state accountability systems, information regarding the use of accommodations is needed to help inform this policy. Systematic reviews of the use of accommodations can benefit policymakers by highlighting potential sources of concern over their use. The numbers reported here do not suggest that accommodations were being used to offset poor reading and writing skills as was suggested by Koretz (1997) in the review of Kentucky data. In the case of Kentucky, the state had implemented financial incentives tied to high performing districts at the time of the review, which may have influenced the more widespread use of accommodations. The results of the Kentucky study suggest that one way for districts to "improve" their scores may be to increase the number of students who receive accommodations. Continued monitoring to evaluate the appropriate use of accommodations is therefore essential as states increase the stakes in their assessment and accountability systems.

This review also highlights the importance of a clear reporting system as states go about implementing accommodations. Without the ability to disaggregate data by disability category, it is difficult to determine on what basis teachers made decisions to provide accommodations. Current reporting procedures in Washington, for example, do not capture the variations in practice and interpretation that most likely exist from district to district, and for schools within a district. For example, teachers often confessed, at information sessions held across the state, that they had been reading the math items to *all* students in their classroom because they felt that students would perform better in spite of the criteria for decision making in the guidelines. These differences in what is officially reported and what is confessed off the record highlight the need for state-based systems to be backed up by continued professional training in the implementation of accommodations guidelines. Professional development will clearly need to be directed to multiple audiences including district- and school-based administrators, teachers (general and special education), aides, and parents, who each are important players in the decision to provide accommodations.

Providing accommodations on large-scale assessments is *one* way to include students who have been previously excluded from accountability efforts. Including students in these efforts can help ensure that the education system becomes responsible for educating all students; that the expectations for students with disabilities are raised; and that policy decisions are made based on the performance of the entire school population (Center for Policy Research, 1996). The inclusion of students with disabilities can also inform the standards-based reform movement by addressing not only the educational opportunity provided, but also the educational relevance of narrowly defined academic standards for *all* students. The performance of students in special education with or without accommodations raises concern about the appropriateness of using the same content standards for all students. With individual stakes tied to performance on state assessment systems, districts may be faced with large numbers of students who cannot complete high school. In order to avoid this difficult situation, districts should develop multiple methods of inclusion and find programs that allow all students to progress. The effect of providing accommodations on large-scale assessments is not adequately researched even though it is becoming common practice. The purpose of this review of the statewide use of accommodations was to expand understanding of these important issues and to identify areas where experimental research is needed. The findings suggest that generally, accommodations are most likely being provided in a manner consistent with the state guidelines. However, the limitations noted with this type of evaluation and the inconsistencies between what people say and what they do highlight the need for carefully delivered professional development.

Accommodations on high-stakes assessment systems present practical, psychometric, and legal challenges that need continued research. This study highlights the practical challenges many states face in communicating the policy to educators across the state. Even with the information in hand, many teachers and administrators have questions about how to translate guidelines into classroom practice. As the stakes increase in many states, adequate training opportunities and improved reporting procedures must be readily available to ensure that all

students have a fair opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge on the assessments.

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

EVELYN JOHNSON, Consultant, Special Education; **KATHY KIMBALL,** Director; and **SHAWN OLSON BROWN,** Teaching Assistant, Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, University of Washington, Seattle. **DAVID ANDERSON,** Assessment Specialist, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, Olympia, Washington.

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Multicultural Aspects of Parent Involvement in Transition Planning

SARAH GEENEN

LAURIE E. POWERS

ALFONSO LOPEZ-VASQUEZ

Oregon Health Sciences University

ABSTRACT: *This study surveyed 308 African-American, Hispanic-American, Native-American and European-American parents to assess their level of participation in various transition planning activities and how important each activity was to them. In addition, 52 school professionals completed a parallel survey of their perceptions toward parent participation. Analyses indicate that culturally and linguistically diverse parents are active in the transition process and, in some instances, their level of reported participation surpassed that of European-American parents. In contrast, professionals described culturally and linguistically diverse parents as less involved than European-American parents in the majority of transition activities. The results are discussed in terms of how the participation of culturally and linguistically diverse parents can be better supported and the importance of transition planning extending beyond school to include other life domains.*

The United States continues to grow increasingly diverse and by the year 2050, the U.S. Bureau of the Census projects that culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) groups will represent a numerical majority (Sue, Bingham, Porché-Burke, & Vasquez, 1999). National statistics further reveal that an unequal number of students from ethnically, linguistically, and culturally diverse backgrounds receive special education services (Argulewicz, 1983; Barona & Faykus, 1992; Harry, 1992a; Shinn, Tindal & Spira, 1987). For example, Harry and Anderson (1994) found that while African-American students constituted 16% of the nation's school population in 1991, they made up 35% of the special education population. Similarly, Ortiz and Yates (1983) estimated that children with Spanish surnames were overrepresented by 300% in classes for students with learning disabilities. While barriers such as poverty, environmental factors, and associated poor health status may place culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) persons at higher risk for disability, the cultural differences between students of color and educators who are primarily European-American increase the risk of inappropriate diagnoses and classifications (Bynoe,

1998; Grant & Secada, 1990). While the referral and assignment of youth to special education services is not supposed to reflect sociocultural factors, the meaning of a student's behavior may be culturally embedded, and can be misinterpreted when the standards and expectations of the professional differ from that of the student (Harry & Kalyanpur, 1994).

