

Whetstone, M. (2002). *Alabama Post School Outcomes and Best Practices in Transition*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Auburn University.

DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationships between best practices and student outcomes in transition. The study examined the relationship between the perceptions of secondary special education teachers in regard to transition best practices and their former student's success. Also, it investigated the relationship between the post-school outcomes (employment and quality of life) as reported by students through the Alabama Student Tracking system, and best practices as reported by students through the Alabama Student Tracking System, and best practices as reported by the teachers of those former students in the Alabama Statewide Transition Study.

The sample for this study was comprised of 41 (or 32%) of Alabama's public school systems that participated in both the statewide study and the post-school survey study. A total of 197 secondary special education teachers participated in the statewide study, whereas 1,162 of their former students from these 41 school systems participated in the post-school survey study.

Data from these two studies were used to define the independent and dependent variables examined in the four null hypotheses. The three sets of variables examined in terms of their interrelationship were school demographics, best practices, and student outcomes (perceived student success, employment and quality of life). A series of linear regression analyses and a restrictive regression analysis were performed.

Significant relationships were found between the variable of perceived success of former students receiving special education services and the independent variables of (a) quality of life (satisfaction) as reported by former students, and (b) perceived performance of five best practices as reported by secondary special education teachers. Significant relationships were also found between the former students' quality of life (satisfaction) and four of the five best practices in transition. The employment outcome rate of 72% was not found to have a significant relationship between school system demographics, the perceived importance of best practices, or the performance of best

practices.

A major explanation for the fact that there was not more significance among the variables is the study's positive sample bias created from the exemplariness of the transition programs in the 41 school systems. While few statistically significant results were found, significance in terms of practicality may be implied in that (a) the training model employed with the school systems appeared to be effective in unifying the knowledge base of the participants, and (b) the demonstration sites uniformly produced positive outcomes for their former students.