

# *Transitions* Longitudinal Study

3rd Annual Report to the Ministry of  
Training, Colleges and Universities

June 2007

TRANSITIONS



# *Transitions Longitudinal Study*

## 3rd Annual Report to the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities

June 2007

Prepared By:

Larry McCloskey: *Researcher*

Kim Figura: *Research Assistant*

Pei Kaw: *Research Assistant*

Katherine Narraway: *Research Assistant*

Boris Vukovic: *Transitions Portal Creator/Administrator*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The *Transitions* longitudinal study exists only because of the work of the Learning Opportunities Task Force. Between 1998 and 2002, LOTF revolutionized services and programs for students with learning disabilities at ten post-secondary pilot institutions. The core of the pilot programs has since been replicated at all colleges and universities in Ontario in the form of the Enhanced Services Program. As such, the legacy of LOTF exists in the fact that Ontario provides the most comprehensive support for post-secondary students with learning disabilities in the world. *Transitions* will help to test the efficacy of this statement as the study unfolds over the next ten years (2004—2014).

The province of Ontario owes a debt of gratitude to Dr. Bette Stephenson, who was a passionate and active Chairman to the task force. Great expertise and commitment was exemplified by Eva Nichols, who acted as Senior Consultant to the Chair.

This acknowledgement would not be complete without paying tribute to two other individuals who served LOTF. Bonnie Tiffin was a capable Executive Coordinator for the Richmond Hill office, and Dr. Laura Weintraub was an impassioned consultant to LOTF until her untimely death in January, 2004.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In each of our three annual reports completed thus far, we have noted Trends based on the rich quantitative and qualitative information received from our *Transitions* participants during the survey process. We have cautioned that our Trends are subject to change and that during the course of a 10 year longitudinal study much can change. In this way, trends noted and continuing for 10 years will legitimately become findings, backed up by empirical evidence. There are a number of different Trends we will discuss in this report, but if there is one unifying theme that may be emerging from the surveys, it is this: *“Transitions participants are generally graduating, working, living and thriving as successfully as the general population of a similar age.”*

This seemingly banal statement-- with an eye to the historic difficulties of persons with learning disabilities--is actually rather bold. And this statement has been emboldened this year with the release of a vast new study by the Learning Disabilities Association of Canada called, “Putting a Face on Learning Disabilities ([www.pacfold.ca](http://www.pacfold.ca)).”

Given our experience with *Transitions*, we maintain our original contention as outlined in the *First Annual Report*, that the key to success for students with learning disabilities is the completion of a post-secondary education appropriately applied. That contention has been further bolstered by a second study stating that, “it is clear that higher education benefits persons with disabilities in the labour market far greater than person without disabilities,” (Literature Review on the Impact of Post-Secondary Education on Labour Market Attachment for Persons with Disabilities).

We believe that the best indicator of success is comparison with the success of the general population. However, we also believe that the new information from the LDAC study strengthens our contention by allowing us additional comparison with persons with learning disabilities outside of the *Transitions* study.

The LDAC study presents a grim profile of life in Canada for persons with learning disabilities,

including being twice as likely to report not being successful in high school, less likely to be employed, two to three times more likely to experience high levels of distress, depression, anxiety disorders, suicidal thoughts, and poorer physical health than the general population.

The study makes a number of relevant recommendations and concludes with a section entitled, “Learning Disabilities in Canada: Economic Costs to Individuals, Families and Society.” The cost of having a learning disability for the life-span is estimated at \$1,951 million per person, with five percent discounted per year to reflect incremental costs, taking the initial figure to \$444,274. The societal cost is \$3,031 billion, discounted to \$690 billion based on the same five percent discount assumption. These inflated figures (particularly the societal cost of \$3,031 billion which is approximately three times Canada’s GNP!) do not make a difficult problem easier to deal with, nor do they coincide with the evidence being assembled in *Transitions*. For example, the LDAO report rate of unemployment for participants age 22-29 residing in Ontario is 40.5%, versus 9.5% for *Transitions*. Additionally, 73% of *Transitions* participants felt that their work built on their areas of strength and interest—a concept unheard of in the LDAO study. The LDAO study shows participation in physical activity at 46.3% for Ontario Residents with learning disabilities ages 22-29, versus 63% for *Transitions*, indicating a more positive life balance ratio for the same age-group.

While it is true that our *Transitions* participants’ achievements are not necessarily representative of Canada’s learning disabled population, our survey’s responses indicate that the potential for success is far greater than is reflected in this study. There certainly is the potential for additional costs, mostly related to lost income, for those with learning disabilities. But there are considerations other than learning disability related to personal choices and the availability of relevant work experience which also influences income, career and success in life.

A perusal of the 2006 *Transitions* Trends will give a more accurate portrayal of how our cohort is faring:

## **The 2006 profile of *Transitions* Trends:**

### **Transitions Trend #1: Participants place a high value on post-secondary education. (Continuing)**

In 2006, of the 46 participants still studying, 22 (48%) had not yet graduated and of these 13 (59%) were still in the academic program they began as a pilot student. Not only have most of our participants graduated, with many continuing onto other post-secondary programs, those who have not yet graduated have shown incredible tenacity and determination to finish their program regardless of how long it has taken.

### **Transitions Trend #2: *Transitions* participants have a higher than average retention rate than the general population in post-secondary education. (Continuing)**

Retention rates in post-secondary education are considered to be one of the most important benchmarks for determining student success. In 2004 and 2005 we noted that *Transitions* participants had a higher retention rate than the general population. In 2006, only 10 (7%) of 141 participants have left school without graduating, compared to an average of 15% in the general population.

### **Transitions Trend #3: *Transitions* PSE Leavers cite inability to pass required courses as the most common reason for not graduating. (Continuing)**

In 2005, nine *Transitions* participants cited their inability to complete required courses was the most recent reason for not graduating. In 2006, this figure has dropped to four, which is a marked improvement. Still, as our benchmark for success in *Transitions* is to be able to compete with the general population, these four generate enough concern to maintain *Transitions* Trend #3 for the purposes of this report.

**Transitions Trend #4: *Transitions* participants combine post-secondary education and work reasonably well. (Continuing)**

In 2006, of the 46 participants currently studying, 30 are employed, a rate of 65%, combining work and post-secondary education (22 are working part-time and eight are working full-time). Another interesting note on this trend is the fact that additionally, 41% of our participants also combine their studies with volunteer activities. A full 13 of the 19 participants who combine school and volunteer work are also currently employed in paid positions.

**Transitions Trend #5: A high percentage of *Transitions* participants are living with their parents (Continuing)**

In 2006, 44% (62 of 141) of *Transitions* participants live at home, compared to 20% of adults of similar age in the general population. Still, it is worth noting that this figure is significantly lower than the LDAC study figure of 54.4% of Ontario residents age 22-29 with learning disabilities.

**Transitions Trend #6: Financial concerns are impacting on *Transitions* participant's life decisions. (New Trend)**

In 2006, 90 of 141 participants (64%) reported having student loans, and 71 of that 90 reported being in significant debt due to that student loan. When we further probed the issue of debt and how it impacts on participants lives in the 2006 survey, 45 of 71 (63%) of participants responded that they were financially concerned about paying off their student loans. Paying student loans was the highest category of concern for participants managing their debt load and planning to pay for their future.

**Transitions Trend #7: The majority of *Transitions* participants, upon graduation, feel prepared to seek employment. (New Trend)**

In the 2006 survey, we asked participants who have graduated and are not currently studying if they feel prepared to seek employment. Seventy-one of the 95 participants (75%) who have graduated felt prepared to seek employment, while only 14 (25%) felt unprepared.

**Transitions Trend #8: *Transitions* participants have lower salaries and are under-employed compared to the general population. (Continuing)**

A comparison between 2005 and 2006 salaries shows a marked improvement in our *Transitions* cohort. The number of participants working full-time and earning less than \$20,000 annually, has decreased. Additionally, the number of participants earning in each higher salary range has increased.

**Transitions Trend #9: *Transitions* participants have higher salaries and a higher rate of employment than other Ontario Residents aged 22-29 with Learning Disabilities. (New Trend)**

Our *Transitions* participants are doing extremely well in comparison of salaries with Ontario residents age 22-29 with learning disabilities. The LDAC study notes that in this demographic 41.2% are unemployed, 26.3% earn between \$1-9999 annually, 32.5% \$10,000 or more. Conversely, 87% of employed *Transitions* participants are earning at least \$20,000 or more annually.

**Transitions Trend #10: Post-secondary Leavers employed full-time are generally earning salaries that are comparable to graduates in the general population. (Continuing)**

Of the 10 PSE Leavers in 2006, two are unemployed, one is working part-time, and the remaining seven are employed full-time. In 2005, 50% of PSE Leavers earned between \$20,000- \$34,999, and that figure increased to 57% in 2006. This broad salary range is only slightly lower than graduates in the general population, who generally earn \$31, 200 (college graduate) - \$39,000 (university bachelor graduate) annually depending on the level of educational attainment.

