you know I have ADD, so I can’t do this and that. I mean, at times I think because I have it, that’s the reason I’m not trying hard enough, cuz I don’t want to do it or it could just be because I just want to be lazy and sit home and watch TV and go to work, and do nothin’, (laugh)
But basically, you know, I don’t know, it could have been both...I never really thought of it on a daily basis.

(I wanted to graduate) because I had help; that was probably the easiest thing you could have. I mean...the way I thought about it is why are you going to drop out of high school when you have all these people that are helping you and you know it’s just gonna fly by fast and it’s gonna be easier for you and you know years from now you’ll go back to the high school and there would be no one there to help me. Might as well get it over and done with now.

In high school I knew I wanted to go to college...nobody...in a way I wanted to go because my older sister was in college and my twin sister was going to college and I didn’t want to be the only one left out, so I didn’t want to disappoint my parents and I didn’t want to prove to my parents that I couldn’t make it in life, but as I went...everybody was telling me that Criminal Justice was the hardest course and everybody was telling me you should go for another major. But I didn’t know that in order to... I mean to be a police officer you don’t need a degree...it’s better to have one; I thought if you had one it has to be CJ. Everybody’s telling me get another one, get another one at the last minute, everybody’s telling me you don’t even have to do CJ... you could have done anything. Yea, well thanks for telling me now; you know I dropped out and they told me not to come back.

(Back in junior high) I kinda known that I wanted to get into some exciting stuff; like I remember being a little girl and one of my friends ...she actually has a heart problem and she’s been going through heart surgery her whole life, and we always used to say we were going to be heart surgeons...and I wanted to be an EMT or something exciting like that and then you know as I got into high school, the beginning of high
school I started watching cop shows. I said “this is exciting” and stuff like that and I am not the type of person... I can’t sit down and type and sit there and do work. I gotta get out, you know, for me, I honestly... you probably hear a lot of people saying this, but I really honestly like helping people, like if I see somebody that needs my help and I can’t do it, I get frustrated cuz I wanna do it. So pretty much all through my high school I was... probably when I was younger than that... but it didn’t really start hitting me til I was in high school and this is what I want to do. Especially during my senior year, I did an internship at the police station, and I actually really got into it, and I was going on ride alongs, and I was doing administrative work, and I was doing everything, and I loved it... I absolutely loved it. It was excitement.

I did (feel successful)... up until this day I still go the police station and I go and see the guys and you know it was a lot of fun... I was doing dispatching and I was on the radio and it was a lot of fun.

The difference (between that and studying) to me is like I said... even with work, I can’t sit there and I can’t just look up at somebody and have’em writin on the board and just talkin to me... that’s not doin anything. I have to have hands-on experience. If you want to teach me, you show me, show me a certain method that I can actually do myself or that I’m gonna remember. You know, in school, like when I was in CJ or whatever... I can’t even remember half of the stuff, more than half the stuff, cuz you know they put it on the board and they’d write and that would be it.

The stuff when I was interning, that (administrative) stuff was kinda boring, but you know I was reading stuff like... I’d read all... the police reports; they had pieces of paper and situations that happened and stuff... and you know I talked to the guys I was working with and I would ask them questions and a lot of it helped. I learned more in that
half year of high school than the whole year in college, because… in a way because in
high school I knew I wanted to do it and knew when I got to my senior year I would be
able to go out and do it. And especially for me I am gonna jump at that chance because I
think I was the first high school student to actually do it there, because most …

internships are in the medical field. But I knew that as soon as I was in high school I was
gonna do it. I came to the headmaster…housemaster, and I went to her and told her I
wanted to do this and she asked people and they thought it was ok. And now I go back
and I see a lot of high school students over there…

So like I think I had the best experience I had… For me I got out of school at
12:00 and I’d be there from 12-2:30 and in a way I was also getting out of high school,
but the way I thought about it was I’d go a half day of school and I wouldn’t have to sit
there and learn, but in a way I was learning…to me it wasn’t like that… it was me goin
out havin fun and you think about it, I learned so much from that.

I did do a half of year of private school… my sister went there the whole time and
my twin sister went there for 8th grade and half of a year when I was there and we both
got kicked out. My mother really wanted me to go in 9th grade, but at the end I was
failing every single one of my classes. I couldn’t do it. It was… way too hard for me.
Their expectations were too high over there. (There were no support services). Not that I
can remember… I mean I’m sure, they could have. I mean all their classes were hard and I
absolutely could not do it. My twin… she was the same way. (But my older sister got
through.) She is at R. College … what do you call it, in (education) and she is studying to
be a teacher…. She had no disabilities.

I kinda think that my parents expect me to be like her but in a way … she went to
this expensive private high school and she was going to college and she’ll be graduating
next... well she should be graduating next year, but I think she’s doin one more year, and
you know they expect me to be like her and at least that is how I feel. And you know I
tell ‘em I can’t... I’m not gonna be like her you know... it’s just not me. I can’t just sit
there and learn; if you want me to learn I gotta get out there ‘n do stuff, I mean that’s the
only way of doin it.

(My other sister)... after I got there she was trying to be lazy with me. She never
did have any (disabilities)... it was just me and my brother. But um... she, I mean you
hear everybody in my family like “oh you dropped out of college”... this and that... it’s
not like I feel threatened by her. She’s not the smartest person. She was more into trying
than I was. She can sit there and learn. Pretty much in high school she got better grades
than me. It wasn't A's and B's, but you know, it was pretty much B's and C's.
It could be because she tried harder... I honestly don't know how it was for her but.....
She'll have her little comments to other people... “oh ya she dropped out of college,” but
I mean you ignore it. As of right now I'm doing other things with my life and just because
I'm not goin to college doesn't mean that I'm not goin to be something in life you know.
But we can get into that later.

Interview Two - The Details of the Experience: Mary

We (my twin) weren't doin it (together)... I mean in a way we kinda applied to
some colleges that were the same. I applied to six colleges. And I got accepted to two...
which was H and MB Community College, so you obviously knew right there my grades
weren't the best. So she got accepted there, too. And our friend S got accepted there too...
So we all wanted to go to college together, so we went over there, and we were more into
“we don’t want to live at home.” To me, I did not want to live in a dorm...Dorms were
not for me. I don't share showers, I don't do any of that. So then eventually my father bought a two family house for my sister (at R. College) to live in and they rented out the other side... so we were kinda like... we could have our own apt. so we said.... we'll go. All three of us stayed together.

The house was in the town of H. We'd go from H to the college...and it was the first semester. That was better because obviously the teachers are more easy on you cuz you're new and so that one was better. Toward the second semester. I knew I didn't want to be in college anymore, so I wasn't going to classes...I was sleeping in. Really I wasn't tryin...which I should have done, instead of wasting my mother's money. I should have stopped at the half year. I was on probation.

It was both hard and.... I mean...I really didn't want ...It's not like I had a lot of homework...but then like as I got home I had so many bills to pay for ...Credit card bills and cable and my parents paid our rent, electric, water stuff like that. But we had to pay for our luxuries like phones...cell phones. So after I got out of school I'd go home, I'd go to work. I just worked around the corner at this gas station. And so I did that and I'd come home even if I got out at 12:00 from school... I'd want to take a nap. Get up and go to work. By the time I got out of work...9 or 10 o'clock at night, I just wanted to sit down, watch TV and go to bed. So it was kinda like I had no room for homework. I didn't want to sit there and do anything.

In a way I really wanted to stay in school, like I wanted to, but not really... But I couldn't ... I couldn't, I just couldn't do it, like I needed to pay my bills. I was getting too far in debt. I was afraid I was going to get bad credit and stuff and then you know going through my own personal problems with school cuz school was just too much. I didn't even want to deal with school. You know and then dealing wit goin to class and sittin

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here like... "I don't know what I'm doin;" I'm not payin attention. I didn't want to do it and eventually... in March I had an operation and after that I was just ...I didn't want to go to school. I was out for a little while because of recovery but after that I was um...

In a way (I was depressed)... because you know I didn't want to be going through what I was goin through... I mean I had pre-cancerous cells in my cervix and they had to go in to take them out. They actually cut a cone shaped out of it and took it out. Actually it's not (good now). In fact I have to go back to the doctors in February cuz it actually came back at low grade. Now it's getting to the point that I'm just tired. I figure now that I look upon it, if I was in college this year I don't think I could have done it. Cuz I'm more in a depressing stage right now. More thinkin like I'm really gonna have cancer and that would have taken away a lot of my concentration.