While culturally diverse families may encounter discrimination or insensitivity by the educational system at any grade, it may become particularly important during the transition period. How one defines "successful adulthood," the end goal of transition planning, is determined by culture-specific values and expectations about many important issues, such as work, community integration, role expectations, and social functioning. For example, the achievement of independence is often viewed as a fundamental transition goal for youth with disabilities. However, this transition goal, as it is often implemented, may be antithetical to a youth's cultural background, unless it occurs within a context of interdependent family relationships (Harkness, Super, & Keefer, 1992). To date, information regarding the cultural aspects of transition planning is scarce. As Meier-Kronick (1993) points out, the field of transition has evolved to focus on issues considered most seminal to postsecondary outcomes (e.g., School-to-Work programs, career development, life skills instruction, transition assessment and planning, student participation) and issues related to cultural diversity have typically not been emphasized.

The lack of focused attention on the cultural aspects of transition is troubling as CLD youth with disabilities often experience poor transition outcomes, even more so than their non-CLD peers with disabilities. The National Longitudinal Study (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996) revealed that African-American and Hispanic-American youth with disabilities have greater difficulty than European-American youth with disabilities finding employment and, when they did work, earned significantly less than European-American workers. Similarly, Yelin and Trupin (1997), using data from the Current Population Survey (CPS), found that unemployed European-American adults with disabilities were 40% more likely to find employment than adults with disabilities from ethnically diverse backgrounds. Minority persons also do not appear to have equal access to vocational rehabilitation (VR) services. Studies have shown that European-American individuals are more likely to use VR services, experience greater placement rates, and receive higher wages than CLD individuals (Atkins & Wright, 1980; National Council on Disability, 1993).

ROLE OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Research indicates that parental involvement is an important factor in promoting the successful transition of youth with disabilities into adulthood. Schalock et al., (1986), in studying youth with learning or developmental disabilities, found that students whose parents were actively involved in transition programming were more successful on employment outcome measures than students whose parents had little involvement. Youth who had high family involvement worked more hours and received higher wages than students who had low family involvement. Schalock and Lilley (1986) further documented the association between parental participation and successful living among people with disabilities, while Hasazi, Gordon, & Roe (1985) revealed that most students find employment through parental or community-based networks.

Parental participation may be particularly important for CLD youth, as a strong partnership between parents and the school can promote cultural understanding and responsiveness in transition planning. Ethnically diverse groups often emphasize different norm-related behaviors and define adult roles differently, and parents can be a valuable resource in helping educators understand, identify, and support transition outcomes that are valued within a family's culture. Research confirms that when educators engage in a firm partnership with parents, schools can more effectively meet the needs of their CLD students. For example, Harry's study (1992b) of 12 low-income Puerto Rican parents revealed that while they had a limited understanding of the educational system, the parents had important information and insight

into the difficulties of their children. Additionally, when professionals were receptive to parental feedback, the views of parents had an important impact upon educational decisions made by the school. At the high school level, research has demonstrated that parent involvement has an impact on the academic performance of CLD students, particularly for Native-American students (Keith et al., 1998). As eloquently stated by Cummins, "When educators involve CLD parents as partners in their children's education, parents appear to develop a sense of efficacy that communicates itself to children, with positive academic consequences." (1986, p. 26).

While the importance of parent participation is clearly recognized, actual parent involvement in school-based transition planning typically declines during the transition period. For example, Lynch and Stein (1982) reported significantly less participation in individualized education program (IEP) conferences by parents of older students that by parents of younger children. McNair and Rusch (1991) found that only slightly more than 30% of parents surveyed had involvement in transition programs, although nearly 70% reported they desired involvement. Teachers also seem both cognizant of and unhappy with the low parental involvement in transition planning. Benz and Halpern (1987) conducted a survey of parents, teachers, and administrators in Oregon and found that only 13% of the educators were very satisfied with the parental support they were receiving. When parents were surveyed, over half indicated contact with their child's teacher once per term or less.

Parent involvement in school-based transition planning may be particularly low among CLD parents as they experience more barriers to participation than European-American parents (Lynch and Stein, 1982, 1987). However, while studies have revealed that CLD parents are typically less involved in the educational planning process than non-CLD parents, their participation in transition planning has not been specifically investigated. This study explored how parents across different cultural groups, particularly those traditionally defined in the literature as racial/ethnic minorities, practice and define "participation" in transition planning and evaluated the extent to which this definition differs from that of educators. Specifically, this investigation addressed four research questions:

- What activities are parents currently *involved* in during their children's transition planning, and how does this *vary by cultural group*?
- What type of participation is most *important* to parents, and how does this *vary by cultural group*?
- How do *parents and educators* differ in the level of *importance* they assign to parent participation across different transition planning activities?
- How do *parents and educators* differ in the level of parental *involvement* they report for different transition planning activities?

METHOD

Instrumentation

A survey instrument was developed to examine the perceived level and importance of parent involvement in specific transition activities. The items were derived from a review of the literature on transition planning and parent involvement and from a related qualitative study of the transition experiences of culturally diverse youth with disabilities and their families (Geenen, Powers, Lopez-Vasquez, & Bersani, 1999). The qualitative study consisted of focus groups or interviews conducted with youth and family members from Native-American, African-American, and Hispanic-American communities; and interviews with professionals who had involvement in transition planning. Based upon this information, an initial version of the questionnaire was developed. The language, scaling, and content of the questionnaire was reviewed by two parents and two professionals who had participated in the interviews, and a consultant with expertise in survey development. Their feedback was used to revise the questionnaire, and a final draft of the survey was field-tested with six new parents and six professionals representative of the population to be surveyed.