**Transitions Trend #11: Field of Study likely influences low salaries of *Transitions* participants. (Continuing)**

As indicated in all previous *Transitions Reports*, field of study likely influences overall low salaries of *Transitions* PSE Graduate Non-Continuers. We believe this is because many were in the Arts and Social Sciences whose average annual earnings are lower than the earnings of



those in professional programs. For example, the average salary six months after graduation for a student with a university Bachelor of Arts degree working in Ontario in 2003-2004 was \$32,249, and for a college arts graduate it was approximately \$27,237 annually. In comparison, the average salary for an architecture or engineering graduate was \$51,540 for university graduates and \$38,000 for college graduates (*OUGS* and *2001-2002 College Graduates*)

**Transitions Trend # 12: Female *Transitions* graduates are more likely to experience high rates of under-employment than male participants. (Continuing)**

In 2005, we reported that 19% of female graduates were significantly under-employed (less than \$20,000 annually) compared to seven percent of male graduates. In 2006, eight percent of female graduates were significantly under-employed compared to four percent of males. Though we maintain Trend #12 for this year's report, we note that the gap has closed considerably.

**Transitions Trend #13: *Transitions* participants have a high unemployment rate compared with the general population. (Continuing)**

In 2004, we noted that 15% of *Transitions* participants were unemployed. In 2005, that number had decreased to 10%, and for 2006 the rate of unemployment is 9.5%. While we note significant progress has been made, the unemployment rate in the general population is only seven percent. It is also worth noting that the LDAC study states that the unemployment is 41.2% for Ontario residents age 22-29 with learning disabilities.

**Transitions Trend #14: *Transitions* participants place great emphasis on educational and career goals, while social goals remain relatively low. (Continuing)**

In our life goals category, we asked participants "What kind of goals (other than career) do you wish to achieve in the near future?" In 2005 career were the most chosen category, and we wanted to know more about life goals in 2006. Eighty-one participants chose Buy Property, 79 choose Be debt free, and 66 choose Pursue further education. Social goals were lower at 64 Get married, 55 Start a family, and 50 Have a steady relationship.

**Transitions Trend #15: A high number of *Transitions* participants engage in volunteer work. (New Trend)**

In 2005, 23% of participants responded that they spend some of their free time doing volunteer work, while in 2006 that figure has risen to 38%.

**Transitions Trend #16: A high number of *Transitions* participants engage in physical activity. (Continuing)**

In 2005, we learned that 29% of individuals in the general population chose to spend some of their free time engaged in physical activity on a daily basis, compared with 38% of *Transitions* participants. In 2006, 63% of *Transitions* participants indicated that they participate in a physical activity on a regular basis compared to 46.3% of Ontario residents, age 22-29 with learning disabilities in the LDAC study.

**Transitions Trend #17: Participants appear to be resilient in social relationships. (Continuing)**

In 2006, the majority of *Transitions* participants, 59%, reported that they are satisfied or very satisfied with their friendships, and 76% are satisfied or very satisfied with their family relationships. When it comes to romantic relationships, 31% of participants report having no relationship in 2006, while 55% say they are very satisfied or satisfied with their romantic relationships.

**Transitions Trend #18: *Transitions* participants disclose their learning disability at work only when necessary for the job. (Continuing)**

Of 112 currently employed participants (both full-time and part-time), 53 (48%) have indicated that they have disclosed that they have a learning disability at work. That figure is up from 38% in 2005. On a very positive note, only one participant in those two years received a negative response from an employer.

**Transitions Trend #19: Significantly more women working full-time disclose their learning disability at work than men working full-time. (Continuing)**

In 2006, 26 women employed full-time disclosed their having a learning disability at work, while only seven men employed full-time disclosed.

**Transitions Trend #20: Few participants who are currently employed use accommodations and/or assistive technology at work. (New Trend)**

Of the 112 participants who are currently employed, only 24 (21%) use accommodations at work, though this is an increase from 2005 where only 18% used accommodations. Only 27 participants who are currently employed (24%) use assistive technology in the workplace, though this is again an increase from 2005 where only 15% used assistive technology at work.

**Transitions Trend #21: *Transitions* participants have good relationships with their co-workers (New Trend)**

In 2005, 94% of participants described their working relationship with their co-workers as 'comfortable.' In 2006, 96% have a comfortable working relationship with co-workers.

**Transitions Trend #22: An overwhelming percentage of *Transitions* participants experience job satisfaction. (New Trend)**

In 2006, participants were asked, 'are you satisfied with your job?' Eighty-two of 112 (73%) currently employed participants responded that they are satisfied, with only 30 (27%) indicating dissatisfaction.

**Transitions Trend #23: Overall, *Transitions* participants feel they have learned how to manage their learning disability well. (New Trend)**

In 2006, we asked participants 'Do you feel you have learned how to manage your learning disability?' An astonishing 123 of 141 participants responded affirmatively.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>I.</b>	<b>A Context for Transitions.....</b>	<b>14</b>
I. 1.	The Application of Knowledge.....	16
I. 2.	Beyond Success Indicators.....	17
I. 3.	The <i>Transitions</i> Longitudinal Study.....	19
<b>II.</b>	<b>Methodology.....</b>	<b>22</b>
II. 1.	The Surveying Process: An Overview.....	22
II. 2.	Getting Started.....	22
II. 3.	Telephone Surveying.....	23
II. 4.	Telephone Surveying: The Interview.....	24
II. 5.	Online Surveys.....	25
II. 6.	Mailed Surveys.....	25
II. 7.	<i>Transitions</i> Portal.....	26
II. 8.	<i>Transitions</i> Administrative Portal.....	26
II. 9.	<i>Transitions</i> Study Database.....	27
II. 10.	Surveying Wrap-Up.....	28
II. 11.	Challenges for Phase III.....	28
<b>III.</b>	<b>Literature Review.....</b>	<b>30</b>
III.	Overview of primary articles used in this study related to the general population.....	30
III.	Overview of primary articles used in this study on populations of adults with learning disabilities.....	39
<b>IV.</b>	<b>Trends Related to Education.....</b>	<b>48</b>
IV. 1.	Value of Education.....	49
IV. 2.	General Education Statistics.....	49
IV. 3.	Accommodations and Assistive Technology.....	50
IV. 4.	Field of Study.....	50
IV. 5.	Post-Secondary Education Continuers.....	51
IV. 6.	Further Education Trend: PSE Graduate Continuers.....	53
IV. 7.	Post-Secondary Education Leavers.....	54
IV. 8.	Graduation.....	56
IV. 9.	Studying and Working Concurrently.....	57
IV. 10.	Living Arrangements.....	59
IV. 11.	Financial Issues.....	60
IV. 12.	Preparation for Employment.....	62
<b>V.</b>	<b>Trends Related to Employment.....</b>	<b>65</b>
V. 1.	Salary and <i>Transitions</i> Participants.....	65
V. 2.	Post-Secondary Leavers.....	69
V. 3.	Post-Secondary Graduate Non-Continuer Statistics.....	71

V. 4. Post-Secondary Graduate Non-Continuer Salary Statistics.....	73
V. 5. Unemployment and <i>Transitions</i> Participants.....	87
<b>VI. General Trends Related to Learning Disabilities.....</b>	<b>90</b>
VI. 1. Self Advocacy and Resiliency.....	90
VI. 2. Impact of Learning Disability on Social Life.....	91
VI. 3. Impact of Learning Disability on Employment.....	98
VI. 4. Additional Concerns Related to Learning Disability.....	103
<b>VII. Conclusion.....</b>	<b>106</b>
<b>VIII. Looking Ahead.....</b>	<b>107</b>
<b>IX. Bibliography.....</b>	<b>108</b>
<b>X. Appendices.....</b>	<b>112</b>
X. Appendix 1: Validation Status, Documentation and Definition of Learning Disability.....	112
X. Appendix 2: <i>Transitions</i> Longitudinal Study: Phase III Survey (Winter/Spring 2006).....	116

# I. A CONTEXT FOR *TRANSITIONS*

The Learning Opportunities Task Force (LOTF) permanently altered the post-secondary landscape for students with learning disabilities between 1998 and 2002. It is simply a statement of fact that the pilot programs established by LOTF during this period were unprecedented in the world. The Enhanced Service Fund and a number of innovative projects that have been entrenched since 2002 continue to position the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities as unique in the world for its provision of services to students with learning disabilities.

In 1997, LOTF was established under the leadership of Dr. Bette Stephenson, with the following mandate:

1. To improve the transition of students with specific learning disabilities from secondary school to post-secondary education.
2. To enhance the services and supports that students with learning disabilities receive within the post-secondary educational sector, such that they can complete their education successfully.