(Anyway) I stayed here (home) for a week and then I went to NH and then at times I just didn't want to get out... I just stayed in... I made that decision to quit college, but I actually had to get another job cuz when I came back they decided they hired too many people... and they didn't have any room for me. So I had to wait like three months... but I eventually found another job at the mall and I started working there full time and I knew I wasn't going to go back to college so...

I hated it in that state. That's why I moved back down here. Being up there you know... you come down here... you know this is basically my home. It's so quiet up there... there's nothing to do ... You have no friends up there... so I wanted to be down here... I wasn't happy at all up there

I did, you know, like Mr. L. He was the funniest teacher... he's one of the best teachers and Mr. C... they both were the best teachers I had. There were some teachers who were so boring, like one of the math teachers; he actually left that year. Everybody
failed his class, cuz all he did was write on the board and that's it... you know.

But some of them were real... one, we didn't get along at all. But some of em were really into ... I can't remember her name... but she was one of the nicest ladies, she really was.

There was a lot of em.... You know she gave me so many opportunities to even make up work. I mean a lot of them wanted to sit there and help me. And that's the only way. I mean one time in high school I had this math teacher... she was the best teacher, you know. She always sat there, she helped me and I got straight A's in her class. That's really what helps the most is the teacher. If you really want to help me you really gotta sit there and explain every little detail so I know it... that's what's gonna help me. And most of them were like that. I did like the school and a lot of the teachers were excellent.

But I wasn't ready to actually sit there and do all the work.

(When I left) I was (both) sad and happy.... cuz I wasn't in school, I could come home... work during the morning, go out at night. I could be my own person... pay off my bills and you know... I felt more... (independent) during high school... in college, my parents would have me like this (holds her throat)... and I couldn't do anything. I felt that as soon as I got a full time job I'd be out there, on my own, eventually I'd get my own place. Obviously, things don't always turn out the way you expect them... but you realize eventually, hopefully it's gonna happen... but... in a way I was sad cuz in a way I wanted to get college life and you know, I liked the people that were there but... (quiet) I just couldn't do it. The couldn't do, it is in a way didn't want to, but for me I liked the course; I liked CJ, but a lot of it was too hard and you know, you learn something one way and then come to the test they switch it around, so you get confused and... in a way the CJ was kinda hard, but it was both... couldn't and really didn't want to.
Interview Three - Reflection on the Meaning: Mary

Right now I'm working full time at Children's Hospital. I work for L. Security. Well I work for L. but my site is Children's Hospital...actually I love it there. You know, I figured because I didn’t finish college I needed to get some experience in the field, so I'm doing that. A lot of it is hard, especially being with the kids with...they are walking around with cancer and certain situations like that and we have to do body escorts for the kids who pass away. We have to bring 'em down to the morgue. So I mean, they're already wrapped up, but you know, it's just hard seeing it. Like the first time I did it, I cried. You know it's hard to see something like that, but at least I'm getting experience where I'm seeing all this. When I become a police officer or whatever... I'm gonna already most likely be used to it. Especially it’s better seeing it, well, it's not better seeing it on kids, but you know at least I'm seeing it on kids first. That probably has to be the hardest ones that you have to see. But I'm doing that right now and I love it. The problem is, it doesn't pay enough to pay off my bills (laugh). Like after I had my operation I was out of work like three months; all those bills kept on adding up and you know...I eventually want to move out of my parents' house...be on my own.

As of right now I am sending out an application...April 27 is the fire exam....that way the police exam isn't until next year and I figure if I do firefighter now, especially then I can just slide my way into being on the police force. So hopefully, if I pass that and I go on the force... they'll pay for me to take a course in EMT. So I kinda have the best of both worlds --firefighter, EMT and then you know as soon as I can...take the police exam. Hopefully pass that and get on. It kinda looks better (to have a college degree) and pays more but...

(As a security person)...it's different day and night...during the day we have two
hours a day at Children's Hospital. There is like a circle...the valet works...we have to sit
there and direct traffic out there...We do a lot of unlocking doors...do a lot of patient
watches for kids who are suicidal or try and hurt other people or going crazy. Like right
now we are doing a parent watch for a child who had shaken baby syndrome...stuff like
that. We just had one child who was raped by the father. The psych ward, which is a lock
down unit...we have to go up there occasionally and strap down a patient going out of
control...morgue escorts. We do basically whatever problem is in the hospital. You
know, we've had to run after a guy who had stolen a wallet.

All we have is a radio, keys and a GCS gun. That's another thing; we do tours
around the hospital. You know there's these little strips...there's so many different
buildings inside the hospital, and you go around and you do like a basement tour...cuz
we have to see if there is a light out or something broken, or anything hazardous and we
have to put strips so they know that we went to that spot and checked it. Sometimes on
weekends we have to work the main desk and check everybody in, every single person
that goes in the building, if they're not a hospital employee...because of situations like
that. If we have to do parent watches...parents are not allowed on hospital property.

It's exciting...like I said, it's not just sitting there reading and doing work. It's
actually getting into it and getting hands-on experience. I have to be able to do stuff, get
involved in stuff. I can't just sit back and take paperwork...that's not for me.

I really don't (think about my disability). To me, it's just I am more of a person
who needs hands-on experience. It's not that I have a learning disability. I mean, I know I
do...I've seen myself...like I can't sit there and learn writing, typing and stuff. I really
don't think of it as "I have ADD"...I learn better hands-on, getting in there and doing it. I
don't try to let it hold me back...you know. If I want to do it...If I put my mind to it, I'm
gonna do it.

I'm excited about the firefighters. It pays more obviously. The schedule is good. You can work three days straight... three/four days off. It goes like that. You're actually helping people, especially in a fire you see a lot of kids; you go to every single call... if it's medical, fire, accident... it's everything. So I'll be able to see a lot there. I'm gonna go and buy the book... I actually have a police exam booklet, but I still have to pick up the fire exam booklet. After I send in the application they actually send you the booklet... study guide to study... so I'm actually not sure what I'm looking for. The paper that they gave when I grabbed the application... it may have to do with certain types of math and memorization skills and stuff like that. I am (nervous)... I really am cuz I don't know how I'm gonna do. For right now I'm gonna get the exam book... try to get into that... they got practice sheets and stuff like that... just try to do that even though I'm not that great at reading, there are a lot of people who said they would help me with it. Like in Drivers Ed... I failed the first time... I think I missed it by a question or two... and then I took it again and passed it that time.

(Eventually) I want to do either juvenile detective, that's like one of my goals... but I actually really want to do canine... where you have canine dogs, but they don't have that in W. though... Juvenile detective is obviously detective work on juvenile cases, but canine you are a regular police officer with a dog... so if you're looking for somebody you bring the dog... I really want to do that, but they don't have that. So it depends... as far as... eventually when I get to that point in my life I have to figure out if I want to do it in W or B with the canine situation. I am hoping by that time they'll have a police force that changes their mind, because they used to have it. But the cops were getting mad because they wanted to get paid for overtime cuz they were bringing the
dogs home and feeding them and walking them, so eventually a police officer sued the
department and they didn't have anymore canines.

(I know all this)... just by working over there and my parents own a bakery in
town and all the cops... most of em hang out there. I'm real close to a lot of em... and my
internship.

W is hiring more females for the police force... I'll say there's like five. At my job
now it's not really sexist, but a lot of people think guys can do the job better. You know,
when we're going to the psych ward the guys will check it out and stuff. I get into
arguments with people "who are you to say you're better than me in situations... you may
be stronger than me, but I may be the one to go up there and calm a situation down where
there is not even going to have to be a fight or whatever!"

I do I love my job... but to me I won't be successful until I have my career; to me
obviously there is a difference between a job and a career... and this is just a job to me.
... I dropped out of college ... I haven't really done anything big. Graduating from high
school and stuff... personally that's not big... to me until I have my career, at least the fire
department... that's all gonna be my career... but until I have that, I won't feel successful.

I'd like the training if I could do it in college.... but right now I am not in college
so I feel like I am making steps toward it... and it's gonna come real quick. Like in
college, I would feel like it's not gonna come any time soon cuz I would have to do so
many years in college...

My parents are fine with it... Sometimes you hear them braggin to people "you
know K... she's gonna take over the bakery business and M. is still in college... you hear
them bragging, but what can you say... it bothers me sometimes, but you know I really
don't know how they feel... whatever, it's my life and I need to do what I want to do...
They already know my goals...My mother is VP of Community Policing, so she is more into policing...she gets more into it... she's more excited about it and like my father's more into the business... so he's more into things like that. My father came here from Greece when he was 15-16; when he was a sophomore he dropped out of high school cuz he didn't know any better, but actually he has to be one of the smartest people I know...