The final version of the parent survey listed different transition activities parents may

engage in to prepare their children for life after high school. These items included (1) Talking with your child about his or her life after high school; (2) Helping your child find paid or volunteer work or volunteer positions in the community after high school; (3) Helping your child prepare for education after high school (college, training program, etc.); (4) Finding out about adult services your child can receive after high school; (5) Teaching your child to care for his or her health condition or disability; (6) Helping your child find recreation, leisure and social opportunities; (7) Participating in school meetings to talk about plans for your child after high school; (8) Teaching your child about your family's cultural values and beliefs; (9) Teaching your child how to use transportation on his or her own, such as driving or taking the bus; and (10) Finding out whether your child can receive Social Security Income (SSI). Each item was formatted into a closed-ended question with a Likert scale of 1 to 5 (1 representing "not at all," 5 representing "a lot"). Parents were asked to rate (a) how much they had done each activity, and (b) how important each activity was to them at that time. The survey also asked for information about the respondents' sociodemographic characteristics and included a set of questions for a related study, focusing on barriers to transition for CLD youth with disabilities. The parent survey was translated verbatim into Spanish.

A separate survey was administered to school professionals. The wording of the questions was slightly different, as professionals were asked to rate their *perceptions* of the level of parental involvement in various activities. Similar to the parent survey, professionals were also asked to rate the importance of parental participation in various activities. The survey was formatted such that professionals completed their ratings for CLD and European-American parents separately. In half the surveys administered, professionals were asked to circle their responses for European-American parents first and CLD parents second, while in the other half of the surveys this order was reversed. The professionals' survey also contained a section to gather sociodemographic information on the respondents and the student populations they served.

Subjects

Survey participants were recruited from a large urban school district in the western United States which serves approximately 57,000 students, 29% of whom are ethnically and culturally diverse, and 9% of whom receive services through special education. The survey was mailed to 474 African-American, 106 Hispanic-American, and 88 Native-American parents whose children fell between the ages of 13 and 21 and were classified by the school district as having physical, developmental, or health-related disabilities. The survey was also sent to a sample of 250 randomly selected European-American parents who were part of the same school district and had children with similar disabilities. The professionals' survey was administered to 130 school staff identified by the district as serving the students and families targeted for survey administration and having involvement in transition planning. This included staff at the middle school level, who according to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) must start transition planning at age 14.

To enhance the response rate, surveys were formatted as a booklet with a bright cover and were accompanied by a cover letter emphasizing the usefulness of the study and the importance of the individual's response. For participants with a Hispanic surname, both Spanish and English versions of the survey were mailed. For the professionals' survey, a personalized cover letter was sent by the director of special education. All participants were provided with a self-addressed stamped envelope to return their survey and offered a $15 stipend for completing it. Respondents who desired payment were asked to fill out a postcard with their name and address; however, it was clearly stated that the postcard would be immediately separated from the survey to maintain subjects' anonymity.

Returned surveys were screened for incorrect completion (e.g., circling multiple responses for one item), and noncompletion or inappropriate population (e.g., parent did not have child with disability, professional was not involved in transition planning, etc.). As a result, surveys from 12 parents and 6 professionals were not included in the data analyses. Correctly completed

surveys were returned by 156 African-American, 34 Hispanic-American, 31 Native-American, and 87 European-American parents, relatives or guardians, for an overall response rate of 34% which was relatively even across the different ethnic groups. A majority of the surveys (302) were completed in English, and 6 were completed in Spanish. Subjects completing the survey were primarily mothers (78%), 46% of whom graduated from high school, and 57% of whom were employed full time. Twenty-seven percent of the respondents classified their child's disability as mild, 33% as moderate, 29% as severe, and 11% indicated that their child's disability was very severe. Sixty-six percent of the children were male and their age range spanned from 13 to 22 years with the mode being 15 years of age. Eighty-two percent of the parents reported that they were aware their children were receiving special education services. While detailed information about the family's financial status was not asked in order to enhance response rate, 61% of the respondents reported they had a child in the family who received free or reduced lunch.

Fifty-two professionals correctly completed and returned the survey, for an overall response rate of 40%. Respondents were primarily special education teachers (90%), although 3 transition specialists and 2 school counselors also completed surveys. Most participants were European-American (94%); 3 professionals indicated they were CLD (1 Hispanic, 1 Native American, and 1 Pacific Islander). Fifty-two percent of the respondents worked with middle school students, and 43% worked with high school students. Most professional participants (62%) indicated that the majority of the students with whom they worked fell within the lower socioeconomic range. When asked to describe the ethnic backgrounds of the students they worked with, 20 professionals reported that half or more of their students were minorities, 14 professionals indicated that between 25% and 49% of their students were minorities, and 18 professionals responded that less than 25% of their students were minorities.

RESULTS

Differences Among Parent Ethnic Groups

To investigate whether parent groups varied by ethnicity in how parent participation is practiced and defined, two sets of analysis of variance (ANOVAs) were utilized. The first set of ANOVAs assessed whether parents differed by ethnicity in the *level of importance* they assigned to various activities, while the second set of ANOVAs evaluated whether parents differed by ethnic group in the *level of involvement* they reported for various activities. In each set of ANOVAs, the independent variable was the ethnicity of parents (African American, European American, Hispanic American, and Native American), while the dependent variable was level of importance or level of involvement (depending upon which set of ANOVAs was being calculated) for a particular activity. Ten ANOVAs were calculated in each set, one for each transition activity. Post hoc analyses were conducted using *t*-tests, with *p*-values adjusted to control for multiple comparisons using the Bonferroni method. Inspection of the frequencies of responses (e.g., the number of people in each group selecting a particular rating on the Likert scale) suggested that group differences were not due to irregularities in the distribution of responses. The results also indicated that group differences were not accounted for by gender or age of child, severity of disability, or economic status (as measured by whether a family had a child who received free lunch at school). In one instance (Activity 9: Level of involvement in teaching children to use transportation independently), type of disability was a confounding variable when differences between ethnic groups were identified.