Perhaps the most important fact to emphasize about LOTF's functioning during the pilot years is that all of its assumptions, programs, evaluations and ultimately its recommendations as reflected in its final report, were based upon research. LOTF was established as a research project in order to substantiate and monitor the progress it made towards creating a level playing field for post-secondary students with learning disabilities in Ontario.

Between 1998 and 2002, **1242** students met the very rigorous LOTF participation criteria, received pilot services, and participated in pilot projects' evaluation process, which resulted in over 3000 completed questionnaires. These facts made the LOTF project the largest research endeavour of its kind in the learning disabilities field, unique both in its depth of enquiry and the selection process of its participants.

In order to achieve baseline consistency for pilot participant evaluation measures, LOTF developed student Success Indicators, which are contained in the LOTF vision statement.

These indicators were first articulated as:

- entry into an academic program of the student's choice, provided that the student meets standard entrance requirements;

- successful meeting of the essential requirements of the program, although the manner in which the student demonstrates mastery may be altered by academic accommodations, programme modifications or the use of coping and compensatory strategies, but with no change to standards or outcomes;
- graduation from the student's chosen program and institution;
- possession of the requisite skills to pass any licensing requirements, with appropriate accommodations, if needed, related to the field of study or career which he or she has chosen;
- being employment ready;
- being sufficiently job ready so that he or she can advocate for any job accommodations that may be required in order to obtain and maintain employment.

The primary vehicle for evaluating the student Success Indicators were the students themselves. The LOTF database contained more than 3000 student questionnaires collected as intake, progress and exit questionnaires over a period of four years.

The LOTF final report contains seven Key Findings and 24 Recommendations based on this empirical evidence. The first key finding reads as follows:

*Students with learning disabilities are as able to succeed in post-secondary education as their non-disabled peers, provided that their transition to post-secondary education is appropriately facilitated.*

This statement is a powerful endorsement of the success of LOTF initiatives during the pilot years. Consequently, the report articulates the following recommendation:

*Proven transition programming should be available to students with learning disabilities who are going on to post-secondary education and are interested in participating in such opportunities.*

Project Advance was a very successful comprehensive summer transition program that was created during the pilot years. LOTF established another seven programs at four colleges and three universities at the end of the pilot years, and these Summer Institutes have continued under MTCU along with Project Advance. Innovative transition programs such as the Make the Cut are now supported by the MTCU throughout Ontario and are all intended to assist students with entry into post-secondary education.

Early during the pilot experience, LOTF recognised the need for comprehensive programming to assist with the transition from secondary to post-secondary education. However, it was only as the first cohort of LOTF pilot students began to graduate from post-secondary education that the need for transitional support into the work force became fully understood. Dealing with this realization may become one of the most important contributions of this longitudinal study to the field of learning disabilities.

## **I. 1. The Application of Knowledge:**

The pilot programs were well funded, and students with learning disabilities were offered a comprehensive range of programs and services between 1998 and 2002. Pilot students consistently identified that, in addition to an improved understanding of their learning disabilities, they most valued:

- provision of learning strategy supports by appropriately qualified and engaged staff
- access to and instruction in assistive technology from staff with expertise in both the technology itself and learning disabilities.

Currently, all institutions provide services, supports, and accommodations to students with disabilities. These services are quite diverse and are funded by the Ministry's Accessibility Fund for Students with Disabilities (AFSD) allocation. It was on the basis of these Key Findings and LOTF's preliminary recommendation to the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, that the Enhanced Services Fund (ESF) was created at all colleges and universities in Ontario in September, 2002. (since folded into the AFSD allocation). It is through this dedicated funding envelope that students with learning disabilities are provided with the support of knowledgeable Learning Strategists and Assistive Technologists.

Because of its intensive reliance on research upon which its key findings are based, LOTF was able to identify which components worked particularly well for students during the pilot years, and then apply that knowledge to its final report recommendations.



The supporting data for the creation of the Enhanced Services Fund is as follows:

- pilot institutions reported that 1120 pilot students utilised assistive technology and 1086 pilot students utilised learning and metacognitive strategies during the pilot period
- pilot students cited assistive technology and learning metacognitive strategies as the most useful program components provided to them by the pilot projects
- 86% of pilot students indicated that they had used and/or plan to use assistive technology
- 94% of pilot students indicated that they had used and/or plan to use learning strategy and metacognitive training supports

On the basis of research, LOTF was able to refine certain components from each of the unique pilot programs into a set of focused supports that best assist students with learning disabilities to become successful and independent learners. Many of the institutions providing these services include transition programming into and out of post-secondary education, self-advocacy training as well as career counseling and training in their Enhanced Services Projects. Thus, the justification for ESF funding was easy to produce and accountability is equally easy to establish at any given time. In fact, the Enhanced Services Fund was purposely established to set an exemplary standard of accountability to the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. Still, it must be remembered — a fact that is particularly relevant to Transitions — successful entry into and graduation from post-secondary education is not the only goal for students with learning disabilities.

## **I. 2. Beyond Success Indicators:**

The six Success Indicators articulated in 1998 were certainly ambitious, particularly given the difficulties encountered by students leading up to the establishment of the pilots. Case in point, despite strong legislation in the form of Bill 82, and later in the Education Act, which requires school boards to identify and provide appropriate service to all students with special needs, over 80% of the pilot students arrived at college or university without adequate documentation.

As well, 35% of the pilot students repeated at least one grade, and only 56% were identified as having a learning disability within the primary or secondary school. Of these, 70% stated that they received some special education in elementary school, but in senior grades, there was significantly less help available—all of which is indicative of failure of the system to provide a proper level of specialised programming for which it was, and is, legislated. Not surprisingly, 85% of incoming pilot students reported that their learning disabilities mostly affect their academic functioning.

Thus the creation of the Learning Opportunities Task Force in 1997, with a five-year allocation of \$30 million, was based upon a fundamental premise:

*“There is an assumption that attending and graduating from post-secondary educational programs improve employment opportunities, which provide higher wages, which increases financial and personal independence and thus enhances the overall quality of the lives of its graduates; the question remains as to whether this assumption is true for young men and women who have learning disabilities.”* (Levine and Nourse 231)

LOTF answered the first part of this question by achieving and often exceeding expectations related to Success Indicators. Answering the second half of this question, which is essentially related to *quality of life*, requires in-depth, follow-up research of the kind only available through the use of a longitudinal study, relying upon both quantitative and qualitative research methods:

*“Studies that focus on isolated factors such as employment at a single point in time do not provide an adequate picture of a graduate’s situation. In order to understand adjustment patterns for individuals, we need to develop composite measures to examine multiple components as they interact.” Thus in addition to comparing multiple components using quantitative measures, “we need to employ qualitative analytic techniques to provide a much-needed look at the factors that affect long-term adjustment and paint a picture of post-school life that is currently unavailable, given the constraints of quantitative research methods.”* (Levine and Nourse 231)

In the province of Ontario, we have concentrated our collective efforts on education for good reason. As students entered into jobs, careers and all facets of life after the pilot experience, LOTF was quite confident that they did so armed with real benefits to assist them in reaching their potential. We have continued with, and do not see any reason to be dissuaded from the assumption that what matters most in determining success, broadly speaking, is a good education appropriately applied.

Still, even as LOTF was satisfied with student achievement of Success Indicators, there were lingering questions about the success of students with learning disabilities after they left the pilot programs. How ever positive the educational experience, we know that learning disabilities are very much a life-long condition. Therefore, we could not help but wonder if we had accommodated and served students well, by not only helping them to pass into and out of post-secondary education, but also to attain the skills they need to become fully successful after their post-secondary years.

We asked ourselves if the effects of the pilot experience would continue beyond the achievement of Success Indicators. Most of all, we wondered if our pilot population had attained resiliency and permanent skills, and if the pilot experience offered students with learning disabilities the potential to improve their lives for themselves.

*“What happens 5 years beyond the transition period, or 10 years beyond, has been of less concern to the field. Questions have arisen as to how adequately youth with learning disabilities served by special education are prepared to cope in later years, particularly after the major portion of services previously provided are no longer available. Some follow-up investigators have attempted to respond to this query, but the majority have simply combined data from youth in transition, youth in floundering period, and youth in their 20s who are well into the struggle of adjusting to adult life. It is clear that the expectations and realities for these different periods of time are quite different.” (Levine and Nourse 220)*

### **I. 3. The *Transitions* Longitudinal Study:**

The problem with asking these questions is that the answers do not come easily. The only way to know what happens in the post pilot years is to follow a significant percentage of the population for a period of some years. Longitudinal studies are not undertaken lightly. They tend to be expensive and difficult to conduct. In addition, contemplating doing a forensic audit, that is, studying a population that had disbanded for two full years by the time the study had begun, is highly unusual. Still, LOTF determined that the uniqueness of this research project and its population of students with learning disabilities was simply too

important to risk not tapping into.