He sat and read books and educated himself about everything...and you could sit here with my father and he'll talk to you about politics and other countries and you'll be amazed cuz he knows so much about it...My mother graduated from high school and never went to college.

I never touch books...unless they're magazines...but (in spare time) me and my boyfriend go to the gym to workout.... He's going to school to get his electrician's license.

I am hoping (in a year from now) not to be in this same position...hopefully I've grown. But I'm hoping to be a firefighter...around this time next year I am hoping to be taking the police exam...and hopefully reach my goals. I'll be 21 soon. I know I just want to start an early life...I tell my mother that ...I won't be happy until I'm a police officer.... That's the only time I'll be happy with anything I'm doing. (Nothing will stand in my way) unless I die (Laugh)...that's really how much I want to be one. Unless they tell me there's no possible way... or I get sick...have cancer...other than that....

Also, I want to live on my own... be independent... not live with my boyfriend right away... not even living with my sisters cuz they were messy. I like being organized and clean...it helps me get things done and focus. I don't think about my diagnosis of my disability...cuz they're diagnosing everybody with ADD today... like my brother. I just want to do what makes me happy and what I know I am good at!
Profile of Harry

Interview 1 - Focused Life History: Harry

Well, in the beginning, I was born in Great Neck, NY. My father was born there; my mother was from here. I lived there the first 6 years of my life. I went to Kindergarten... what's before kindergarten? Pre-school... and I went to kindergarten there and I had asthma very severe when I was down there and the doctors determined it was related to air quality... the city and that kind of stuff. At least that is what I was told... decided to move up here and I moved up at age 6. I really didn't have any problems with that at all since it was a fairly good diagnosis. My mother grew up in G which is 10 miles outside of K so that's where we relocated, and I entered the school system in K and shortly after that my teachers noticed that there was something that wasn't right as far as my learning letters, numbers, that kind of thing. They had recommended that I have an evaluation at Boston Children's Hospital.... The evaluation determined that I had severe dyslexia and a learning disability. After the evaluation I went back to my elementary school and I was put into a pre-first grade... and struggled through that and then I was placed in the morning at a... I forget what it was called... but it was a school at K State College where I had three teachers to myself, they were students, senior students, and they were specializing in special ed. and basically they sort of team taught me. I'd have one of them for a little while and then I'd have the other one and basically they were teaching me really basic skills, how to count, how to tell time, how to distinguish the alphabet and really focused quite a bit on that and I was there, I believe, four years and I would go to school in the morning. I would get on the bus. They would take me down there for a few hours and then they would bus me back, and then I did that until about fourth grade. There were several other children there from other different communities.
and it was a big room and we'd each have our own little cubicle and we'd have sort of our stuff put up there and the teachers would come ... I think it really did help. I think that as far as my basic skills...yes it did...quite a bit.

Then I was integrated into the regular classroom after that in fifth grade. Basically I went back to mainstream and I was not getting the reading and the writing...also mathematics is a difficulty for me...It has to do I guess with symbols. I tend to transpose them and all that kind of stuff. You know I'm still learning about it.... And I felt very different and apart but that feeling is still unbelievable; I can vividly remember looking up at this overhead screening and we were supposed to write down letters and that kind of stuff and the teachers would be like ...what's the deal, I mean why aren't you getting it and I remember being riveted to that spot, I really look at 5th grade as a wasted year...just because I didn't get too much special ed. Help. They put me on one of these little punch computer things and I liked the inclusion...but...I was also quite a skinny, small child and (quietly) so I got picked on a lot, that kind of thing. I mean I was the kid who ran home from school so that he didn't get beat up. I really didn't know any better, so you know sometimes I loved to be included, sometimes I didn't. I do remember my 5th grade teacher reading to the whole class and I absolutely loved that...that was rather fun. You know, it was that I couldn't keep up with the rest of the class. Again it was a double edge sword. I was more successful and I learned better that way but I was also excluded and not in with the rest of my peers And I think that affected my social interactions with other children. I had friends, but they were you know...one or two good close friends ...I was kind of ostracized by the other kids. Then junior high school

Oh that was a very tough transition.... Really tough, not to mention the fact that I had to be bussed to this really large school. They did have a special ed. department and I
was mainstreamed for a few classes...gym, art, social studies. And then it was sort of the
start with accommodations...tests ...accepting work from me orally. Then I'd go to the
special ed classes for reading and writing. And again they weren't super well-organized. I
mean the teacher meant very well but they had a bunch of different students at different
levels and we didn't get what I consider excellent services... Junior High School I started
to flourish a little bit. I made a very good friend. It was actually very interesting how I
met him. We were at music class together. He was sort of a new kid; he had just recently
moved up and he was um bigger than most of the other kids; he was our same age and all
that but he was sitting here (pointing) and there was another kid sitting here and I was
sitting here and, actually no, he was sitting here and I was sitting next to him and there
was another kid on the other side and he was picking on us...or picking on me... teasing
me quite a bit, and this guy, before I ever met him said "duck" and I said "what" and he
said "duck." I put my head down and he went boof...punched the kid in the head. So
after that we were best friends. Yea. I'm still friends with him now. Actually he had a
learning disability, but he sort of overcame that I guess. But anyway that was just a little
side story.

So basically I went through 6th through 8th grade...with him. We weren't in
always the same classes and we uh...we had some of the same classes. But uh, sort of
making some progress and then sort of regressing and then making progress and then
regressing...I would guess that I could inconsistently read and write at the third grade
level...depending on the day and how tired I am and that kind of stuff. That was my
junior high experience.

My mother was more involved in it; my dad worked several jobs...he was a
fireman and also worked other jobs and he wasn't around very much. I don't think that he
quite accepted it. But I do think that he has some of the same issues as I do...not as severe, but my mother was a very passive person and she sort of just went along with whatever they said for the IEP's and I had no clue. Looking back on it now I think I could have gotten a lot better education. I don't know if I could have learned more, but I certainly could have done more.

High school, I went to K High School. Pretty big...and again I was mainstreamed for a good number of classes with accommodations in reading and math, spelling. I was in special ed. classes. Again still ostracized. I had my friend Eric. After our first year of high school we started drifting apart. He started to get into a crowd that I just wasn't comfortable with and we sort of drifted apart in high school..

I did one sport. Basically what had happened is freshmen year I got beat up. I was considered in the retard class and I was still small and thin. Um...however, the end of freshmen year puberty kicked in, I was a late bloomer, and over that summer I started working out and I really became quite muscular, I must have gained 25 or 30 pounds and really it came natural. Over the summer, I really got quite muscular and actually I went through a pudgy phase before that where my shoulders were this wide and my waist was this wide and I got picked on a little for that.... And after that...I was in gym class and one of the gym teachers, who was a wrestling coach, asked me if I ever wrestled...so I wrestled...went on the wrestling team. Part of my dyslexia, I didn't know my right from my left, my kinesthetic sense is not great and I know that improved, after puberty it really improved a bit. Also I had some performance anxiety in front of big groups and so when it came to the wrestling matches when we were in a big stadium I didn't do well, but when it came to wrestling at practice with people I knew, I did much better.... So I did that.
I think what really helped my self-esteem is I seemed to become much more muscular, much stronger; you know people treated me different. I didn't so much enjoy the wrestling as much as I enjoyed the conditioning aspect of the sport, you know, I enjoyed doing it but I didn't particularly enjoy the competition.

So I did that all through school. Also, I shot archery in junior high school and went to competitions and that was something I excelled at as well.... I didn't like the competition. I liked trying to better myself...but not so much the competition. I did well in that. I enjoyed it.

There were like two different people. When I was at home, when I was with my friends and stuff and I didn't have to read...I was one person and when I was at school having to read and that kind of stuff, I was another person. And um that sort of ...that's still the case right now. I'm actually finding my disability more difficult now than I did when I was younger. Basically high school I had my first love ...actually she was in special education. Our relationship didn't blossom because of the fact that I was in special ed...her father...

I basically got through high school, other than the special ed. stuff, with no problem. I had a few close friends...not a real big social crowd...was a bit ostracized, but not physically anymore...I just felt like I made it through. They wouldn't let me fail. One of the things I did do was some vocational things. I did do horticulture for a few years. I really enjoyed plants.... They modified the curriculum with me. I was in with the kids who weren't the brightest in the bunch and that was kind of hard for me and that was sort of like when I was in the school at K. That was hard for me too, cuz I knew I was a lot smarter intellectually than the kids that I was with and can I go back to that whole thing?

