

A.T. Still University

**Still ScholarWorks**

---

OT Student Capstones

Occupational Therapy Department

---

2020

## **Occupational Therapy's Role in Self-Determination and Transition to Adulthood for High School Students in Special Education Programming**

Kylee A. Read  
*A.T. Still University*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.atsu.edu/ot-capstones>



Part of the [Occupational Therapy Commons](#)

---

### **Recommended Citation**

Read, Kylee A., "Occupational Therapy's Role in Self-Determination and Transition to Adulthood for High School Students in Special Education Programming" (2020). *OT Student Capstones*. 66.  
<https://scholarworks.atsu.edu/ot-capstones/66>

This Capstone is brought to you for free and open access by the Occupational Therapy Department at Still ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in OT Student Capstones by an authorized administrator of Still ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact [mohammadaslam@atsu.edu](mailto:mohammadaslam@atsu.edu).

# Occupational Therapy's Role in Self-Determination and Transition to Adulthood for High School Students in Special Education Programming

Kylee Read, OTS

A.T. Still University, Mesa, AZ

## Introduction

- Occupational therapists (OTs) are not currently fully participating in providing transition-related services to students with disabilities.<sup>1</sup>
- OTs are outlined as related-service providers able to provide interventions to help students access the school curriculum and transition-related activities.<sup>2</sup>
- OTs are uniquely situated to fill gaps in transition services and provide quality interventions for greater success in post-secondary transition areas.<sup>3 4 5</sup>
- Self-determination is the best predictor of successful transition to adulthood for students with disabilities.<sup>6</sup>
- Self-determination is defined as volitional behavior<sup>6</sup> or "the ability to act as a causal agent in one's life."<sup>7</sup>
- Self-determination is linked to greater post-secondary outcomes 2 years post graduation in all areas of transition<sup>7</sup> and increased quality of life<sup>8</sup>
- Little evidence exists for successful interventions for students with learning disabilities (LD) or emotional behavioral disorders (EBD).
- The *Whose Future Is It Anyway?* program is one evidence-based program to teach self-determination skills.<sup>9</sup>

## Capstone Background and Methods

- 14-Week Doctoral Capstone Project at Compadre Academy, Tempe, AZ.
- Program implementation and evaluation of the 36-session *\*Whose Future Is It Anyway?\**<sup>9</sup> program for 6 students (N=6) with LD and EBD.
- Assessed pre- and post-intervention self-determination skills using 72-question *\*Arc's Self-Determination Scale\** (Arc's SDS).<sup>10</sup>
- Completed 20-question *\*Self-Determination Analog Scale\** post-intervention to compare student perceptions about knowledge and use of various self-determined skills.

*This project was approved by the A.T. Still University Arizona IRB.*

## Results

### Study Group Scores on Arc's SDS Pre-Test vs. Post-Test

	Autonomy	Self-Regulation	Psychological Empowerment	Self-Realization	Self-Determination Total
Pretest	48.83	11.33	14.50	11.33	86.00
Post-Test	60.83	14.67	13.67	11.33	100.50
p-Value	p=.36	p=.13	p=.55	p=1.0	p=.35

### Change in Knowledge of and Participation in Self-Determination Activities

	M Before Program	M After Program	p-Value
<b>Knowledge of:</b>			
Self-Determination	5.43	8.71	.006*
IEPs	6.71	9.14	.02*
Transition Plan	5.86	8.00	.09
Making Decisions	8.86	9.57	.22
Setting Goals	7.71	9.43	.04*
<b>Use of Self-Determination:</b>			
At School	6.00	8.43	.05*
At Home	6.43	8.14	.17
In Communication	6.71	9.00	.04*
For Realistic Goal Setting	7.43	9.00	.11
Leading IEP Meetings	5.00	8.57	.002*

p<.05=statistically significant

### Study Limitations

- Sample Size
- Diversity
- Attendance
- Cell Phones and Headphones
- Time

### Opportunities for Future Research

- Larger Scale Study
- Add Parent/Teacher Measures
- Follow Student Outcomes Post-Graduation

\*Program Table of Contents, Assessment Sample Questions, Analog Scale, and References available as a handout.

## Discussion

- At baseline, students without disabilities scored higher in self-determination skills than students with disabilities.
- After program implementation, students with disabilities scored much more similarly to their peers.
- Students with disabilities reported a statistically significant increase in knowledge of self-determination, IEPs, and goal setting and use of skills at school, during communication, and in leading IEP meetings.
- Students were observed to develop a more positive disability lens, take on a more active role in IEP meetings, advocate for IEP/transition plan changes, set more realistic goals, and initiate asking for help in the classroom.

## Conclusion

- The *Whose Future Is It Anyway?* program is one, quality self-determination intervention for OTs to implement with students with LD or EBD.
- Self-determination training increased students' self-determination soft skills while in high school.
- Additional materials are needed to supplement realistic goal-setting.