Consequently, the *Transitions* Longitudinal Study was launched with the following goals in mind:

1. To inform persons with learning disabilities about their own potential and their continuing obstacles and successes in order to assist them in making positive changes for themselves throughout their lives.
2. To inform government and policy makers about the needs and abilities of students and persons with learning disabilities in order to make a positive contribution to public policy and government sponsored programs and services, both in terms of fiscal responsibility and program effectiveness.
3. To inform post-secondary institutions with the intent of influencing their existing and evolving programs for students with learning disabilities, primarily ESF.
4. To inform prospective employers and government departments involved with job training and career and employment issues about the needs and abilities of adults with learning disabilities.
5. Finally, as an overarching goal, to broaden and keep relevant the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities' body of knowledge and information, regarding the efficacy of specialized programs and services for students with learning disabilities.

In order to achieve these goals, *Transitions* decided to engage a population of post-pilot participants, and to conduct an annual survey asking questions in the following categories:

1. Education — to assess participants' views about their LOTF and post-secondary experience from a more distant perspective, and if relevant, their current educational involvement.
2. Employment/Career — to investigate the successes and areas of difficulty participants are experiencing in the labour market, and in finding career-related employment.

3. Social — given that a learning disability is a life long condition, and affects areas of functioning other than education and employment, examining social relationships, living arrangements and how participants choose to spend their non-working time is essential to establishing a holistic profile of our population throughout the duration of the study.

## II. METHODOLOGY

### II. 1. The Surveying Process: An Overview:

The third *Transitions* survey was launched on February 1, 2006, and the surveying process continued for seven months. The survey was once again made available to participants to complete either online via the *Transitions* Portal or by telephone with a Research Assistant. Mailed surveys were continued as a third option for those participants were very difficult to get a hold of, or otherwise did not have access to the Internet but who also did not prefer to do the survey over the telephone.

Our final figure of completed surveys for this round is 141, down from our total of 195 from the second phase.

The following will outline in detail the surveying process and the obstacles that were encountered for the third phase of the *Transitions* Study.

### II. 2. Getting Started:

In preparation for the third round of *Transitions* surveying, the Research Assistants sent out a general email to all *Transitions* participants notifying them that the third survey was about to begin. Surveying commenced on February 1, 2006, when participants were emailed invitations which included their unique token IDs, as well as a link directing them toward the *Transitions* Portal where they can complete the survey online. The email invitations were well received by the participants resulting in a healthy level of surveys being completed online within the first couple of weeks. This can be partly attributed to the use of these email invitations for the intake and second surveys, as participants have become familiar with them. Some participants eagerly responded by completing the survey online, while some sent one of the Research Assistants an

email requesting a telephone survey.

In spite of this positive start, we did encounter some problems, as is the nature of longitudinal research.

### **II. 3. Telephone Surveying:**

Once the third survey was launched and all participants were contacted either through email or telephone, our next step was to get the participants to complete the survey. As stated above, there was an early surge due to the email invitations, which resulted in many online surveys being completed via the *Transitions* Portal. As the weeks went by, however, it became clear that the level of involvement and the number of surveys being completed online was declining. This was especially true during the months of March and April, when essays, midterms and final examinations are given in colleges and universities. Many of our *Transitions* participants are still attending a post-secondary institution.

In an attempt to revive the momentum, the Research Assistants began a “reminder campaign” and started emailing and calling participants on a regular basis to encourage them to complete the third *Transitions* survey. This generated the revitalization that we were hoping for as another batch of participants completed the survey online, while others requested to have a telephone survey with a Research Assistant. Some were willing to complete the survey when the first contacted by a Research Assistant. Some participants, as a result of their learning disabilities, found the online survey to be too distracting and difficult to navigate, and asked to complete the survey verbally while a Research Assistant transcribed responses.

## **II. 4: Telephone Surveying: The Interview:**

Telephone surveys were set up according to the availability of the participants and all efforts were made to accommodate their schedules by the Research Assistants, in an attempt to engage as many participants as possible and to retain their interest in the study. As a result, telephone surveys were conducted during the weekdays and on weekends in the morning, afternoon or evening depending on the participant's schedule.

However, a couple of obstacles arose when a Research Assistant telephoned the participant on the agreed upon date and time to complete the survey. First, the participant was not at home, and second, the participant had to reschedule because something else had come up. This of course delayed the surveying process, because in some cases it would take numerous more attempts for the participants to complete the survey either because they became unreachable or they were too busy with school or work.

When a Research Assistant was finally able to get a telephone survey underway, she would notify the participant that the length of time it would take to complete the survey is about 30 minutes. The Research Assistant would then ask the questions and transcribe the responses given by the participant. The advantage to conducting a telephone survey included the ability to elaborate on or to clarify questions, which resulted in more detailed responses. By speaking to the participant, the Research Assistants also had the opportunity to get to know them better, and to learn about other aspects of their lives which were not brought up in the survey. This helped to create a stronger sense of amity between the participants and *Transitions* staff, and we hope it will enhance the *Transitions* community as the study progresses. It was also imperative for the Research Assistant to obtain the most up-to-date contact information to help combat participant attrition.

Once a survey has been completed, the Research Assistant would then log on to the *Transitions* Portal to access the online survey. In order to input the responses, the Research Assistant had to enter in the participant's unique token ID, which is what the study uses to differentiate between all the participants.



## **II. 5. Online Surveys:**

The *Transitions* Portal Administrator was able to make the online survey more user-friendly and managed to fix many of the problems that were occurred in the last survey. As with the second survey, participants have the option to save their responses and return to the survey at a later date and time.

Since the beginning of the study, the Research Assistants expected that the convenience factor of the online survey would elicit a positive response from participants, particularly as they could do the survey at their own leisure and in the privacy of their own homes. Since many of the *Transitions* participants were familiar with using the computer and the Internet, they expressed preference for the *Transitions* portal, though procrastination proved to be a major obstacle. On average, it took about four to six email and telephone reminders combined before the majority of participants completed the survey online.

## **II. 6. Mailed Surveys:**

Given the difficulty in reaching some of the *Transitions* participants, the Research Assistants decided to continue offering the option of a mailed survey with a pre-paid envelope that had begun in the second phase. Unlike the second survey, which was mailed out late into the surveying process, the third survey was mailed out at the beginning. The Research Assistants mailed surveys to *Transitions* participants without email addresses or Internet access and stragglers who were not able to complete the third survey on time. It was hoped that the mailed surveys including a personalized letter would succeed in encouraging participants.

When the Research Assistants followed up with participants, some of them did mention that they would prefer having the survey mailed out rather than completing it online or by the telephone. There were a couple of setbacks with this approach. For example, some participants

thought that the survey was junk mail and threw it out before opening it. Other participants forgot about the survey after initially opening it and did not complete it at a later date.

## **II. 7. *Transitions* Portal:**

The *Transitions* Portal, located at [www.transitionsportal.ca](http://www.transitionsportal.ca), came into existence in the spring of 2005 and accompanying its launch was the *First Annual Transitions Longitudinal Research Study* to the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. A PDF version of it as well as the *Second and Third Annual Report* can presently be downloaded from the *Transitions* Portal.

One of the main purposes of the Portal is to create a sense of community among the *Transitions* participants and staff. The Portal is meant to be a sort of virtual meeting place where participants can get together and meet each other to share their experiences about what it is like for them to be in school, or getting through it, as well as discussing how their learning disabilities affect their work. The Portal provides a forum for participants to gather, and in this way act as a substitute for face-to-face meetings, which are not possible at this time given the diversity in geographic locations of participants ranging from British Columbia to Nova Scotia.

## **II. 8. *Transitions* Administrative Portal:**

In addition to the public *Transitions* Portal there is also an Administrative Portal which only *Transitions* staff have access to. This Administrative Portal is where all completed surveys are maintained, providing the Research Assistants with the convenience of viewing the responses online by simply logging in and selecting which survey they wish to analyze. This Portal has a variety of functions, including the ability to send out emails to the participants, keep track of who has completed the survey and who has not, export data into an Access database for

analysis, and also to providing a manageable way of looking up token IDs.

The Administrative Portal was very useful when it came to writing the participants Thank You cards for completing the second survey. The Research Assistants were able to specifically look up the individual responses of each participant and to write a personalized note in his or her card, which many participants were appreciative of receiving, along with a *Transitions* pen. The Administrative Portal also allows the Research Assistant to update any new contact information for participants by editing his or her particular profile, though such information is also entered into the *Transitions* Study Database.