When I was in that phase at K my parents...my mother did take me to see a
psychologist cuz I was having some real self-esteem issues...so I went to see a
psychologist for a while during elementary school. I’m sorry I’m jumping back.
Basically I went in and talked with him and played checkers and I’d go once per week
and basically he was a nice guy. I enjoyed it; we talked ...and I probably went to see him
maybe three or four months and I could just remember the last time I was scheduled to
see him he was talking about "Oh we don't need to see you anymore" and I could
remember leaving there thinking "Boy I feel much better about myself." And I didn't
know it was about myself, but I felt better, because when I was in that school at K. I was
really picking on the other kids quite a bit because I was much more intellectually
smarter than them and they interpreted that as low self-esteem, maybe some depression I
think that's why they recommended me...

When I was in high school the vocational stuff that I did, there were a couple of
teachers that saw some promise in me um...my abilities are like a third grader, but my
verbal skills, my auditory memory is good, so they encouraged me actually to go to
college ...apply for colleges...And what I did was uh...I didn't think this was an option
but...my IQ is like... I know it was over 100... Above average.... What can come out
verbally and what can come out in writing are two totally different things.
Intake...output... basically I am an auditory learner, thankfully...so if I hear it I got it.

So what this teacher did is encourage me and she set me up with Vocational
Rehabilitation (VR) and I went through and I had VR testing and I decided that I wanted
to go to college. This was senior year...and I was going to get some help from VR
...hopefully. And talking with my special ed. teachers... they recommended two schools
that were supposedly specially designed for people with learning disabilities. One was C
College in Mass. and one was M College.
Interview Two - The Details of the Experience: Harry

This was in '83...’82...Basically I applied to both schools. I went down for an interview to C College and spoke with them and got a letter back from them saying I was too disabled for their program. Same thing with M College. I was too disabled for their program. That was quite a blow...But I was determined that I was going to go to college because if I didn't I would be collecting garbage or something like that...I knew I was too smart for that. So what I did was I talked with my teachers and other people and they had this program at K State called the Link Program... what that was you would spend the summer taking some classes, also doing some team building things and study skill things to help you out and if you do well they would accept you as a matriculated student. I did very poorly in the mathematics...I did ok in a history class...so the bottom line - they did not accept me as a matriculated student and again I was determined to get in.

Fortunately, they had academic support services that were very good, and basically, if I went to school for a year or took a few classes and did well that was another way I could get matriculated. So I set myself up with special academic support services, with Voc. Rehab. and basically went to school as a visually handicapped student...so I had books on tape, oral un-timed exams, scribes to help me with my papers and...I found that with all that, I could go sit in a lecture and get things like psychology. I could get it fairly easily. That was through that program...and VR did help with some money, with some tutors and I was very successful with that. I only took three classes a semester cuz four would have been too much for me and basically I did that and got matriculated. I did well...got A's and B's. I couldn't have taken mathematics classes...What I did end up taking was a course called Quantitative Reasoning which was more of a thinking mathematics, and that's how I got over my math requirement. I initially started out as a
psychology major and did that for two years and really started to seem like it was the same thing over and over and it was kind of boring me a little bit. I had an interest in physical therapy so I talked to my Voc. Rehab counselor and there was a physical therapy assistant program at the Tech and I applied there...got in and initially worked with them sort of the same way that I did with K. By then I knew what I needed so I was successful there. Was there for a year and I was the only male in the program... I was successful. I didn't like the school. I felt that the other students in the program ostracized me because I was a man, maybe because I got oral un-timed exams and that kind of stuff... so I decided to leave there and go back to K State and pursue Sports Management.

So I went back to K State and it took me a lot longer cuz I could only take a few classes at a time. What had happened, shortly after I went to K. State I met the woman who was to be my first wife. We proceeded to start a family and get married very quickly and I ended up working, going to school and having a family and that was tough, especially on top of me having a learning disability. What I was doing was I was working at a pet store and part time at a fitness center and ... I had a lot of different jobs. And finally I ended up graduating from K State. My GPA was a 2.0, good enough to graduate. I think maybe because I was married and working a lot had more to do with that than my dyslexia and my LD.

That marriage subsequently ended. Had two wonderful kids out of it. My first job out of college was working as a recreation coordinator at a girls' shelter, which was basically a step down from lock-up for adolescent girls in trouble.... It burnt me right out. Basically it was a facility that was non-lock up, you were basically the lock. So you physically restrained the girls...and the head games and you're always watching your back... these were all adolescents.... And I just got totally burnt out from the job. I
worked at Crochet Mountain as a residential counselor, basically just a baby sitter for really handicapped children... and was married, doing the best I could. Things weren't going great. I was never around cuz I was working so much and so anyway I only lasted a year doing that.

(Then) my ex-wife met someone she liked better so we ended up not being together anymore. We were separated for a while. I was back home living with my parents and at that time I decided that I'd like to go back to physical therapy school... finish that degree. Worked at South Rehab Hospital as a transportation person, also as a rehab aide and decided I wanted to go back to school. The reason I took the job was because they said they had a scholarship to help people complete school.

Anyway... got divorced finally and started to apply for schools and I applied at H. College and went in for my interviews and I gave my resume... I already had a bachelor's degree and had been working in related fields and all that kind of stuff and I was right up front. I told them about my dyslexia and I basically went through the interview process... they loved me; they accepted me in the program. I got a letter of acceptance. Then I told them I needed to talk to someone in Academic Support Services and I told this person in admissions what I needed and they told me if they knew how disabled I was they wouldn't have accepted me right to my face...(cough).

At the time H College was very expensive. I went back and I applied at the tech. It wasn't my first choice cuz I was living in the C area and H turned me off so much it infuriated me and I got accepted at the other college. It was sort of like a little fight... we accepted you but I don't know if we want you now. But the other school had a much better reputation and was a lot cheaper... I finished school at the tech and got my degree and wanted to go back and stick it to that guy who told me I was too handicapped.
I've been very, very lucky ... there's got to be someone looking out for me because I made those connections that I needed to and since I had a bachelor degree I had a lot of classes under my belt. Basically all I needed to do was take the core classes... They accepted the math from the other school... so anyway I did that and we had a good mix of people in the class and I did fairly well, had oral un-timed exams. One of the things that was a stumbling block was going to be documentation for my affiliation. Just before I went on my first affiliation I got a computer through VR that I could talk into and dictate what I say, also with scan text, so I could scan text and have it read back to me. It was a regular computer, but I went through this place called Compu-care and VR hooked me up with a speech input program and speech out—anything on the screen, it would read it to me and I had a scanning and reading program. I got that a week before I was supposed to start my first affiliation, so I got intensive training on that.

I ended up doing that with my first affiliation which is almost like an internship and that was basically happening between my schooling... like you do one week of school and then you do a six week affiliation in the summer and then back for another semester of school and then another two affiliations. My teachers were supportive and I still got the oral un-timed exams and tutors and I was pretty tight with people I went to school with; we had study groups...

My first affiliation.... right out front I disclosed and I worked with this wonderful woman.... She was very accommodating, very helpful and did well in that affiliation. Went back to school and finished up my classes and went on to my second affiliation. And there had my ups and downs.... So anyway I did make it through there... that was fine. Had a week off, went to my third affiliation. Again, it was guy who owned a private practice. I worked with him, good guy; he tried to work with me the best he could with
what I needed for accommodations and I ended up staying there. After I finished my affiliation, I just ended up working with him. I worked as an aide for the summer until I got my license... I had an oral, un-timed exam, just the same as everyone else took. Basically it was on computer and they gave me a reader. Actually I was quite upset about that because they were supposed to provide me with a reader who understood Medical Terminology, but I didn't get that person. So he sat down with me; he read it but he couldn't pronounce the words...and so I had to fill in the blanks. But by the grace of God I passed it and I actually passed it quite well, and got my NH license and stayed working there for a while. Had some problems though, cuz we made a merger with another company; didn't particularly like the other company and so I ended up getting another job and I worked part-time at the YMCA. Ended up getting a job as the Associate Health and Fitness Director. Was there for a year, and left there after a year when I moved in with my new wife, which is where I am now. She's from NH...it just all fell together. I had applied for a Physical Therapy job and I had gotten a job covering a maternity leave at E. Hospital for two months. I do that now on weekends. I'm sort of on call. But it's sort of a permanent ...I work every other weekend whenever they call me in. After that maternity leave they had another maternity leave...