## Implications for OT Practice

- OTs can and should be a part of transition teams.
- OTs should evaluate transition-aged students that were previously discharged from services or never received OT for barriers to successful transition.
- OTs can provide individual or small group self-determination instruction to students with LD and EBD.
- OTs can continue to promote/ solidify their role on transition teams.
- OTs should advocate for additional funding and personnel to fulfill additional roles in transition.

# Whose Future Is It Anyway? Program Table of Contents

## Section 1: Getting to know you

- Session 1: The planning meeting
- Session 2: Choosing people to attend
- Session 3: Your preferences & interests
- Session 4: Disabilities
- Session 5: Your unique learning needs
- Session 6: Supports

## Section 2: Making Decisions .....

- Session 7: Introduction to **DO IT!**
- Role play script A & Applying **DO IT!**
- Role play script B & Applying **DO IT!**
- Session 8: Steps 1 & 2 of **DO IT!**
- Session 9: Steps 3 & 4 of **DO IT!**
- Session 10: Using **DO IT!**
- Session 11: Real life stories to use **DO IT!**
- Session 12: Giving informed consent

## Section 3: How to Get What You Need, Sec. 101.....

- Session 13: Community resources in your plan
- Session 14: Community resources for work
- Session 15: Community resources for more school
- Session 16: Community resources for living
- Session 17: Community resources for fun
- Session 18: Community resources you want

## Section 4: Goals, Objectives, and the Future.....

- Session 19: Identifying goals in your plan
- Session 20: Identifying goals for work
- Session 21: Identifying goals for more school
- Session 22: Identifying goals for living
- Session 23: Identifying goals for fun
- Session 24: Keeping track of your goals

## Section 5: Communicating (or: I thought you said she said he said?) .....

- Session 25: Communicating in small groups
- Session 26: Body language and assertiveness
- Session 27: Advocating and appealing
- Session 28: Timing and persuasion
- Session 29: Keeping your ideas out there
- Session 30: Listening and the team

## Section 6: Thank You, Honorable Chairperson.....

- Session 31: Different kinds of meetings
- Session 32: Step to planning a meeting
- Session 33: Being a good team member
- Session 34: Managing the meeting
- Session 35: Sessions 1-18 review
- Session 36: Sessions 19-34 review

# Arc's Self-Determination Scale Sample Questions

## Autonomy

1C. Acting on the basis of preferences, beliefs, interests and abilities: Recreational and leisure time					1C. Subtotal
11. I do free time activities based on my interests.	<input type="checkbox"/> I do not even if I have the chance	<input type="checkbox"/> I do sometimes when I have the chance	<input type="checkbox"/> I do most of the time I have the chance	<input type="checkbox"/> I do every time I have the chance	
12. I plan weekend activities that I like to do.	<input type="checkbox"/> I do not even if I have the chance	<input type="checkbox"/> I do sometimes when I have the chance	<input type="checkbox"/> I do most of the time I have the chance	<input type="checkbox"/> I do every time I have the chance	
13. I am involved in school-related activities.	<input type="checkbox"/> I do not even if I have the chance	<input type="checkbox"/> I do sometimes when I have the chance	<input type="checkbox"/> I do most of the time I have the chance	<input type="checkbox"/> I do every time I have the chance	
14. My friends and I choose activities that we want to do.	<input type="checkbox"/> I do not even if I have the chance	<input type="checkbox"/> I do sometimes when I have the chance	<input type="checkbox"/> I do most of the time I have the chance	<input type="checkbox"/> I do every time I have the chance	
15. I write letters, notes or talk on the phone to friends and family.	<input type="checkbox"/> I do not even if I have the chance	<input type="checkbox"/> I do sometimes when I have the chance	<input type="checkbox"/> I do most of the time I have the chance	<input type="checkbox"/> I do every time I have the chance	
16. I listen to music that I like.	<input type="checkbox"/> I do not even if I have the chance	<input type="checkbox"/> I do sometimes when I have the chance	<input type="checkbox"/> I do most of the time I have the chance	<input type="checkbox"/> I do every time I have the chance	

## Self-Regulation

33. **Beginning:** You are sitting in a planning meeting with your parents and teachers. You want to take a class where you can learn to work as a cashier in a store. Your parents want you to take the Family and Child Care class. You can only take one of the classes.

**Middle:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Ending:** The story ends with you taking a vocational class where you will learn to be a cashier.

Story Score \_\_\_\_\_

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:

1) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_

4) \_\_\_\_\_

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:

1) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_

4) \_\_\_\_\_

# Arc's SDS Sample Questions (Continued)

## Psychological Empowerment

61. I can like people even if I don't agree with them.

Agree

Don't agree

62. I am afraid of doing things wrong.

Agree

Don't agree

63. It is better to be yourself than to be popular.

Agree

Don't agree

42.  I usually do what my friends want... or

I tell my friends if they are doing something I don't want to do.

43.  I tell others when I have new or different ideas or opinions... or

I usually agree with other peoples' opinions or ideas.

44.  I usually agree with people when they tell me I can't do something... or

I tell people when I think I can do something that they tell me I can't.