Level of Importance Reported by Parents. The results are summarized in Table 1. Significant differences were obtained for Activity 1, $F(3,304) = 3.00$, $p \leq .05$; Activity 8, $F(3,304) = 9.71$, $p \leq .001$; and Activity 9, $F(3, 304) = 3.90$, $p \leq .01$. Follow-up analyses ($p \leq .05$) indicated that African-American parents placed significantly more importance on talking to their children about life after high school and teach-

ing their children to use transportation than did European-American parents. Additionally, African-American, Hispanic-American, and Native-American parents assigned significantly more importance to teaching their children about the family's cultural values and beliefs as compared to the ratings of European-American parents.

Level of Involvement Reported by Parents. Significant main effects were obtained for Activity 1, $F(3,304) = 4.12$, $p \leq .01$; Activity 7, $F(3,304) = 5.93$, $p \leq .001$; and Activity 9, $F(3,304) = 4.57$, $p \leq .01$. Post hoc tests revealed ($p \leq .05$) that European-American parents reported significantly more involvement in school meetings to talk about transition than did African-American, Hispanic-American, or Native-American parents. In contrast, African-American parents reported significantly more involvement than European-American parents in talking with their children about life after high school. Additionally, African-American parents reported significantly more involvement than European-American parents in teaching their children to use transportation independently. Type of disability, however, was a confounding factor for this particular transition activity, and when this variable was controlled for, no significant differences between ethnic groups were identified. These results are presented in Table 1.

Differences Between CLD and Non-CLD Parents

In addition to examining differences between each ethnic group, a broader comparison was made between CLD and non-CLD parents. The sample size of Hispanic-American and Native-American participants was relatively small, thus participants from the three CLD groups were collapsed into one to allow for greater statistical power. In this set of analyses, two-tailed *t*-tests were calculated with the dependent variables again being level of importance and level of involvement for a particular activity.

Level of Importance Reported by Parents. As summarized in Table 2, *t*-tests conducted for each activity revealed that CLD parents placed significantly more importance than European-American parents upon talking to their children about transition ($p \leq .01$), helping their children prepare for postsecondary education ($p \leq .01$), teaching their children to care for their disability ($p \leq .05$), teaching their children about the family's culture ($p \leq .001$), and teaching their children how to use transportation independently ($p \leq .01$).

Level of Involvement Reported by Parents. As presented in Table 3, when two-group comparisons between CLD and non-CLD parents were conducted for each activity using *t*-tests, CLD parents reported significantly more involvement than European-American parents in talking to their youth about life after high school ($p \leq .05$) and teaching their children about cultural values and beliefs ($p \leq .05$). Consistent with earlier analysis, European-American parents reported significantly more involvement in school-based transition meetings ($p \leq .001$).

Comparison of Professional Perceptions and Parent Self-Reports

Level of Importance. An objective of this study was to determine whether there would be a significant difference between parents and professionals in the level of importance they assign to parent participation across different transition planning activities. In other words, do parents and professionals share the same view regarding which activities are most important for parents to participate in to promote successful transition? To answer this question, two sets of *t*-tests were calculated. The first set of *t*-tests involved two-group comparisons of how important CLD parents believed it was for them to participate in a particular activity versus how important professionals felt it was for CLD parents to participate in the same activity. In the second set of *t*-tests, the same analyses were conducted for European-American parents. The results, summarized in Table 2, indicated that professionals placed significantly more importance upon European-American parents talking to their children about life after high school than did European-American parents themselves ($p \leq .01$). Professionals also placed significantly less importance on CLD parents teaching their children about family cultural values and beliefs than did the CLD parents completing the survey

TABLE 1

Means, SD, and F Values for Involvement and Importance for All Parent Ethnic Groups

Transition Activity		Ethnic Group: African-American (n = 156) M	SD	Hispanic (n = 34) M	SD	Native-American (n = 31) M	SD	Euro-American (n = 31) M	SD	F Value (F = 3.304)
1. Talking with child about life after high school	Importance	4.65	0.85	4.5	1.16	4.52	0.72	4.26	1.1	3.0*
	Involvement	4.22	1.08	3.85	1.21	3.74	1.24	3.72	1.32	4.12**
2. Helping child find work	Importance	4.1	1.21	4.35	1.01	4.23	1.02	4.02	1.28	0.73
	Involvement	3.2	1.5	3.18	1.49	3.1	1.6	3.26	1.36	0.11
3. Helping child prepare for education after high schoool	Importance	4.49	0.99	4.56	0.86	4.45	1.09	4.14	1.27	2.35
	Involvement	3.54	1.37	3.29	1.31	2.87	1.6	3.36	1.47	2.02
4. Finding out about adult services	Importance	4.02	1.24	4.38	0.95	3.9	1.42	4.23	1.09	1.51
	Involvement	2.6	1.4	2.76	1.44	2.39	1.38	2.89	1.32	1.31
5. Teaching child to care for disability	Importance	4.63	0.92	4.5	1.02	4.58	0.93	4.29	1.18	2.01
	Involvement	4.26	1.12	3.82	1.4	4	1.18	3.9	1.27	2.52
6. Finding recreation activities	Importance	4.38	0.92	4.21	0.95	4.52	0.77	4.39	0.91	0.66
	Involvement	3.93	1.06	3.47	1.35	3.74	1.37	3.94	0.93	1.92
7. Participating in school meetings	Importance	4.29	1.02	4.26	1.19	3.94	1.34	4.29	0.98	1.01
	Involvement	3.12	1.4	2.88	1.61	2.58	1.57	4.39	1.41	5.93***
8. Teaching child cultural values of family	Importance	4.6	0.82	4.5	0.79	4.45	1.03	3.91	1.23	9.71***
	Involvement	4.33	1.07	4.21	0.91	4.16	1.19	3.94	1.17	2.36
9. Teaching child to use transportation	Importance	4.51	1.04	4.38	1.02	4.35	0.95	3.97	1.57	3.90**
	Involvement	4.26	1.2	4.09	1.31	3.84	1.29	3.62	1.52	4.57**
10. Finding out about SSI	Importance	3.73	1.49	3.65	1.63	3.65	1.68	3.52	1.61	0.35
	Involvement	2.62	1.73	2.53	1.74	2.55	1.67	2.95	1.72	0.93

Note: SSI = Social Security Income.
*$p < .05$. **$p < 0.01$. ***$p < 0.001$.