## **II. 9. *Transitions* Study Database:**

The *Transitions* Study Database is essentially a very detailed Excel spreadsheet, in which the Research Assistants record everything from telephone numbers to addresses to small notes about what participants are planning on doing in their immediate future, so as to get an idea of some of the changes that could happen when the third round of surveying begins.

This database is the primary resource that the Research Assistants work with in terms of contacting participants, updating their contact information including email addresses and telephone numbers, as well as keeping track of how the surveying process is going. The database is highlighted to denote the different status of each participants in order to keep track of what stage of the survey a participant is at. For instance those who have completed the survey will be indicated in a blue font, while those who have agreed to do the survey but have not yet completed it are highlighted in grey. This colour coding system is meant to avoid confusion and overlap in contacting participants for the Research Assistants who uses the spreadsheet. For the purposes of surveying and organization, the participants were divided into two separate groups, and one Research Assistant was assigned to each one.

It then became the responsibility of the Research Assistant to contact and engage her own group of participants and to encourage them to complete the second survey. By dividing up the participants it also helped to promote a sense of familiarity, with the same Research Assistant intending to follow through year after year. Participants were able to recognize the name of their Research Assistant resulting in fewer deleted email messages, and ignored telephone calls.

## **II. 10: Surveying Wrap-up:**

The third round of surveying ended on October 19, 2006, two months later than the first expected deadline of August 31, 2006. Thank you cards were once again sent out to each participant along with a *Transitions* pen. This was done to achieve a greater sense of appreciation on behalf of the *Transitions* staff to the participants for completing the survey. For the next round of surveying, the timeframe will be significantly condensed, and the effort to get participants to complete surveys will be more focused and strategic.

## **II. 11. Challenges for Phase III:**

The major challenge in the third phase of surveying was the difficulty contacting some participants due to invalid telephone numbers, addresses and email accounts. As well, *Transitions* experienced normal study attrition that cannot be combated with any amount of strategic planning.

Incorrect email information was an issue for several reasons – many of the participants ceased to use their school email account after graduating and did not provide us with a new address, some simply stopped using one account in favour of another and, in some cases, participants did not have access to a computer due to different living arrangements or no longer being a student.

In the third phase, Research Assistants made an special effort to obtain correct email addresses for all participants who were surveyed, even requesting a ‘primary’ and ‘secondary’ address when possible.

With respect to inaccurate telephone and address information, drawing from a transitory population makes it challenging to maintain a database that is up-to-date. Despite the fact that Research Assistants have made significant efforts to collect current contact information in each phase of surveying and have urged participants to forward new telephone numbers or addresses at any time of the year, it has proved difficult. Besides invalid contact information, another obstacle was the frequency of telephone calls going to voice mail. Research Assistants observed a surge in unanswered calls in the third round and attributed this to people either not recognizing the displayed telephone number or not wanting to answer a long distance ring. It was very unusual for a participant to respond to a voice mail message, so it was ineffectual to leave a message in these instances. To compound these difficulties, family members were often unwilling to divulge new telephone numbers if they did not recognize the caller or the name of the study. Without an accurate telephone number or address, the usual means of searching for a person via the internet yielded no results. Still, overall the surveying process was enjoyable and successful, with our core *Transitions* participants committed to participating in the study for its duration.

### III. LITERATURE REVIEW

#### III.1. Overview of primary articles used in this study related to the General Population

**Rene Morissette and Anick Johnson. “Are Good Jobs Disappearing in Canada?” Business and Labour Market Analysis Division: Statistics Canada, 2005. 11F0019MIE – No. 239.**

Using data about hourly wages from the Labour Force Survey from the 1997-2004 period, this study sets out to assess whether the importance of low-wage jobs and well-paid jobs has changed over this period of time. They find little evidence that the importance of well-paid jobs has declined, and little evidence that jobs paying \$10.00 per hour or less have increased in importance in the Canadian economy.

Significantly, however, this study highlights the increasing gap between young workers (under 35) and those who have been in the workforce for years. Importantly, it also shows that within age groups, the wages of newly hired male and female employees (those with two years of seniority or less) have fallen substantially. In addition, in the private sector, a trend of hiring new employees on a temporary basis has risen substantially, from 11% in 1989 to 21% in 2004. The authors suggest that companies benefit by offering temporary jobs to their new employees because it reduces their need to provide defined-benefit pension plans.

**Rene Morissette and Garnett Picot. “Summary of: Low-paid Work and Economically Vulnerable Families over the Last Two Decades” Business and Labour Market Analysis Division: Statistics Canada, 2005. 11F0019 – No. 249.**

This study analyses fluctuations in hourly wages over the period of 1981-2004. In this period of time, hourly wages have remained remarkably stable, and among employees ages 17-64, median hourly wages remained at approximately \$15. However, wages in full-time versus part-time jobs evolved in a very different way. Median hourly wages in full-time jobs rose about 5% while those in part-time jobs fell by 15%. In addition, median wages among newly hired employees has fallen. Median hourly wages for male workers with two years of seniority or less fell 13% between 1981-2004, while among women they fell 2%.

Overall, the proportion of low-paid jobs has been stable in this time period. In 1981, 17% of the jobs held by workers aged 25-64 paid below \$10 per hour, and this changed to 16% in 2004. This study theorizes that since the workforce has become better educated and more experienced over the last two decades, one would expect the incidents of low-paid work to fall. However, this was not the case, and within demographic groups like those aged 25-34, the proportion of low wage work increased.

**Lev Grossman. "Grow Up? Not so Fast." *Time Magazine*, January 24, 2005.**

There is a strong trend among young people today to live at home with their parents well into adulthood, to extend finishing their education, to delay establishing their career, and to avoid or delay committing to permanent relationships. This cover Time magazine article characterizes this twentysomething phenomenon as an extended childhood, a sort of Peter Pan syndrome.

"The years from 18 until 25 and even beyond have become a distinct and separate life stage, a strange, transitional never-never land between adolescence and adulthood in which people stall for a few years, putting off the iron cage of adult responsibility that constantly threatens to crash down on them. They're betwixt and between. You could call them twixters."

Of particular interest to our *Transitions* panel whose average is 27.59, is that "the percentage of 26-year-olds living with their parents has nearly doubled since 1970, from 11% to 20%...." In 2004, 49% of Transitions participants were living with their parents, and in 2005 the number had dropped to 39%. As one can see, 39% is much higher than the North American average of 20%. There are extenuating reasons why the Transitions group have chosen to live at home longer than the general population, often related to support and the financial assistance they receive from their parents. Living arrangements are one of several interesting social issues that *Transitions* will observe in the coming years.

**Charles M. Beach and Ross Finnie. "A Longitudinal Analysis of Earnings Change in Canada." Business and Labour Market Analysis Division: Statistics Canada, 2004. 11F0019 – No. 227.**

This study analyses tax-based longitudinal data collected from 1982-1989. It found that over this period of time there has been a rise in earnings of women, increased polarization of earnings among men, and a significant decline in the real earning of entry level workers (age 20-24) for both men and women. In addition, upward mobility with regard to wages is shown to

be significantly higher for male than for female workers, though with some decline in the 1998-1999 periods.

**Ross Finnie and Ted Wannell. "The Evolution of the Gender Earnings Gap Amongst Canadian University Graduates." Business and Labour Market Analysis Division: Statistics Canada, 2004. 11F0019MIE – No. 235.**

This paper analyses the gender earnings gap amongst Canadian Bachelor's level university graduates. The overall gap, after two years in the workforce, was quite narrow, though it increased five years after graduation, with men earning more over time than women and increased further over time. Women are shown to be overrepresented in disciplines that generally have low earnings: "a large portion of the gender earnings gap amongst recent graduates has been associated with a general tendency for female graduates of a given field of study to have lower earnings than males regardless of the specific nature of their current job characteristics, post-graduation work experience, or personal attributes." (13) A contributing factor may be that men employed full-time work more hours than women, with the gap growing over time. Many more male than female graduates worked very long hours (more than 50 hours per week), with more than one-quarter of full-time employed men working greater than 50 hours per week in every age group, compared to just 17.1% of female graduates. The gap, however, is greatest amongst married graduates with children: married mothers in full-time work averaged at least four hours less work a week than their male counterparts.

**Rene Morissette et al. "Relative Wage Patterns among the Highly Educated in a Knowledge-based Economy." Business and Labour Market Analysis Division: Statistics Canada, 2004.**

The major finding of this paper is that even though employment grew much faster in the high-knowledge industries in the last two decades compared with other industries, trends in relative wages and real wages of university and high school graduates have displayed similar patterns across industries. However, earnings of university graduates with degrees in engineering, mathematics and computer sciences are higher than those of other university graduates (21). This study also notes that in all private sector industries, young and prime-aged female university graduates have experienced faster wage growth than their male counterparts (23).



