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## Editorial

In this issue of the *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, Dr. Pamela Wolfe and Dr. James McAfee have co-edited an outstanding issue on transition issues from school to adulthood. Throughout the world, different countries are grappling with the best way to help youth with special needs make the adjustment from school into adulthood. While this has often been seen as concentrating primarily on work experience and competitive employment, Wolfe and McAfee have assembled a series of papers that give a much broader and comprehensive understanding of the transition problems that are faced. Sex education, leisure education, transition training needs, and collaborative interagency work are but some of the issues that must be resolved as young adults leave the schools and enter their community.

Transition has been a major priority in the United States for well over a decade, and as the demographics shift to include an increasing number of teenagers in school systems this will continue to occur. Unfortunately, over the years much of the transition efforts that have occurred in different states in the US as well as different countries has focused more on process activity; for example, many efforts have been made at interagency planning agreements, seminars for discussing how to maximize roles, and other planning activities which, while well intentioned, do not lead to the critical post-21 outcomes that many of these young people need.

What then are these adult outcomes that transition specialists should be concentrating on? One way to measure how well a transition program is really working is to look at the number of students who are graduating that have employment when they leave school. Another way of evaluating how well the secondary special education program is functioning is to determine how many

students exit into business schools, community colleges, or 4-year universities to undertake post-secondary study.

A third way to determine the success of the transition program is to access the number of students who are able to live independently away from their family. There are other indicators as well. For example, looking at the crime rate, substance abuse likelihood, or involvement in community recreation or civic activities are all other key areas. These measures can help suggest the level of adjustment and normalcy in adulthood. Through these indicators we can tell which transition and secondary special education programs are effective in helping students.

There needs to be substantially more emphasis on evaluating how well students do after they leave school by measuring outcomes such as those listed above. We really cannot determine how effective a transition program is by only looking at that school program at a given point in time. The true proof of whether the program is effective will be directly related to whether these outcomes are achievable and are maintained over time. The Wolfe and McAfee issue provides a good start in the right direction and will be an invaluable resource for those involved in transition training.

A final word is in order. Due to space consideration, several other excellent papers that were in this original issue have been moved to the next issue of the *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*. Therefore, readers can look forward to additional excellent papers on transition in the immediate next issue.

Paul Wehman