When I originally first started applying for jobs, I applied for at the VNA for PTA...and they loved my resume, they loved my interview, they went as far as to verbally offer me the job...I have it on tape...then I said well, I have a learning disability, I need accommodations, I need this equipment... and they were like, whoa...wait a minute...they gave me the run around and I had VR come and talk to me and I had a specialist in computers come talk to me cuz the issue was I had to go to people's houses and I had to do everything on the computer. They said that their computer wouldn't be
compatible...they ended up having a big meeting with my VR counselor and my
computer specialist from VR and they brought everybody from their computer
company...their supervisors. So basically there was this huge meeting that didn't need to
happen...and what they said was, they would not accommodate me. So I didn't push it
because I wanted to be part of this community here, but...

Although I do need accommodations and I do not work as fast as everyone else in
reading and writing, I knew that I was very successful at E Hospital, I still am... I put my
software on their computer...no problem and I write basically shorthand for my notes
where we have to write a daily note; and when I have to write more, I dictate and I
transpose it into the medical records. My supervisor is excellent; she reads me most of the
stuff, verbally gives me what I need.

It's not the best situation for her...I'm more labor intensive than other people for
her. Then after I was done with that there was another pregnancy leave at another facility
and they basically had me on to cover some maternity leave again and they also had a
position available, and what they did, they sort of had me shadow and work in a very
isolated area, just doing aquatics and basically saw what I could do... I think they just
wanted to act like they were giving me a chance and I was working with some PT's
shadowing and stuff and basically they tricked me into saying that my manual skills
weren't good, meaning manipulation skills of joints, which isn't a real strong point of
mine, because I didn't get it in school. I haven't done much of it and then they used that as
a reason why they didn't want to hire me.

And I'm going through that again...I applied for another position and basically
what they did, it was on their website and I applied for it and I had the credentials for it.
After my interview they changed what it said on the website.... They wanted somebody
with manual skills and also someone for women's issues. Then I applied for a job doing cardiac rehab...I had an interview.... They let me shadow...showed me where all the people worked. Then they had an exercise tech position that they wanted on the website and I went and interviewed for that...in interviewing for that they said, "Well you know we are going to change the job description...with more cardiac rehab experience." That's not what they initially asked for.

My wife began trying to push me into doing something about it...it'd be a tough fight though...So anyway I am still in the process of finding out if I am going to have that as a job...and meanwhile I got a part-time job working at a Health/Fitness Center.

I do just fitness appointments and that kind of stuff.... I also work at another fitness center, so I've got like three jobs going and it's not working well...and I am still trying to break into there. I'm having a hard time finding a full time job; I've had a hard time trying to find a job for quite some time in my field...um...I am reassessing whether or not this is for me and that's why I am working with VR now. Next week I am going for another vocational evaluation. And they've really been very helpful...they helped me with my bachelor's degree; they helped me with my associate degree; they helped me with my computer technology and now they are helping me with jobs. What I am looking for is my niche where I can be accepted and work and you know, accept my disability...cuz sometimes I don't accept it; sometimes I do. And what I am looking to get into now is ... I am an educational advocate for the PIC Program...Parent's Information Center. It is an educational advocate program for parents who have children with disabilities; so they can call me and I can help them navigate the school systems and if they don't know the laws and that's really where I want to head to. Really what I think I
would like to do now is get a master's in counseling and counsel people with disabilities, children with disabilities. Self-advocacy, but also, too, I'd like to counsel them for their self-esteem issues and that kind of thing. My son was just diagnosed with the same thing I have.

Interview Three - Reflection on the Meaning: Harry

I have pushed through every obstacle and this is the self-determination thing, every obstacle that has been in my way so far. I am really having a hard time pushing through this obstacle and I think pushing through this obstacle is going to have me require my wife's help; do some litigation. I don't know if the people who are in charge of human resources know what the managers are doing, but I think I am going to have to take this a step further.

College was easy. I am doing several part-time jobs, which come up to about 50 hours a week. I will tell you right now, my wife and I are in counseling because she is the exact opposite of me...she was a gifted student...she skipped the third grade...very intelligent, can read and write very well. Of course she has to; she is an attorney...very, very smart lady. Me, coming from this, it sort of clashes a little bit. She doesn't understand me and some of the ways I do things and some of my motivations...part of my learning disability is my short term memory and I don't remember things and it drives her nuts...We are total opposites in that regard, but we love each other very much and we're working through it and we're going through marriage counseling to help work on these things, not because our relationship is going to end kind of thing. I think, too, it's very hard on her to see me not getting these jobs, not getting these jobs and not bringing in the money that I should and I've got to pay child support and all that kind of stuff and I
don't think she blames me, but then she does blame me...you know.

When I was living at home or not living with my wife, my disability didn't show up because I lived the way that I lived and the way that my parents lived. My dad has learning disabilities...so things were done differently. Now that I am living with my wife...she does things one way and they are totally different than the way that I would do them and we clash there.

Supposedly people with dyslexia are premature...I weighed 2 lbs. 14 ounces when I was born...first child and male...and also too, my mother admittedly says she had a craving...she smoked when she was carrying me...had a craving for beer and crackers. So she drank beer, smoked and also my father didn't graduate high school till he was 20, and my grandfather didn't finish the fourth grade on my father's side. My mother refers to his brothers as the "illiterate bastards," so there is a disability-dyslexia thing through the family; now my son...but my daughter's fine. My son is reading a little bit...he basically is a little bit lower than me, but he was just diagnosed with a severe learning disability. They haven't called it dyslexia but basically it's the same thing that I have. He's a math wiz though, which is nice.... It's similar but different. I have never been able to grasp and hold math facts. My checkbook was terrible until I met my wife...and she does all that stuff now...and there is computer software out there to help with that now too.

I read a bit about my disability. It's very painful though. I would read a bit about it and it would very much upset me...so I would sort of stay away from it and then I would read more...and I think what I want to do now is grab the bull by the horns and realize this is what I have, because I was trying to live a normal life, basically working a lot of hours and I can't do that because it burnt me out and when I get burnt out I can do less.... I'm less productive and less efficient. I could go and be a physical therapy aid and be less
of a professional...less responsibility, less paperwork. Or actually learning more about my disability... and I consider that grabbing the bull by the horns...and in the process help others with the same situation and I really think that is where I am gonna be successful and be fulfilled...

There are two places I can see myself...one being a new father, working part-time for E Hospital and basically staying home and raising my child, and going from there, because my wife makes a lot more money than I do so it makes more sense for me to stay home, or stay home more.... Or I could see myself getting more involved in educational advocate stuff, sort of not give up physical therapy but not beating ...I've been beating down the door for four years now to get a job a full time good job in PT and it hasn't happened; So maybe it's time for me to go to another avenue and the counseling would help with some of my strengths cuz I have good verbal skills and social communication skills and I don't think there would be the push to get it done in this much window.

So I see myself going into two different avenues and I mean, I am 36 now, I see myself now being ready to grasp and take my disability by the horns. I've sort of been running from it a little bit and working with it and running from it and now I want to work with it and I want to help other people with the same issues to not make the mistakes that I made, but also to find an easier way to achieve the things I've achieved, but not to tear themselves apart doing it.

I think some of the mistakes I made...well I might have pushed harder for H. College, but I think that was a good decision. I would not have worked so much when I was in college...I could have lived at home ... I wouldn't have married my ex-wife...I would have really thought more about what I wanted to do and what I could do, instead of saying "I'd like to do that, I'm just gonna bull my way into doing that." I would have
been more thoughtful.

I think I should have majored in PT the first time and I really wanted it and I think it was very good for me and I enjoyed it, but I left it and I felt like I had left something undone, so I finished it... but I was adrift a little bit at K. State... I was a psych major, then didn't want to... went to PT... didn't want to do PT... wanted to go into Sports Management. I really think someone with a disability needs to say “Ok, this is what I am going to do and I need to get as much information and be the best at this that I can” ... don't go here and there and that kind of thing... I did fitness... I have some fitness knowledge, I did PT; I have some PT knowledge, I did some psych.; I have some psych knowledge... If I had really thought, “Do I want to stay just in fitness or do I want to go right into PT?” ... Although it was a process.... I call it a mistake but it was a large process to get me where I am... but if I could help someone not make so many mistakes or not make it so financially burdensome... So basically they were mistakes, but they weren't mistakes... but if I had avoided them I wouldn't be paying for them now.