TABLE 2

Means, SD and t Values for Parents' Self-report and Professionals' Evaluation of the Importance of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse and Euro-American Parent Involvement

		Importance				
		Parents' Report		*Professionals' Evaluation*		t-*value*
Transition Activity		M	SD	M	SD	
1. Talking with child about life after high school	CLD	4.61	0.885	4.52	0.85	0.66
	Euro-American	4.26	1.11	4.65	0.56	-2.76**
	t-value	2.59*		1.85		
2. Helping child find work	CLD	4.15	1.15	3.90	1	1.46
	Euro-American	4.02	1.29	4.04	0.79	0.09
	t-value	0.89		1.15		
3. Helping child prepare for education after high school	CLD	4.50	0.98	4.23	1.11	1.71
	Euro-American	4.14	1.27	4.40	0.80	-1.52
	t-value	2.37*		1.84		
4. Finding out about adult services	CLD	4.06	1.23	4.06	0.87	0.03
	Euro-American	4.23	1.09	4.19	0.78	0.21
	t-value	-1.11		1.36		
5. Teaching child to care for disability	CLD	4.6	0.94	4.5	0.87	0.73
	Euro-American	4.3	1.18	4.51	0.78	-1.32
	t-value	2.15*		0.44		
6. Finding recreation opportunities	CLD	4.38	0.9	4.12	1.02	1.84
	Euro-American	4.39	0.91	4.29	0.78	0.68
	t value	-0.11		2.02*		
7. Participating in school meetings	CLD	4.24	1.09	4.35	1.03	-0.64
	Euro-American	4.29	0.98	4.42	0.89	-0.82
	t-value	-0.36		1.07		
8. Teaching child cultural values	CLD	4.56	0.84	4.21	0.96	2.64**
	Euro-American	3.91	1.23	4.23	0.83	-1.85
	t-value	4.58****		0.19		
9. Teaching child to use transportation	CLD	4.47	1.02	4.17	0.92	1.91
	Euro-American	3.97	1.57	4.17	0.88	-1
	t-value	2.77**		0		
10. Finding out about SSI	CLD	3.69	1.54	4	0.95	-1.83
	Euro-American	3.52	1.61	3.94	0.98	-1.94
	t-value	0.9		1		

Note: $N = 221$ for CLD parents, $N = 87$ for Euro-American parents, and $N = 52$ for professionals.
*$p < .05$ (two-tailed). **$p < 0.01$ (two-tailed). ***$p < 0.001$ (two-tailed).

TABLE 3

Means, SD and t Values for Parents' Self-Report and Professionals' Evaluation of the Involvement of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse and Euro-American Parents

		Involvement				
		Parents' Report		*Professionals' Evaluation*		t-*value*
Transition Activity		M	SD	M	SD	
1. Talking with child about life after high school	CLD	4.09	0.885	4.52	0.85	0.66
	Euro-American	3.72	1.11	4.65	0.56	-2.76**
	t-value	2.46*		1.85		
2. Helping child find work	CLD	3.17	1.15	3.9	1	1.46
	Euro-American	3.26	1.29	4.04	0.79	0.09
	t -value	-0.5		1.15		
3. Helping child prepare for education after high school	CLD	3.4	0.98	4.23	1.11	1.71
	Euro-American	3.36	1.27	4.4	0.8	-1.52
	t-value	0.25		1.84		
4. Finding out about adult services	CLD	2.6	1.23	4.06	0.87	0.03
	Euro-American	2.89	1.09	4.19	0.78	0.21
	t-value	-1.61		1.36		
5. Teaching child to care for disability	CLD	4.17	0.94	4.5	0.87	0.73
	Euro-American	3.9	1.18	4.51	0.78	-1.32
	t-value	1.77		0.44		
6. Finding recreation opportunities	CLD	3.82	0.9	4.12	1.02	1.84
	Euro-American	3.94	0.91	4.29	0.78	0.68
	t-value	-0.93		2.02*		
7. Participating in school meetings	CLD	3	1.09	4.35	1.03	-0.64
	Euro-American	3.69	0.98	4.42	0.89	-0.82
	t-value	-0.93		1.07		
8. Teaching child cultural values	CLD	4.29	1.06	3.35	0.99	0.61
	Euro-American	3.94	1.18	2.98	0.83	0.7
	t-value	2.58*		-2.03		
9. Teaching child to use transportation	CLD	4.29	1.06	3.35	0.99	5.85***
	Euro-American	3.94	1.18	2.98	0.96	4.99***
	t-value	2.53*		-2.03		
10. Finding out about SSI	CLD	2.59	1.72	3.02	1.13	-2.21
	Euro-American	2.95	1.73	3.15	1.02	-0.86
	t-value	-1.68		-0.98		

Note: $N = 221$ for CLD parents, $N = 87$ for Euro-American parents, and $N = 52$ for professionals.
*$p < .05$ (two-tailed). **$p < 0.01$ (two-tailed). ***$p < 0.001$ (two-tailed).

($p \leq .01$). No other significant results were found. The rank of transition items on importance as reported by parent group and professionals is presented in Table 4.