**Allen, Mary and Chantal Vaillancourt. “Class of 2000: Profile of post-secondary graduates and student debt.” *Culture, Tourism and the Centre for Education Statistics Division: Statistics Canada*. 2004. Catalogue no. 81-595-MIE – No. 016.2004.**

This research paper includes results from the 2002 National Graduates Survey, which, at the time of this report, is the most current Canadian National study about the transition from post-secondary education to the labour market. The NGS is a longitudinal study that measures the labour market success of graduates from Canadian universities and colleges two and five years after graduation. The class of 2000, surveyed initially at the time of graduation, returned results in 2002 about education, employment, and debt.

Allen and Vaillancourt highlight the complexity of the transition to the labour market after graduation. Despite the myriad of paths chosen by this graduating class, two years after graduation 90% of the class of 2000 who did not return to post-secondary education were employed.

Both university and college graduates were equally likely to be employed; however those with bachelor degrees typically held jobs with higher earnings. Eighty-one percent of both college and university graduates were employed full-time, with 9% of college graduates working part-time and 8% of university graduates working part-time. The unemployment rate was the same for both university and college graduates in 2002 with a rate of 7%.

The estimated gross annual earnings of 2000 graduates who were working full-time in 2002 were markedly different depending on the level of educational attainment. The median annual earnings for a college graduate was \$31,200.00 while bachelor graduates typically earned \$39,000.00 annually. Gender does play a significant role when it comes to the difference in salaries between college and university graduates. The median annual earning of a male college graduate was \$35,000.00 while the median annual earnings of a female college graduate was \$28,600.00 annually, with a difference of \$6,400.00. The same is true for university graduates. The median annual earning of a male university graduate was \$42,000 while the median annual earning of a female university graduate was \$37,000.00 with a difference of \$5,000.00. This wage difference is interesting, as Allen and Vaillancourt point out that female graduates were slightly more likely to be employed than their male counterparts two years after graduation, however they were less likely to be working full-time.

**Mylene Lambert, Klarka Zeman, Mary Allen, Patrick Bussiere. “Who Pursues post-secondary education, who leaves and why: Results from the Youth in Transition Survey.” *Statistics Canada*. 2004. Catalogue no. 81-595-MIE2004026.**

This study uses data from the Youth in Transition Survey, a national longitudinal survey which first interviewed Canadian youth aged 18-20 in 1999 with a follow-up in both 2000 and 2002. Emphasis is placed on university education.

Over two-thirds of youth in Canada have gone to either college or university in their early twenties. In general, students who pursue post-secondary education are more likely to be women, single with no children, and they are more likely to have lived with two parents while in high school. Youth who have a strong sense of belonging in high school and who do well in high school are more likely to continue their education.

Fifteen percent of youth aged 20-22 who attended post-secondary left their studies without completing their program. Lack of program ‘fit’ is the most common reason for leaving post-secondary, though one in ten youth cited lack of money as the main reason, while only 7% left because they wanted to work. Those who left post-secondary to travel, to change programs, or who just ‘wanted a break’ were the most likely to return, with return rates of 68%, 47% and 38% respectively. Overall, almost 40% of youth that left post-secondary education at the age of 18-20 had returned two years later.

Though this study reports the 2002 YITS findings, the writers of the report emphasize the ongoing nature of their work, stating: “future cycles of YITS will provide a clearer picture on the completion of post-secondary education...[and] will also allow for an in-depth examination of the labour market outcomes associated with having some post-secondary education....” (20)

**Teresa Janz. “Low-paid employment and moving up: A closer look at full-time, full-year workers.” *Statistics Canada*. 2004. Catalogue no. 75F0002MIE – 2004009.**

The average Canadian who worked full time in 1996-2001 had a 14% probability of being employed with low hourly wages. Low hourly wages is considered less than \$10.95 per hour (after tax). Those with a university degree had an 8% probability of experiencing low pay compared to 21% of those with high school or less. Women in the service industry were most likely to experience low wages.

Sex differences remain with regard to annual earnings even when other variables were consistent like age, education, occupation and industry. Women earn significantly less money annually than men, on average \$4000.00 - \$8000.00 less. Women are more likely to be low paid and less likely to experience upward mobility in the workplace (men experience a 19% probability of low pay while women experience a 34% probability).

**Sandra Franke. "School, work and the school-work combination by young people." Housing, Family and Social Statistics Division. Statistics Canada. 2004. Catalogue no. 89-584-MIE – No.3.**

This research paper utilizes the General Social Survey and the National Graduate Survey to analyze the time use of high school and post-secondary students when they combine work and study and furthermore how that time use changes upon entry into the labour force.

The transition from school to work has gone from being a simple event to a process, currently estimated to take eight years to complete. The length of this process has an impact on other transitions, like leaving the family home, entering a conjugal union and having children.

One in three young people combine work and study instead of working full-time. Interestingly, the combination of light work and school does not cause men or women to change the amount of time spent on education. Light work has the same effect on men and women, both cut out leisure time, especially socialising and watching television. However, when combining demanding work and school, socialising and leisure and sports become non-existent in the lives of working students. The amount of time spent sleeping also decreases.

Men tend to remain dependent on their parents longer than women, regardless of their employment status. Forty-seven percent of women at the post-secondary level no longer live with their parents compared with 34% of young men.

When the transition from school to work is completed, the time use pattern of young people relieves considerably. A job fills a large portion of the day but much time is left for leisure activities and personal care. Young men make the transition to work earlier than their female counterparts. Employed young men also devote more time to work than young women.

***Highlights from the 2003-2004 Ontario University Graduate Survey. Council of Ontario Universities.***

This executive summary done by the Council of Ontario Universities draws its information from the Labour Force survey of 2002 by Statistics Canada. This survey is designed to describe employment experiences, earnings and skills matches of students who graduated in 2001 from undergraduate university programs.

Two years after their 2001 graduation, 95.8% of graduates from undergraduate degree programs in the province of Ontario were employed compared with a rate of 93.6% six months after graduation. Their average annual earnings two years after graduation was \$43,296.00 annually compared with \$37,789.00 achieved six months after graduation. Two years after graduation, 85.3% of graduates were working either 'closely' or 'somewhat' related to their field of study, compared with 80.2% six months after graduation.

***Provincial Overview of Survey Results Ontario. Employment Profile: 2001-2002 College Graduates. Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. 2003.***

Of college graduates in Ontario, 57.8% were employed full-time in 2002 with 10.4% employed part-time and 10.2% unemployed. Of those employed part-time 43% say they could not find a full-time job, while 10.7% say working part-time is a personal choice. Forty-four percent of women report working part-time while only 39.7% of men work part-time.

Forty-seven percent of college graduates one year after graduation are employed full-time in a job related to their field of study, with the rate increasing to 51.8% two years after graduation and 61.5% three years after graduation.

The average starting salary one year after graduation is \$26,680.00, increasing to \$28,779.00 and \$34,171.00 two and then three years after graduation.

***2001 Census: analysis series. "Education in Canada: Raising the Standard." Statistics Canada. 2001. Catalogue no. 96F0030XIE2001012.***

According to the 2001 Census, Canada entered the twenty-first century with a population better educated than ever, with 61% of Canadians ages 25-34 having completed post-

secondary education. Twenty-eight percent of all individuals in that age group had university qualifications and 21% held college diplomas while 12% had trade credentials. By comparison, in 1991, only 49% of Canadians had completed education beyond high school.

As far as field of study is concerned, the highest number of Canadian graduates had degrees in Education with a rate of 14%. However, an increasing number of students are choosing technology and business fields in 2001 with Engineering and Commerce attracting the most students with 9% and 8% of the population, respectively.

Women accounted for 57% of the growth in university qualifications in the 1990 and similarly in college, women accounted for 59% of graduates. Two-thirds of trade certificates are held by men.

**Klarka Zema, Tamara Knighton, and Patrick Bussiere. "Education and labour market pathways of young Canadians between age 20 and 22: an Overview." *Culture, Tourism and the Centre for Education Statistics Division, Statistics Canada*. 2001. Catalogue no. 81-595-MIE – No. 018.**

This research paper utilises the Youth in Transition Survey, a Canadian National longitudinal study designed to examine the patterns of major transition in young people's lives, with a focus on education, training and work. It reports the results of youth aged 20-22 in 2001 with regard to education and work.

By age 22, 76% of youth had participated in post-secondary, though only 35% had graduated; this is because many youth at age 22 are still attending post-secondary education, and is not meant to indicate that they have left post-secondary. Eleven percent of youth in this age group left post-secondary without graduating, though more than 35% of those PSE Leavers at age 20 had returned to school at age 22.

The proportion of youth not in school and not working rose from 10% at age 20 to 14% at age 22. However the authors caution that this "should not necessarily be cause for concern," as many youth leave school to undertake activities outside the labour market such as travelling or volunteering. Unemployment in this age group rests at 3%. The writers of this report emphasise that this report is an initial overview, but that the analysis must be extended over the long-term.