It seems that almost every five years I come to a crossroads... it's interesting... and I push when I need to push and regroup and move on... I feel like I have been very successful and, I actually mentioned this to my wife when I was at my son's IEP meeting last week, I am thinking I have some of the same issues they're talking about here but I also have a bachelor degree and an associate's degree... I've done a lot and I worked hard and I have success and I have pushed in the areas where I felt very strongly about and if I hadn't been as strong willed or as determined I wouldn't have succeeded... I wouldn't have succeeded in college, I wouldn't have succeeded in getting another college degree. I wouldn't have gotten help from VR... cuz after I got my first degree they sort of said well, we already gave you one degree... and I looked at their mission statement and their
mission statement is that people with disabilities are working at their potential, and I said "I am not working at my potential." I was the one who brought up the adaptive technology piece and got some information and sort of got that ball rolling and if I hadn't pushed I wouldn't have had that...so getting back to your premise for this...self-determination has gotten me fairly far and...I have another block and I know what I need to do.... My wife knows what I need to do; I just need to make that decision to go on and I am at a crossroads again and I know I'll make the right decision...One of the things that I am finding out, too, is that if I work too much or have too many fragmented things I get burnt out ...and I lose sight of what the goal is, what is important and lose my focus, so I now know I need to regroup and fight my fight and either overcome the obstacle...get a full time job as a PTA or I need to go on and get a masters, counseling people...come around from the back way where I'm fighting problems and hit it from the backside with more education and in a different way. There is a wall here and I could either push or have other people push through that wall...

I benefited from all my educational experiences. It made me a better, smarter more fulfilled person...It's opened up doors for other jobs that I wouldn't have gotten, but the jobs aren't challenging enough and they're not really what I want to do and they don't pay as much as I want to make and they're not fulfilling.

I think it would be good for me to stay home in some respects and I've had two children; I know what it's like to be home and be responsible for the child in the respect that I would really enjoy spending the time with the child; but also, too, I could lose my motivation to do more and want to be more if I stayed home. That's why I would want to work part time doing something and I actually see it as a good thing; I would be able to focus on what I really want rather than have to pull all this together to make money.
I wanted to do educational psychology, but you have to take the GRE’s for that. I could go for a master’s in psych. and I don’t need to do GRE’s for that… I could get in counseling and then I could sort of branch over and go around it again… I am going to talk to C W about what I see myself doing. I want to know what she thinks is out there for jobs for me… opportunities. My VR counselor introduced me to her. She’s great… wonderful… I did have to cancel my first appointment with her because my son was being diagnosed and all that, but I am going to be calling her back to reschedule.

I tell employers all about the computer equipment. I search the web; my screen reading reads everything. It’s called Jaws… you can load it on and it will read whatever is on the screen… I can get the e-mails read to me and speak in and do my e-mails that way… and when I go to the website my jaws screen reading software reads whatever is there… and they just don’t get it… They’re into… especially in PT, they are into productivity… How long is it gonna take you to do this; how much money can we make from you?
APPENDIX Q
Profile of Ed

Interview One - Focused Life History: Ed

Do you know all about the condition, Cerebral Palsy? I don’t know if that affected my eyesight…but I doubt it though. I only need glasses for reading…but I do have glasses. (Interrupted by Aunt walking in room…Ed got flustered) Sorry…

I do not have a learning disability. I believe in elementary school I did…I don’t know what it was. I was too young and mom would handle all that stuff for me. I believe in elementary school I did but it wasn’t dyslexia, but I would write my A’s and my B’s and D’s the wrong way. Since then I no longer do that…it just stopped for some reason. I had an IEP (Individualized Ed. Plan) but to be perfectly honest with you I never used it except when it came to geometry cuz I couldn't get it….I was too stubborn and a lot of the times the only time I ever used it was when I needed someone to type something for me.

What I remember most was that people did a lot of things to compensate for my eyesight, like, for math they would give me graph paper to help me when the problems were corrected…excuse me for being fidgety…I'm nervous… It was mostly for my eyesight if I remember correctly. I think the right eye is 20/20 vision and I think the left eye… there is a severe stigmatism…. And I am a little nearsighted and I need glasses when I read or when the print is too small. I used glasses for one math test last year. Of course I can read…I can read this without glasses. The print has to be extremely small for me to need glasses.

(My elementary years) were… This is hard for me cuz I was a young kid and I was into just being a kid. My early years, unlike most students with disabilities, kids accepted me pretty well cuz I had a sense of humor. So I had friends and stuff…so I spent...
most of my time being a kid. I knew... I knew... I knew if they ever would make fun of me, people would be after em, much like right now. People open their mouth and it gets shut for them, not by me, by my friends and stuff.

Math was always harder for me; third grade was probably my worst year of school. It was just hard... it was just hard. I had a wonderful teacher who got me through it, but it was just... it was just very difficult for me. I'm paying attention; it may not look like it. I enjoyed elementary school... It wasn't until high school that I started having problems. Junior high, I guess I should get more articulate about this, but I was a nerd. I just was a geek. Didn't have a muscle in my body... had no hair. I had a bald head at the time. Those two things alone don't make me... well that's something I always did... for whatever reason I always look at those years as the years I kinda regret... turned into a social outcast and then high school came and I had a chip on my shoulder and a mouth on me. I wouldn't call it a chip on my shoulder and I don't necessarily take it out on anybody else, but part of what makes being disabled so difficult for me is not just being disabled, it's physically having to depend on other people, but yet being so independent upstairs. It's not that I'm a "know it all," but once I get something set in my head, nobody can tell me anything different... my way is my way and that's it. That's what I kind of turned into in high school and I also did some things in high school which made people think I was nuts, which I also have a certain amount of respect for people who were also nuts, people who were also as insane as I was, but the rest of high school kinda just drifted away from me.

I started to develop a temper... I think that my genes kicked in and I'm also a strong guy, so once in a blue moon someone would upset me and I'd grab 'em by the throat cuz they were picking on me. "If you ever do that again, I'll kill you" and I think
some people saw me do that and they kinda just backed away from me, which is good cuz I don't want people picking on me. I don't want people telling me what to do...what I can and can't do and what I should and shouldn't do. I was never a stupid kid. I would never do this so the powers that be could find out. My friends... were as crazy as I was...I never had a girlfriend in high school. That is why they thought I was nuts.

Academically, I wasn’t doing well...um because...like I said I got a chip on my shoulder and I started not to give a damn about it...I started to care less and less. I was only a real good student in elementary school because that's when I paid attention, that's when I did homework and as soon as 6th grade came around I stopped doing a lot of that stuff...(But) I am not as stupid as I look... I've said this too many times...except for math, I was one of those kids who showed up for class and could take the test. I didn't leave class cuz I didn't have a car. I didn't have a car cuz I wouldn't graduate.

I forgot to bring up...I had problems with my handwriting, too. That wasn't really an issue...because they all knew me by the end of high school and a lot of them got to be able to read my writing. As a matter of fact, one teacher had worse handwriting than I did, so he couldn't open his mouth. Um... a lot of people did complain about it, but if I remember correctly they never marked me down for my handwriting. They would mark me down for the wrong answer...period. There could have been help with a computer but I am kinda anti-technology.... if it's not necessary it shouldn't be here. If a point in time were to come where it would be necessary for me to know something, then I would learn it, because I would have no choice; but I vowed from the time that I was this high that I would never own one and I would never allow my kids to own one. Cuz I would never want them to sit in front of a computer all day...it's as bad as sitting in front of a television. I only watch a couple shows... I don't read as much as I should cuz I listen to
a lot of music.

(About disability) I understand what I wanna understand, what I don't wanna understand I kinda just ignore. There are just things that I don't wanna know. If I think about it too much, it ... gets in the way... cuz I get depressed.

I'm going to say this point blank, the majority of the bad things that have happened to me have been my fault. Period. Because as I said before, my way is my way and nobody can tell me different...it's not a case of being a young adolescent, it's just a case of being Ed...that's how I am...um. It's hurt a lot of things for me...it's hurt a lot of relationships. It's only hurt a lot of relationships pertaining to the opposite sex, therefore so what. That was the wrong thing to say, but that's my... I'm not going to say anything misogynistic or sexist but so what...I have one mother and I don't need another one...

