

Introduction to Case Studies

Case studies have been used in professional fields for many years to move learners from theory to application, from the abstract to the concrete, and from generalities to specifics. Case studies help learners identify issues, present situations in context for perspective, and distinguish between relevant and irrelevant data. Good case studies clearly identify problems. One common question is what to do with assessment information in order to develop IEP/ITP goals for transition planning. Those involved in assessment for transition planning can use these specific case studies to

- learn how to identify what one knows with some certainty,
- understand available data (which may have no verification of reliability),
- learn to identify what one knows but cannot evaluate fully because of discrepancies, and
- learn to identify and admit what one clearly does not know because of a lack of adequate information.

Good case studies also engage the planner in a problem-solving process. Although some cases will be of more interest than others because of disability specializations, each case illustrates different types of transition service needs and the issues of individual problem solving. Each case highlights these basic and critical questions:

1. What are the facts of the case?
2. What do these facts mean in relation to transition service needs?

These case studies were written for a number of reasons. First, we feel strongly about the usefulness of case study methodology for transition assessment and planning. Second, in our efforts to reorganize the TPI-3, we placed case studies that were on the CD online in the Supplemental Resources. We hope they will be helpful to you.

While we cannot acknowledge by name the individuals who served as the initial case study examples for this book, we want to extend our appreciation to them for participating anonymously and wish them success in their real-life transitions. They, and their fellow students and families, have shared themselves in a way that we hope will benefit others in transition.

We especially appreciate the efforts of those individuals who provided us with essential information and data for our case studies. To honor the confidentiality of the students involved, we will list only the names of those who assisted us without identification of school districts or programs. These individuals include Nancy Crews, Kelli Denney, and Cassandra Harris.

Note: Examples of further assessment using selected informal assessment components of the Comprehensive Informal Inventory of Knowledge and Skills for Transition are used in some case studies. For full information on the ratings and action checklist abbreviations, see p. 17 of *Informal Assessments for Transition Planning—Second Edition* (Gaumer Erickson, Clark, & Patton, 2013) in the TPI-2 kit.

References

- Clark, G. M., & Patton, J. R. (1997). *Transition planning inventory*. Austin, TX: PRO-ED.
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