Level of Involvement. Once again, differences between parents and professionals were investigated using a series of *t*-tests. In the first set of *t*-tests, two-group comparisons were made between the level of involvement reported by CLD parents versus the level of CLD parent involvement perceived by professionals. In the second set of *t*-tests, similar analyses were conducted for European-American parents. Professionals reported significantly less involvement by CLD parents than did CLD parents themselves for 7 of the 10 activities (Activity 1: $p \leq .001$; Activity 2: $p \leq .001$; Activity 3: $p \leq .001$; Activity 5: $p \leq .001$; Activity 6: $p \leq .001$; Activity 8: $p \leq .001$; Activity 9: $p \leq .001$). When asked to rate European-American parents, professionals reported less involvement than actual European-American parents participating in the survey for 3 of the 10 transition activities (Activity 5: $p \leq .001$; Activity 6: $p \leq .001$; Activity 8: $p \leq .001$, see Table 3). The rank order of transition items on involvement as reported by parent group and professionals is presented in Table 5.

Comparison of Professional Perceptions for CLD versus European-American Involvement

A series of *t*-tests were calculated to evaluate whether the perceptions professionals have of parent involvement differ for CLD versus European-American parents. Shown in Table 3, the results indicated that professionals perceive CLD parents as significantly less involved than European-American parents on 8 of the 10 transition activities (Activity 1: $p \leq .001$; Activity 2: $p \leq .001$; Activity 3: $p \leq .001$; Activity 4: $p \leq .001$; Activity 5: $p \leq .01$; Activity 6: $p \leq .001$; Activity 7: $p \leq .001$; Activity 9: $p \leq .05$). In only one instance (Activity 8: Teaching child about the family's cultural values and beliefs) did professionals rate the involvement of CLD parents significantly higher than that of European-American parents ($p \leq .05$).

DISCUSSION

This study examined the roles that parents, across different ethnic groups, assume in the transition planning of their children and tried to determine how this profile matches the level of importance parents and educators place upon various transition activities. Results indicated that parents and professionals were in general agreement regarding which activities are important for transition. For example, there were no activities which were identified by parents or professionals as superfluous or unimportant to the transition process. In addition, on only two occasions did parents and professionals differ in the level of importance they assigned to a particular activity. While parents and professionals generally agree on what activities are important for transition planning, there were differences *between parents groups* in terms of the *level* of importance assigned to various transition activities. Specifically, CLD parents placed significantly more importance than European-American parents upon talking to their children about transition, helping their children prepare for postsecondary education, teaching their children to care for their disability, teaching their children about the family's culture, and teaching their children how to use transportation independently .

The findings further indicated that CLD parents described themselves as active and involved in the transition process. Indeed, for activities such as talking to youth about life after high school and teaching youth about cultural values and beliefs, the level of participation reported by CLD parents surpassed that of European-American parents. One important exception to the relatively high level of reported involvement by CLD parents in transition activities was their participation in school-based planning, which CLD parents indicated was quite low. This description is consistent with the reports of professionals, who similarly described the involvement of CLD parents in school-based planning as low. However, in contrast to the actual reports of CLD parents, professionals described their involvement in other transition activities as relatively low as well.

TABLE 4

Rank of Transition Items on Importance as Reported by Parent Group and Professionals

Rank	*African American (n = 156)*	*Hispanic (n = 3)*	*Native American (n = 31)*	*Euro-American (n = 87)*	*Professionals for CLD Parents (n = 52)*	*Professionals for Non-CLD Parents (n = 52)*
1	Talking with child about life after high school *M* = 4.65	Helping child prepare for education after high school *M* = 4.56	Teaching child to care for disability *M* = 4.58	Finding recreation opportunities *M* = 4.39	Talking with child about life after high school *M* = 4.52	Talking with child about life after high school *M* = 4.65
2	Teaching child to care for disability *M* = 4.63	Talking with child about life after high school *M* = 4.50	Talking with child about life after high school *M* = 4.52	Teaching child to care for disability *M* = 4.29	Teaching child to care for disability *M* = 4.50	Teaching child to care for disability *M* = 4.51
3	Teaching child cultural values of family *M* = 4.6	Teaching child to care for disability *M* = 4.50	Finding recreation opportunities *M* = 4.52	Participating in school meetings *M* = 4.29	Participating in school meetings *M* = 4.35	Participating in school meetings *M* = 4.42
4	Teaching child to use transportation *M* = 4.51	Teaching child cultural values of family *M* = 4.50	Teaching child cultural values of family *M* = 4.45	Talking with child about life after high school *M* = 4.26	Helping child prepare for education after high school *M* = 4.23	Helping child prepare for education after high school *M* = 4.4
5	Helping child prepare for education after high school *M* = 4.49	Teaching child to use transportation *M* = 4.38	Helping child prepare for education after high school *M* = 4.45	Finding out about adult services *M* = 4.23	Teaching child cultural values of family *M* = 4.21	Finding recreation opportunities *M* = 4.29
6	Finding recreation opportunities M = 4.38	Finding out about adult services *M* = 4.38	Teaching child to use transportation *M* = 4..35	Helping child prepare for education after high school *M* = 4.14	Teaching child to use transportation *M* = 4.17	Teaching child cultural values of family *M* = 4.23
7	Participating in school meetings *M* = 4.29	Helping child find work *M* = 4.35	Helping child find work *M* = 4.23	Helping child find work *M* = 4.02	Finding recreation opportunities *M* = 4.12	Finding recreation opportunities *M* = 4.19

TABLE 4
(Continued)

Rank	*African American (n = 156)*	*Hispanic (n = 34)*	*Native American (n = 31)*	*Euro-American (n = 87)*	*Professionals for CLD Parents (n = 52)*	*Professionals for Non-CLD Parents (n = 52)*
8	Helping child find work $M = 4.1$	Participating in school meetings $M = 4.26$	Participating in school meetings $M = 3.94$	Teaching child to use transportation $M = 3.97$	Finding out about adult services $M = 4.06$	Teaching child to use transportation $M = 4.17$
9	Finding out about adult services $M = 4.02$	Finding recreation opportunities $M = 4.21$	Finding out about adult services $M = 3.90$	Teaching child cultural values of family $M = 3.91$	Finding out about SSI $M = 4.0$	Helping child find work $M = 4.04$
10	Finding out about SSI $M = 3.73$	Finding out about SSI $M = 3.65$	Finding out about SSI $M = 3.65$	Finding out about SSI $M = 3.52$	Helping child find work $M = 3.90$	Finding out about SSI $M = 3.94$