(Interrupted again by aunt) You have probably seen a little of that right now, from just being here...excuse me, my brain works faster than I can go. From the little time that you spent here, you probably see how they treat me, like I'm five years old, except when I was with my father cuz he just kicked my ass and should have, cuz that's his job. Not literally...he's kind of a neat guy, but don't screw with him. That's how a dad should be and a mom um, ...my mom left us a long time ago...but I get treated like I'm five years old and it drives me nuts and I'm gonna work as hard as I can to get the hell out of here now...soon, but you know a lot of this could have been prevented cuz I could have taken an earlier initiative to do something for myself. I avoided those (VR) people because they move too slow for me um... but I don't move much faster, but that's me and this is my life as I said before.

Anyway, they talk to me like I am a fully functioning adult, but they still do a lot of things for me. I need them to do it because I was never taught how to cook...I know
how to do laundry now cuz I learned...but I was never taught how to cook. Things like that, I don't mean dressing myself or bathing myself...just little things and uh because I had a sense of humor at the time and they would say I should do some of the things myself, I would say, well that's what I'm going to get married for...um...then my mother would slap me. (Dad walked through). He's a different story, cuz he doesn't bother me...he treats me like I'm his son...he probably assists me more than anybody else does, outside of my brother. He doesn't dote over me. I hate that, but once again, I let it happen. When people get older they're supposed to grow and they're supposed to change and not that I'm immature...that's a part of my life that I never put my foot down on.

(As for going to college), you're not gonna like this either. My situation decided that for me, because I couldn't do manual labor like I wanted to do. I wanted to do back breaking labor because I felt that was a more honorable job than wearing a suit and tie and going to work everyday. That's just my opinion. Also, you can be your own boss out there...you have work to do and quotas to meet and whatever else...but you don't have to listen to people. I thought it was a manly thing to do. I didn't see putting a suit and tie on every day a manly thing...if you didn't come home with sweat on your brow and dirt on your clothes, then you really didn't work very hard. That was my own personal...that's my opinion...nobody thrust that view upon me. That was a view that I came to myself. As irrational as it may be, that's how I think. I might as well go to college...I have no choice...uh.

My high school gave me a lecture "Ed, you gotta start doing homework." T. High School is a very good high school. And I didn't realize it until I went to H. College We have a one of the best music programs in the country and a wrestling team that doesn't get beat...very rarely. Most of the teachers are good...I ran into one that I didn't like. It
wasn't that she couldn't teach, but I just didn't like her. She annoyed me. If she was walking across the street and a car was coming, I'd have to think before pushing her out of the way. She just...this is silly. But her and I liked to argue ...a lot...and we'd argue about politics and my views are way, way, way over to the right and hers were way, way, way over to the left. And it was just a personality conflict all the way around. She was a feminist for one thing and that got under my skin. She thought her opinion mattered to me and she just wouldn't shut her mouth. But that was a personality conflict that has nothing to do with this interview, but other than that, all the teachers were very good. I had one teacher was one of the smartest teachers I ever met in my life. I always thought I had a large vocabulary for a 21-year-old young man. Then I ran into this guy and I had to carry around a dictionary to have a conversation with him. I mean the guy is just really, really smart. I probably learned more in that class about life and about Shakespeare than any place else. Because he was a reformed hippie and he went to Woodstock...things that I will never get a chance to do, both good and bad...not that he went into it, cuz he was a teacher, but I am assuming. He was kind of an original outlaw. But like I said, just because I think something doesn't make it true.

I do read, but not as much as I should, but I like to talk to people who know what they're talking about, even if I don't know what they're talking about, I can still learn things from them and that's what I got from him (hit table with pencil). I learned so much just by talking to the guy about stuff, not about school, but....

Interview Two - The Details of the Experience: Ed

H College was a piece of crap...it has nothing to do with you. I chose H mainly because of mobility reasons. And like I said, it wasn't the school I had problems
with... how do I put this?... I was getting picked on, because people there didn't like me. Well, either they did or they didn't; there was no in between. And the ones that didn't like me, I just figured good riddance to bad rubbish cuz I didn't like them either. But a lot of people there thought I was mean and I was mean to a lot of people there because a lot of it comes from...I'm not a racist and I'm not prejudiced in any way. But I got up there and I realized how a lot of the blacks were a lot more boisterous and kinda rude and I didn't see a reason for it, so I kinda got a bad taste in my mouth as it pertains to black people. Cuz I wasn't around a whole lot of black people and that caused a lot of problems...not that I walked around flying a flag and stuff like that but I... I... I... got a bad taste in my mouth about black people and they knew that... but I'm not stupid and I'm also in a wheelchair.

Hell... of course if I wasn't in the chair I wouldn't have to run so much. But um...so this is how important music is to me. Hearing rap music 24 hours a day, 7 days a week drove me up a wall. When I was the kid with hair down to here, listening to old Van Halen records and I have a big David Lee Roth poster over my bed..."ok why am I here." I'm at the wrong place at the wrong time. I hated it...I mean, I had friends there but a lot of people didn't just plain out like me (distracted).

I got tested for ADHD and ADD and I don't have it, the last time I was tested anyway...I think it was just laziness. I had my aunt and my best friend die in a period of two weeks...Anyway, I was there two semesters...but I figured I might as well go back and I don't know why I did, because I did the same thing I did the other two.

For the most part, I didn't want to be there, which was very stupid of me not only did I waste a lot of my time and a lot of my money, but I need a college degree and when I am ready to go back, I am going to go back to school. But right now I am not ready to
go back...cuz I'm gonna go back and I'm gonna screw up again. I don't like to do homework and until I start actually doing homework, whether I want to or not, there's no point in going back.

Interview Three - Reflection on the Meaning: Ed

Right now I'm kicking myself for flunking out of an institution a monkey can graduate from...um...Midway through second semester I had straight B's except for math, without trying real hard and I didn't really go to class that often so if I ...I probably could have been an A student. I've said this to you before and you looked at me like if I wasn't a dean I'd slap you...or, you know if you were my son I'd just kill ya... so I could have been an A student if I wanted to be...math, I could have gotten an A, probably a B. and math is funny. I could get the Algebra part right; it was the arithmetic part I had a problem with. I don't know why; it makes no sense.

I regret...I wasted my time and I could have had a degree and I wouldn't have to be looking for a job and I wouldn't have to be in the job market with no jobs right now. I have tried to look several places and they're not hiring. I applied to Blockbuster and instead of actually giving me a handwritten application and calling me for an interview, once again, those damn computers.... They said sit in front of the computer screen and we'll ask you the same question 15 times in order to try and trip you up. I guess that was to test how bright you actually are. But the thing was, you could ask my brother who will attest to it cuz he was there, after a while you get sick of answering the same damn question 15 times, so you just put any answer down...and I knew that they were asking me the same question 100 million times; they just worded it differently to trip me up... like I said before...but after a while I got tired of this and I knew I probably wouldn't get
the job because it took me too long. My brother and I were there 45 minutes. He didn't apply...he applied before and even he thought...he's a computer person, and even he thought it was a stupid idea. And it was a stupid idea. It has nothing to do with me not liking computers...it was just the way they went about, it was stupid. Matter of fact I should call today to see if I got the job.

I don't just sit around...I think you think I do...I don't do that anymore...I applied for at least 10 jobs. I don't walk into a place of business when I am applying for a job in a Ted Nugent T-shirt and a leopard skin overcoat. I wear a pair of nice black jeans cuz I don't really have any dress pants, a nice pull-over shirt...I'm usually shaven and I look good enough to go to a job interview...My brother takes me to and from, but a lot of the places...I should have called before because they weren't hiring to begin with and all they're going to do is put it in a file and of course they never open the file...so right now is a bad time. Sept. 11th really screwed things up...so there's no jobs right now...my aunt's out of work right now, my father's out of work.

I...I...I had one job once, cuz my father worked there and I could have had the job, but it was only seasonal and they only stayed with the help that had seniority and I didn't have seniority and so I got let go. I didn't get fired cuz of conflict.

I get SSI (Social Security Insurance)...and I'm thinking about whether I should call VR or not. But if worse comes to worse, I'll have to wait till spring until people start hiring and then go reapply, not that I'm gonna stop looking, but places aren't even hiring right now...cuz they just let go of seasonal help.

One place did (discriminate)...they just kinda looked down on me...you'd have to be catatonic not to know what was going on...uh...catatonic or brainless, one of the two...I filled out the application but you know....
Hopefully I am trying to get affiliated with an organization called Easter Seals.
You've heard of Easter Seals? You had to have...and they do things like job placement,
assist people with job placement and they don't take forever...and most importantly they
are going to assist me with independent living, physical stuff, cooking, laundry...stuff
that I probably have to do myself cuz I don't plan on getting married for a long time, so I
have to learn to do this stuff anyway...Most likely I'll probably never get married...ah
that suits me just fine.