## Self-Realization

# Self-Determination Analog Scale

Participant Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Rate the following on a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 is no knowledge at all and 10 is that you know everything about it.

- Prior to this class, I would rate my knowledge of self-determination:**  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10  
Don't know about/understand it Know all about it
- After this class, I would rate my knowledge of self-determination:**  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10  
Don't know about/understand it Know all about it
- Prior to this class, I would rate my knowledge of IEPs:**  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10  
Don't know about/understand it Know all about it
- After this class, I would rate my knowledge of IEPs:**  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10  
Don't know about/understand it Know all about it
- Prior to this class, I would rate my knowledge of my own transition plan:**  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10  
Don't know about/understand it Know all about it
- After this class, I would rate my knowledge of my own transition plan:**  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10  
Don't know about/understand it Know all about it
- Prior to this class, I would rate my knowledge of making decisions:**  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10  
Don't know about/understand it Know all about it
- After this class, I would rate my knowledge of making decisions:**  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10  
Don't know about/understand it Know all about it
- Prior to this class, I would rate my knowledge of settings goals for myself:**  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10  
Don't know about/understand it Know all about it
- After this class I would rate my knowledge of setting goals for myself:**  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10  
Don't know about/understand it Know all about it

Participant Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Rate the following on a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 is do not agree at all and 10 is that you completely agree.

- Prior to this class, I used self-determination skills at school.**  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10  
Do not agree Completely Agree
- After this class, I use self-determination skills at school.**  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10  
Do not agree Completely Agree
- Prior to this class, I used self-determination skills at home.**  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10  
Do not agree Completely Agree
- After this class, I use self-determination skills at home.**  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10  
Do not agree Completely Agree
- Prior to this class, I used good communication skills in meetings.**  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10  
Do not agree Completely Agree
- After this class, I use good communication skills in meetings.**  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10  
Do not agree Completely Agree
- Prior to this class, I had realistic goals for myself.**  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10  
Do not agree Completely Agree
- After this class, I have realistic goals for myself.**  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10  
Do not agree Completely Agree
- Prior to this class, I led my IEP meetings.**  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10  
Do not agree Completely Agree
- After this class, I will lead my IEP meetings.**  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10  
Do not agree Completely Agree

# References

- <sup>1</sup> Abbott, B.L., & Provident, I. (2016). Changing occupational therapists' knowledge of their role in secondary transition planning. *Journal of Occupational Therapy, Schools, and Early Intervention, 9*(4), 382-396. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19411243.2016.1227760>
- <sup>2</sup> Cleary, D., Persch, A., & Spencer, K. (2015). Transition to adulthood. In Case-Smith, J., & Obien, J.C. (Eds). *Occupational therapy for children and adolescents*. (7<sup>th</sup>ed., pp. 727-746). Canada: Mosby.
- <sup>3</sup> Michaels, C.A., & Orentlicher, M.L. (2004). The role of occupational therapy in providing person-centered transition services: Implications for school-based practice. *Occupational Therapy International, 11*(4), 209-228.
- <sup>4</sup> Arikawa, M., Goto, H., & Mineno, K. (2013). Job support by occupational therapists for people with developmental disabilities: Two case studies. *Work, 45*, 245-251. <https://doi.org/10.3233/WOR-131590>
- <sup>5</sup> Shea, C., & Giles, G.M. (2016). Goals and expectations of continuation high school students transitioning to postsecondary education. *The Open Journal of Occupational Therapy, 4*(5), 1-13. <https://doi.org/10.15453/2168-6408.1237>
- <sup>6</sup> Stewart, D. (2013). Transition to adulthood for youth with disabilities: Evidence to support occupational therapy practice. In Stewart, D. (Ed). *Transitions to adulthood*. (pp. 1-26). Thorofare, NJ: SLACK Incorporated.
- <sup>7</sup> Shogren, K.A., Wehmeyer, M.L., Palmer, S.B., Rifenbark, G.G., & Little, T.D. (2015). Relationships between self-determination and postschool outcomes for youth with disabilities. *The Journal of Special Education, 48*(4), 256-267. <http://doi.org/10.1177/0022466913489733>
- <sup>8</sup> McDougall, J., Evans, J., & Baldwin, P. (2010). The importance of self-determination to perceived quality of life for youth and young adults with chronic conditions and disabilities. *Remedial and Special Education, 31*(4), 252-260. <http://doi.org/10.1177/0741932509355989>
- <sup>9</sup> Wehmeyer, M., Lawrence, M., Garner, N., Soukup, J., & Palmer, S. (2004). Whose Future Is It Anyway? 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. A student-directed transition planning process – Coach's guide. *University of Kansas*. Retrieved from <http://www.ou.edu/content/dam/Education/documents/wfc-guide-final.pdf>
- <sup>10</sup> Wehmeyer, M.L. (1995). Arc's the Self-Determination Scale: Procedural guidelines. Retrieved from <http://www.ou.edu/content/dam/Education/documents/miscellaneous/sd-scale-procedural-guidelines.pdf>