**Terman, Lewis M, Robert R. Sears, Lee j. Cronbach, and Pauline S. Sears. “Terman Life Cycle Study of Children with High Ability.” Harvard University: The Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, Murray Research Centre. [www.radcliffe.edu/murray](http://www.radcliffe.edu/murray). Murray Archive Date, 1996.**

This pioneering longitudinal study began by comparing a teacher-selected group of children with high IQ's from (mostly) urban California with children in the general population to discover similarities and differences. Research continued from 1922 until the present with follow-ups every five years in order to explore the long-term development of gifted children. This is the lengthiest longitudinal study ever conducted.

As the questionnaire devised for young children could not remain the same as the population aged, new series of questions were devised at each five-year interval. The children in 1922 reported on school, interests and reading choices and again on the same in 1936 along with additional questions about life history and family relationships. In 1940 the questions were extended into the areas of the subject's marriage and children and future plans, with similar follow-ups in 1950-1960. From 1972, 1977 and 1982 the questionnaires dealt with problems of older people – retirement, aging etc. Besides the standardized tests (Stanford-Binet Intelligence Test and other intelligence testing from the time) there were also scales, listings and open-ended questions which were coded and recorded.

The Terman longitudinal study highlights the necessity of allowing a panel study of this kind to evolve and change as the population under question ages and develops. In fact, in 1945, the Terman study, on the request of the participants, sent out a brief two-page questionnaire concerning the effects of military service during World War Two. The broader purposes of longitudinal research, fully understanding the variables present in the life course of participants and the influence of those variables on performance, are best met when the questionnaire is flexible and adapts to allow emerging issues to be isolated and investigated.

In addition, the Terman study overall has a low attrition rate for such a lengthy study. There were 1,528 participants in 1922 and by 1983, 863 participants were still in contact. Though this may initially seem like a low number, we must remember that this study began in 1922 and 410 participants were deceased in 1983. Interesting to note is that only 36 participants voluntarily withdrew from the study and 214 were marked as “unknown” in 1983, which meant there had been no contact since 1977. Though it is difficult to define the attrition rate for this study because of the sporadic response to the numerous follow-ups, what can be said is that in 1982 data exists for 75% of men and 80% of women who are not known to be

dead. The Terman study seems to show that hand-picking participants and remaining in contact with them is enough to keep participants involved in a longitudinal study, even for a life-time.

### **III. 2. Overview of primary articles used in this study on populations of adults with learning disabilities.**

**Archer, Armstrong, Furrie, Walcot-Gayda, and Wilson. “Putting a Canadian Face on Learning Disabilities” [www.pacfold.ca](http://www.pacfold.ca). March 2007.**

The Learning Disabilities Association of Canada (LDAC) released a study on the societal costs of learning disabilities in Canada on their website [www.pacfold.ca](http://www.pacfold.ca) on March 26, 2007. The research herein, begun in 2004 and costing \$302,000, purports to be unique “because it represents the first time any disability organization in Canada has requested access to Statistics Canada data surveys.” The authors examined ten different sets of Statistics Canada data, and produced a report with a three-fold focus. It concentrates on children, youth and adults with learning disabilities and assesses the specific impacts of LD on each group. For the purpose of this literature review, we have chosen to highlight the PACFOLD data about participants in Ontario age 22-29, the same average age and province of residence as our Transitions cohort.

The authors note that in Ontario, slightly more than one person in 100 (1.2%), age 22-29, report having a learning disability. Of these 62.0% were males. With regards to schooling, 42.6% reported less than a secondary school certificate as their highest level of schooling, and 32.5% reported attending trade school. No mention is made of people with learning disabilities who attend other post-secondary programs. Employment data is equally pessimistic, with 40.5% of 22-29 year olds with learning disabilities in Ontario being unemployed. Salary figures for those who were employed were extremely low; 26.3% earned between \$1-\$9,999 annually and 32.5% earned \$10,000 or more annually. With regards to health, results were more positive, with 50.7% reporting their overall health was excellent or very good and 46.3% saying their physical health was excellent or very good. Mental health figures were equally positive, with 47.3% saying their mental health was excellent or very good. However, when participants were asked how they handle unexpected problems, only 16.7% said they handled unexpected problems

well, though 53.1% said they could handle unexpected demands well.

**Roslyn Kunin & Associates. “Literature Review on the Impact of Post-Secondary Education on Labour Market Attachment for Persons with Disabilities.” Presented to The Disability Resource Network, February 2006.**

This report combines data from the Statistics Canada Participation and Activity Limitation Survey (PALS) and the Statistics Canada Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics (SLID) in order to assess the impact of post-secondary education on labour market success for persons with disabilities. It applies its findings to the disabled population of British Columbia. This study shows a “strong positive relation between post-secondary education and labour market attachment for persons with disabilities.” (Kunin 1) Increasing educational attainment among persons with disabilities improves their chances in the labour market and decreases the percentage of those not in the labour market from 58% to 30.3% for men and from 73.3% to 40% for women (Kunin 7). While this is also true for the general population, what this study makes clear is that higher educational attainment benefits persons with disabilities much more positively than the overall population (Kunin 9). It therefore calls for increased support for students with disabilities in post-secondary programs. The authors note that there is no research yet, linking teaching approaches, teacher qualifications, length of programs etc. in post-secondary, to success in the labour market for students with disabilities.

**Levine, Phyllis, Camille Marder, and Mary Wagner, “Services and Supports for Secondary School Students with Disabilities: A Special Topic Report of Findings from the National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS2),” May 2004.**

This 10-year longitudinal study is following a population of more than 11,000 youth with disabilities ages 13 through 16. This extraordinarily large population was receiving special education services in grade 7 or above in the 2000-01 school year.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997 mandate that “...all children with disabilities have available to them a free appropriate public education (FAPE) that emphasises special education and independent living” (IDEA 1997 Final Regulations, Sec300.1a U.S. Department of Education, 1999). This longitudinal study tracks and provides the first national picture of the services and supports provided to secondary school youth with disabilities in a single year. As the study evolves it will provide a far more



complete picture as youth develop transition plans, complete their high school programs, and begin to use post-school services and supports. Perhaps most noteworthy for the *Transitions* study, subsequent reports will show how services and supports received during secondary school affect students' long term support needs and outcomes.

**Goldberg, Roberta J. et al. "Predictors of Success in Individuals with Learning Disabilities: A qualitative Analysis of a 20-Year Longitudinal Study." in *Learning Disabilities Research and Practice*. 18:4. 2003. pp. 222-236.**

Goldberg and colleagues report on their qualitative analysis of interview data collected from a 20-year longitudinal study, earlier presented in Raskind et. al. (1999). Forty-one participants with learning disabilities were involved in this study that traced their progress from childhood to adult life and work. Unlike their previous research where quantitative data was statistically analyzed producing a number of significant success predictors, in the present study, the researchers focused on interview data and qualitative analysis. The main goal was to achieve deeper understanding of these success predictors from an insider perspective. The interviews were two to six hours in length and were conducted by four experienced professionals from the fields of ethnography, clinical psychology, and learning disabilities.

Qualitative analysis of interview data validated previous findings about success predictors and their contribution to specific outcomes for individuals with learning disabilities. More importantly, the researchers gained a deeper understanding of specific cognitive strategies that shaped these predictors (flexibility, anticipating difficulties, breaking down goals into steps, reciprocal relationships with mentors, and recognition of stress triggers). They also identified several new themes, such as the profound influence of learning disabilities in many contexts, and the necessity for continued support throughout their life. Lastly, the longitudinal nature revealed considerable stability of success predictors from year 10 to year 20, with qualitative data revealing that attributes leading to formation of these predictors began to develop in childhood and remained remarkably stable over time.

The conclusions drawn by the authors are three-fold. First, their position in light of the evidence, demonstrating the impact of a learning disability across many areas of life, is that the field of research and service delivery currently has a very limited scope, focusing primarily on educational contexts. The researchers then argue for a need to broaden the spectrum of intervention strategies to include self-awareness, proactivity, perseverance,

goal setting, use of support, and emotional coping. They finally emphasise that these efforts are fully justified by the fact that learning disabilities are life-long conditions, as confirmed by the findings from the present study, and require continuous support from parents, teachers, professionals, and the community.

**Madaus, J. W., Foley, T. E., McGuire, J. M., & Ruban, L. M. "A follow up investigation of university graduates with learning disabilities." *Career Development of Exceptional Individuals*, 24:2. 2001. pp. 133-146.**

The authors surveyed 89 students who graduated from a public university in Northeast United States between 1985 and 1999. The sample came from a pool of students who received special needs services throughout their post-secondary education at this university. The questionnaire used in the survey was developed by the authors who took appropriate measures to ensure content and construct validity, and they also report high reliability at 0.92 and 0.95 for the two scales.