LIMITATIONS

Several limitations exist in the interpretation of the study's results. First, because the surveys were anonymous and included no personally identifying information, the responses of parents could not be matched to the responses of school staff working with their particular child. As such, there was not a one-to-one correspondence between the parents referenced by the professionals and the parents who completed the survey. However, the professionals included in the survey were school staff identified by the district as directly serving the students and families participating in the survey (e.g., the survey was sent to special educators who taught the students in our study). Therefore, with reasonable certainty, we can assume that professionals completing our survey work with student populations that resemble the youth and families in our survey sample in terms of type of disability, severity of disability, age, and gender.

Second, the issue of response bias and the nature of our sample prevent us from making direct, conclusive statements about minorities not participating in the study. For example, the possibility exists that CLD parents who are most active and involved in transition planning are also most likely to successfully complete and return the survey. Similarly, our study did not include Asian-American parents, and the relatively small sample size of Native Americans and Hispanics may have limited the amount of potentially interesting information that could have been gathered about these specific populations. The sample was drawn from only one urban school district which further limits the generalizability of the study.

The third limitation concerns the accuracy of self-report. The study asked parents to rate their own behavior (i.e., their involvement in various transition activities) and it is possible that their assessments do not accurately reflect their true behavior. However, literature on the accuracy of self-report indicates that when respondents clearly understand what information is being requested, have access to the information, and are willing to respond, the accuracy of self-report increases (Armstrong, Jensen, McCaffrey, & Reynolds, 1976; Laing, 1988) and can be as good as or even better than other evaluation

TABLE 5

Rank of Transition Items on Involvement as Reported by Parent Group and Professionals

Rank	*African-American (n = 156)*	*Hispanic (n = 34)*	*Native-American (n = 31)*	*Euro-American (n = 87)*	*Professionals for* CLD Parents *(n = 52)*	*Professionals for Non-*CLD *Parents (n = 52)*
1	Teaching child cultural values of family *M* = 4.33	Teaching child cultural values of family *M* = 4.21	Teaching child cultural values of family *M* = 4.16	Teaching child cultural values of family *M* = 3.94	Teaching child cultural values of family *M* = 4.52	Participating in school meetings *M* = 3.42
2	Teaching child to care for disability *M* = 4.26	Teaching child to use transportation *M* = 4.09	Teaching child to use transportation *M* = 3.84	Finding recreation opportunities *M* = 3.94	Finding out about SSI. *M* = 3.02	Talking with child about life after high school *M* = 3.42
3	Teaching child to use transportation *M* = 4.26	Talking with child about life after high school *M* = 3.85	Teaching child to care for disability *M* = 4.0	Teaching child to care for disability *M* = 3.9	Teaching child to use transportation *M* = 2.92	Helping child prepare for education after high school *M* = 3.23
4	Talking with child about life after high school *M* = 4.22	Teaching child to care for disability *M* = 3.82	Talking with child about life after high school *M* = 3.74	Talking with child about life after high school *M* = 3.72	Talking with child about life after high school *M* = 2.92	Teaching child to care for disability *M* = 3.21
5	Finding recreation opportunities *M* = 3.93	Finding recreation opportunities *M* = 3.47	Finding recreation opportunities *M* = 3.74	Participating in school meetings *M* = 3.69	Participating in school meetings *M* = 2.9	Teaching child to use transportation *M* = 3.19
6	Helping child prepare for education after high school *M* = 3.54	Helping child prepare for education after high school *M* = 3.29	Helping child find work *M* = 3.1	Teaching child to use transportation *M* = 3.62	Teaching child to care for disability *M* = 2.79	Finding out about SSI *M* = 3.15
7	Helping child find work *M* = 3.2	Helping child find work *M* = 3.18	Helping child prepare for education after high school *M* = 2.87	Helping child prepare for education after high school *M* = 3.36	Helping child prepare for education after high school *M* = 2.54	Finding recreation opportunities *M* =3.02

TABLE 5
(Continued)

Rank	*African-American (n = 156)*	*Hispanic (n = 34)*	*Native-American (n = 31)*	*Euro-American (n = 87)*	*Professionals for CLD Parents (n = 52)*	*Professionals for Non-CLD Parents (n = 52)*
8	Participating in school meetings $M = 3.12$	Participating in school meetings $M = 2.88$	Participating in school meetings $M = 2.58$	Helping child find work $M = 3.26$	Helping child find work $M = 2.38$	Finding out about adult services $M = 2.98$
9	Finding out about SSI $M = 2.62$	Finding out about adult services $M = 2.76$	Finding out about SSI M = 2.55	Finding out about SSI $M = 2.95$	Finding recreation opportunities $M = 2.35$	Helping child find work $M = 2.98$
10	Finding out about adult services $M = 2.60$	Finding out about SSI $M = 2.53$	Finding out about adult services $M = 4.23$	Finding out about adult services $M = 2.89$	Finding out about adult services $M = 2.35$	Teaching child cultural values of family $M = 2.98$

techniques. In addition, no evidence was found in our study or in the literature to suggest that there are differences in self-report accuracy between CLD and non-CLD parents on this survey. Finally, it is important to note that the list of transition planning activities incorporated into the surveys may not be inclusive of all the activities parents perform.