...I can't give you a timeline, but soon I'll be living on my own...enough is
enough is enough is enough and part of what flunking out of H College did for me is it
made me realize "you have to try and figure something out...you're gonna have to start
doing things for yourself...you're gonna have to get the ball rolling and you gotta do it
yourself...you can't just hang out and sip wine all night."

My plan is to first...get affiliated with Easter Seals; to find out whether I am
eligible for it or not, which I probably am; I'm not worried about it. So once I get
affiliated with Easter Seals, I'm gonna get the ball rolling with them and have them assist
me with you know, job placement; I think they work with you on job placement; I
think...and mostly in the independent living stuff. They do just about everything.
I need to find out what they have, but in order to do that I have to become... I have to...
I have to go through the necessary paperwork and everything else. I found out about this
because my aunt happened to come across it...she's been another one to say "you know
you've gotta start doing things." Ah and you know she's right. Like I said, flunking out of
college made me realize I gotta start doing something and I can't do nothing for the rest
of my life. It's a waste of space...so she's the one who came across it. I think she went in
and I don't know if she found out much about it and I'm going to do that myself...
Eventually I will get a vehicle of my own... (bangs finger on table), but I’m too lazy. Ok... it’s more than that with driving. I would feel more comfortable on a motorcycle than I would in a car because 1. I like motorcycles and 2. I’d rather hurt myself than someone else... not that I’m a masochist and enjoy pain, but I’d rather end up in the hospital than somebody else. What I’m saying is that I’d feel safer on a motorcycle... I want a motorcycle and a car... plus I’m a biker at heart... my dad used to take me to functions where all the bikers were. And he doesn’t like bikers. They are very family-oriented people though...

I don’t know where I’ll be in a year... I’m moving forward slowly but I will be continuing to move forward. I can’t tell you where I’ll be in a year I’m not a psychic. In a year, I’d like to be further along than I am now. I’d be working with Easter Seals for one, and probably started my independent living program and in a year from now... right now I don’t even know what the heck they offer so I can’t tell you where I’m going to be in a year. I have to get other things going first and I have to grow up a little and I should take some anger management courses. I don’t have an anger problem in terms of what people might perceive as an anger problem. I will get angry and get upset and you will not see it. For the most part, I will never act on it; if I ever act on it, that’s somebody else’s fault; they pushed me that far. But I have an anger problem in terms of "hey look" (hits hand)... I’m a guy and I’m a young guy and I wanna get laid... and if I don’t change my attitude toward the opposite sex, it’s not gonna happen. If I don’t start to look at them as something that’s in the way... it’s an obstacle... it’s not gonna happen.

I got angry at H College too. That’s because they were idiots... a lot of them would pick on me... they’d only go so far. From what I could gather, it wasn’t just because I was disabled... most of the kids liked me or not... they weren’t going to tip a
wheel chair over and it's not that I took advantage of that and egged them on. I know better than that. But a lot of the students thought I was crazy... I'm not crazy. I just have very little patience with people... certain groups of people. If I don't like you, I don't like you, stay away from me and a lot of people just didn't get that. It drove me nuts.

I would prefer to live alone because I'm a loner. Um... I have friends, I don't have a whole lot... the friends that I have get me; they know my hang ups; they know my shortcomings, and they stay with me despite those shortcomings cuz they have a lot of the same shortcoming as I do. My best friend at H College... he's basically a mirror image of me and that's why him and I get along.... The amazing thing about him was he had an understanding and diplomacy about him. He was just a pissed off Irishman who just chose not to use it.

I failed myself... this is my fault. It certainly wasn't the academic standards; it was the place. I'll tell you one thing; thank God for P C because her door was always open. I think from what she told me I am a lot like her son... her son had kind of an anger problem too, and she knew how to deal with that, and so I'd go in and talk to her when I was ready to rip someone's throat and she was good enough not to put all the blame on me, because from what she said her son was the same way. Apparently. I don't know, I don't know the guy. What I'm trying to say, she knows how to deal with people like me. Whereas a lot of people didn't. B was a good person and B did her best but B's a flake...

I liked my major, but I didn't like.... as a matter of fact the one thing that could have motivated me to stay was that we were changing the... well R M, not me, was working on changing the radio station... getting rid of all the crap, getting rid of all the hip hop and the rap, cuz it was a rock station. Period. His attitude and my attitude was go upstairs and listen in your bedroom... there's enough of it there. I have to hear it in

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hallways all the time... ignorance was ubiquitous to that place and it drove me nuts; so when I went to work down at the station for my two hours I was gonna do what I wanted to do...which was play hard rock and heavy metal and a lot of kids didn't want to hear that and I got a lot of flack from them. I also got a lot of flack for a lot of the stuff I said on my show. I said stuff that was sexist...my argument was it was supposed to be sexist. I designed the show so it could be that way cuz I think it was funny...it's not cuz I am that way; I think it's amusing. My favorite show is "All in the Family"...I like Ted Nugent. I like his politics...um cuz Ted Nugent is a rebel.... He is like a modern day Tarzan. Not that I look at myself that way; my ego isn't that big, but my political views are kind of like that. So a lot of people didn't like what I said; but they liked the show. I liked the show; the only people who didn't like the show were people that I didn't want listening to my show.

It's going to come to a point where I'll have no choice and learn computers, because I can't do a physical labor job, which really eats away at my insides...because I want to do an honest day's work. It's not just the typing, I just don't see a need for computers. What I meant by manual labor is lifting heavy stuff and sweating and by the time I get home at night pass out and then get up in the morning and do it over again. And the fact that I can't do that eats away at my insides because I am a strong guy and I could do that stuff if I had some legs.

I am sure I have insulted you several times by now, but not intentionally. I say whatever comes to mind.

(Anyway)... I feel success coming.... Because if I want to do something and I want to do it then I'm gonna do it cuz that's what I damn well please. Here's the thing...and this is really weird and I haven't completely figured this out yet. As low as

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my self-esteem can get sometimes, there is always this little part of me, this stubborn part of me, that won't let it get too low. I mean, I could if I wanted to but I kinda have this spark, deep, deep, deep in the recesses of my mind, that won't let me do anything detrimental to my own life. Because high school was really hard, cuz I thought about suicide many, many times... I was that miserable; I felt like I was a fly in the spider web of a black widow... you know, going through adolescence and being disabled that's not an easy thing... do the math. It's different now, because things just get old... you get sick of being sick. It's good that things got old cuz if things didn't get old I (quiet) might not be sitting here right now.
UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

Office of Sponsored Research
Service Building
51 College Road
Durham, New Hampshire
03824-3585
(603) 862-3564 FAX

LAST NAME Jameson
FIRST NAME Deborah
APPL DATE 8/2/2001

DEPT Education Department, Morrill Hall
OFF-CAMPUS ADDRESS 21 Meadowbrook Road, Derry, NH 03038
IRB # 2583

ADDRESS (if applicable)
REVIEW LEVEL EXP
DATE OF NOTICE 2/4/2002

PROJECT Self-Determination and Success Outcomes of Two-Year College Students with Disabilities: An Integration of
TITLE Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research reviewed and approved the protocol for your
project as Expedited as described in Federal Regulations 45 CFR 46, Subsection 46.110 (b) (1) category 7.

Approval is granted for one year from the approval date above. At the end of the approval period you will be asked to submit a
project report with regard to the involvement of human subjects. If your project is still active, you may apply for extension of IRB
approval through this office.

The protection of human subjects in your study is an ongoing process for which you hold primary responsibility. In receiving IRB
approval for your protocol, you agree to conduct the project in accordance with the ethical principles and guidelines for the protection of
human subjects in research, as described in the following three reports: Belmont Report; Title 45, Code of Federal Regulations,
Part 46; and UNH's Multiple Project Assurance of Compliance. The full text of these documents is available on the Office of
Sponsored Research (OSR) website at http://www.unh.edu/osr/compliance/Regulatory_Compliance.html and by request from OSR.

Changes in your protocol must be submitted to the IRB for review and approval prior to their implementation; you must
receive written, unconditional approval from the IRB before implementing them. If you experience any unusual or
unanticipated results with regard to the participation of human subjects, report such events to this office within one working
day of occurrence. If you have questions or concerns about your project or this approval, please feel free to contact this office at
862-2003. Please refer to the IRB # above in all correspondence related to this project. The IRB wishes you success with your
research.

For the IRB,

Julie F. Simpson
Regulatory Compliance Manager

cc: File
Barbara H. Krysiak, Education

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