Suggestions for Future Research

The research findings indicate that CLD parents are actively involved in transition activities, many of which fall outside the realm of school-based planning. Therefore, researchers who are examining parental participation must be careful not to limit their investigation solely to activities based within the educational system. Such an approach would overlook the true pattern of involvement and create a skewed picture of passivity among CLD parents.

Additionally, qualitative research studies examining the transition activities parents engage in outside of school-based planning would provide a richer understanding of parental experiences and resources, would identify opportunities for professionals to better support families in their home and community activities, and would be useful in developing more meaningful school-based transition plans complementary to the needs, experiences, and strengths of families.

Furthermore, future investigations should examine whether the specific training of professionals in parent-professional collaboration actually increases parental involvement. Traditionally, research has emphasized interventions designed to make parents better participants (e.g., parent training, parent education, parent advocacy) rather than featuring strategies focused on helping professionals be better collaborators. Development and careful assessment of new models of professional behavior may be more useful in advancing school-based parent involvement than continuing to hold parents responsible for change.

Finally, research studies should continue to examine how different cultural variables influence parental involvement in transition planning. For example, level of acculturation is likely to be an important factor for many culturally diverse families. It is quite possible that a family

that has recently immigrated to the United States will be unfamiliar with services and the American educational system, making it difficult for families to fully participate in the transition process. In addition, the nature of participation should be examined for other ethnic groups not included in the study (e.g., Asian, East European, etc.), in particular, because these groups may have different experiences and histories within the U.S. educational system.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

Despite the study's limitations, there are a number of implications that can be drawn from the study to enhance our understanding and promote the multicultural aspects of transition planning. When the results are viewed concurrently, a picture of how CLD parents and professionals practice and define participation in transition planning begins to emerge. While there appears to be general agreement between CLD parents and professionals on which activities are important for transition planning, their reports differ related to the level of involvement by CLD parents. In particular, CLD parents described themselves as active and involved in transition planning for their children, in stark contrast to the reports of professionals and much of what has been reported in the literature. One possible explanation for the discrepancy may be the issue of response bias, as mentioned earlier. However, a second more compelling explanation may center around how professionals are forming their perceptions of parent involvement, as is discussed below.

For many CLD families, the "launching" of a young person into adulthood stems from family and community rather than experiences provided by educational or other formal institutions. Native-American families who adhere to traditional indigenous values frequently live within a context of interconnectedness where the responsibility for the care of youth is shared among family, kin, and the tribal system. Similarly, many Hispanic and Native American families rely on relationships with extended family or informal community-based networks for emotional or social support as well as resources such as child care (Attneave, 1982; Salend & Taylor, 1993). Thus, while the findings suggest that CLD parents feel school-based transition planning is important, it may represent only one arena in which parents seek support and begin preparing for their child's transition. In most cases, however, educators interact with parents only within the context of school and have limited awareness of family activities, beliefs, and values within other spheres of life, such as community, extended family, and religion. Therefore, the view professionals have of CLD parent participation may be based upon only one context (i.e., school). This view may be furthered skewed as CLD parents often encounter a variety of barriers which make parents reluctant to engage in school-based transition planning.

Parents of all ethnic groups are likely to encounter barriers to school participation, including (a) parental fatigue; (b) lack of parental knowledge regarding their rights, school procedures or policies; (c) logistical constraints, such as a lack of child care or transportation; (d) rigid or limited options for parent involvement in educational planning; and (e) language. However, for CLD parents these same barriers are made more formidable by racism, discrimination, insensitivity, and cultural unresponsiveness. For example, while parents across ethnic groups may find professionals reluctant to work with families in a truly collaborative manner, the issue of power imbalance takes on greater significance for CLD parents as it occurs on a systemic level as well. Educational laws and policies have been culturally biased or discriminatory, and youth from diverse backgrounds continue to be disproportionately identified as needing special education services (Artiles & Trent, 1994; Calabrese, 1990; Harry, 1992a). As CLD parents perceive continued misinterpretation by schools of their children's educational needs, as well as parent involvement, they experience further alienation and mistrust, and, unfortunately, many families withdraw their participation altogether.

Teachers and school administrators often attribute low CLD parent participation in educational processes to parental apathy or a failure by parents to recognize the importance of their participation (Calabrese, 1990; Harry, 1992a). The results of this study suggest that CLD par-

ents understand and believe their involvement in school-based planning is important. Furthermore, in contrast to the perceptions of professionals, parents appear active and involved in the transition process. However, this involvement may be greatest in family- or community-based settings, where parents feel most supported and understood. When examining and promoting parent involvement among culturally diverse families, attention should be paid to the roles parents are assuming outside of school-based planning. In addition, professionals must not be quick to view a lack of parental involvement in school-based planning as a sign of parental apathy or lack of interest. Rather, professionals may be most successful in promoting parent participation if they first examine their own behavior in terms of how it facilitates or discourages partnership with parents, particularly in light of enduring institutional barriers and the historical experiences of minorities with the educational system.

Besides working to make school-based planning more responsive to CLD parents, there appear to be untapped opportunities for professionals to learn more about ways CLD parents are supporting the transition preparation of their sons and daughters at home and in the community. This information could be used by professionals to design complementary school-based transition support experiences for youth as well as to identify strategies to support parents in home and community activities. This interaction between professionals and parents has the potential to strengthen school-parent relationships and to enhance the effectiveness of transition services for CLD youth with disabilities. While all of these strategies could prove useful, none of them will be effective unless professionals are truly prepared to encourage parental involvement. Walker and Singer (1993) point out that while professionals are required to work collaboratively with families, they often lack specific training on how to form partnerships with parents. Educators need new models and training around professional collaboration in order to better understand the perspectives of parents and strengthen school-family relationships. One such model is proposed by Walker and Singer, which offers important tools for working collaboratively with parents through valuing collaboration, understanding the developmental nature of parent-professional relationships, and effective communication.

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