The results support the findings in earlier studies (as reported by the authors) that indicate successful transition of post-secondary students with learning disabilities into the workforce. As shown in the present survey, these individuals are employed at rates comparable to non-disabled graduates. Their full-time employment levels and salaries also exceed those of persons with learning disabilities who have no post-secondary education. Another finding to be noted is that 66% of participants indicated they did not disclose their disability to an employer. The two main reasons reported by those who did not disclose to their employer were as follows: no need for accommodations and fear of negative impacts on their job security.

The authors stress the importance of the findings showing much higher rates of employment by the post-secondary graduates versus the high-school graduates with learning disabilities. This conclusion is made in light of a significant body of research showing below-average employment success rates for individuals with learning disabilities who did not pursue further education after graduating from high school. While they make a strong argument for the critical importance of post-secondary education for persons with learning disabilities, they also emphasize that all participants in their survey received formal support from the Special Needs Office at the university. The authors also caution about the generalizing findings due to a homogeneous sample - predominantly young, male, and Caucasian - as well as a high national employment rate at the time of the study.

**Raskind, Marshall H. Higgins, Roberta J. Goldberg, Eleanor L., Herman, Kenneth L.** “Patterns of Change and Predictors of Success in Individuals with Learning Disabilities: Results from a Twenty-year Study,” in *Learning Disabilities Research & Practice*, 14:1. 1999. pp. 35-49.

The exploratory research presented in this article is a part of a 20-year longitudinal study, which followed the lives of 41 individuals with learning disabilities, from their entry into the Frostig Center in California as elementary school children, to adult life, and employment 20 years after leaving the Center. In this article the authors present results of a quantitative analysis of the findings to statistically determine the best predictors of success based on data collected at four points in time during the 20-year period. Data was gathered in multiple ways: records, testing, interviews, and researcher ratings on specific success predictors. The dependent measure of success was based on judgments by four researchers with a high inter-rater reliability of 0.97, as well as specific success domains, at 0.94.

It was found that 21 out of 41 participants rated as ‘successful’. Statistical analysis determined most significant predictors of success to be: self-awareness, proactivity, perseverance, goal setting, presence and use of effective support systems, and emotional stability. The authors note that these predictors were more powerful than traditionally considered IQ, academic achievement, life stressors, SES, etc. The success predictors identified showed a high level of statistical significance and accounted for a large portion of the variance in participant success (at 75%).

The authors acknowledge that all participants possessed some of the success attributes, but it was the “successful” individuals whose scores on these predictors achieved statistically significant levels. A main recommendation by the researchers concerns the current practices in special education programs that focus mainly on academic achievement. It is argued that more emphasis should be placed on those attributes that demonstrate a high degree of predictive power as demonstrated in the present study.

**Levine, Phyllis and Nourse, Steven W.,** “What follow-up study say about post school life for Young Men and Women with Learning Disabilities: A Critical Look at the Literature.” in *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 31:3. 1998. pp. 212-233.

This paper is a literature review that references and synthesises the important follow-up American studies regarding post-school outcomes for young men and women with learning

disabilities. Thirteen studies are referenced on post-secondary education and employment with respect to students who were served and have graduated from special education programs in the United States.

This examination of the literature on learning disabilities embraces the notion that higher education is the best investment for attaining one's aspirations and improving one's status in life. The critical question that is of particular interest to researchers is whether the same opportunities occur for youth with learning disabilities as exist for the general population. More specifically, do students with learning disabilities acquire skills and credentials that significantly improve their job opportunities, wages, level of independence, and quality of life? This question was also of interest to LOTF during its piloting years, and, in fact, it fuelled its determination to follow a cohort of post-pilot students in the form of a longitudinal study.

Levine and Nourse acknowledge that little is known about outcomes, particularly quality of life outcomes for graduates from special education programs. Consequently, there exists a need to research, to collect both quantitative and qualitative information:

*“Despite the proliferation of follow-up studies in the past two decades, the immediate and long-term post-high school and long-term post-high school lives of youth and learning disabilities who were served in special education are not well understood; little is known about the quality of life these individuals experience, how they manage (or do not manage to fit) to fit into their communities, how satisfied they are with their lives, and how their life adjustment compares to that of students who were not identified as requiring special education services.” (213)*

This review cites studies that provide empirical evidence to demonstrate that, “generally speaking, youth with learning disabilities do less well than their peers without disabilities,” a claim that students, parents and professionals have always known intuitively through experience, but whose causes and solutions remain to be explored.

The review concludes that while the attainment of post-secondary education may well hold the key to an enhanced quality of life for students with disabilities, the assumption has yet to be fully proven. The authors recommend further follow-up study in order to, “provide the empirical base necessary to advocate for improvements in service delivery, and... to improve the quality of life for our youth” (213).

**Vogel, Susan A, Faith Leonard, William Scales, Peggy Hayeslip, Jane Hermansen, and Linda Donnell, “The National Learning Disabilities Post-Secondary Data Bank: An Overview.” in *The Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 31:3. 1998. pp. 234-247.**

This study reports on the assessment of support services policies, the proportion of students with learning disabilities and factors that affect differences in proportions in a national sample of American post-secondary institutions. A survey was used to investigate admissions policies, year of initiation of learning disability support services, type and location of support services, eligibility criteria for services and accommodations, the number of students with learning disabilities, and demographic and diagnostic information available. These factors contribute to a disparity across the U.S. of the percentage of students with learning disabilities enrolled at post-secondary institutions ranging from 0.5% to almost 10%.

This study references an earlier study that is worth noting in view of the subsequent success of the students who participated in the LOTF pilot programs, and more recently, the Enhanced Services Fund and the *Transitions* longitudinal study. As in most studies in the literature, this study is based on the assumption that completion of post-secondary education is the most effective means by which students with learning disabilities can become financially independent. According to Wagner, Newman and Backorby (1993), “3 to 5 years after exiting from high school, only 30% of the students identified with school-identified learning disabilities in the nation had enrolled in a post-secondary program and a discouraging one-half percent had completed a program or earned a degree.” Wagner, Newman and Backorby could not have envisioned the *Transitions* panel with comparable progress with the general population.

**Raskind, Marshall H, Paul J. Gerber, Roberta J. Goldberg, Eleanor L. Higgins, and Kenneth L. Herman, “ Longitudinal Research in Learning Disabilities: Report on an International Symposium.” in *Journal of Learning Disabilities* 31: 3. 1998. pp. 266-277.**

This article presents highlights from an international symposium on longitudinal research and learning disabilities. Longitudinal research is presented as essential in the field of learning disabilities. According to McKinney (1994), “longitudinal research remains an under-used but powerful tool, in understanding the development of individuals with learning disabilities and its full impact on practice has yet to be realised.”

McKinney is further quoted, consistent with the symposium theme, as follows: “[a] major failing is not taking full advantage of the descriptive and explanatory power of the longitudinal method itself. Accordingly, we still lack basic knowledge about the natural history of learning disability. Specifically, we know little about how the various risk factors that have been associated with the disorder interact over time to produce learning disabilities, or how the manifestations of the disorder evolve and change over time as a function of biologic and environmental factors. Also, we have little direct knowledge that can be applied to prevent or ameliorate the educational consequences of learning disabilities by altering the course of faulty development. Such are the broader purposes of longitudinal research.”

Symposium participants noted the problems inherent in conducting longitudinal research, as follows: cost, funding, control group comparison issues, publication record, participant attrition, communication issues, missing data and excessive data. The symposium, somewhat facetiously wondered, “why would anyone want to do longitudinal research in the first place?” given these difficulties.

Nonetheless, longitudinal research with all its inherent difficulties is regarded as essential to a complete and holistic understanding of persons with learning disabilities, as they determined: “[i]n order to provide persons with learning disabilities with the proper opportunities/experiences and determine the most valid treatment/ interventions—in the long run—for promoting life satisfaction and success, we must fully understand the factors/ variables that are predictive of, and affect, specific outcomes. Again, longitudinal studies are essential for making such determinations.”

**Gerber, Paul J, Rick Ginsberg and Henry B. Reiff. “Learning to Achieve: Suggestions from Adults with Learning Disabilities.” *Journal on Post-Secondary Education and Disability*, 10:1. 1993.**

Seventy-one adults who all evidenced learning disabilities and who had achieved either moderate or high vocational success were interviewed to obtain valuable information about how they have coped successfully with their learning disability both in childhood and adulthood. The interview process covered six facets of life: vocation, education, family, social issues, emotional issues and daily living.

“The driving factor underlying the success of the entire sample was an effort to gain control

of their lives.” This study highlights both the internal and external manifestations of attaining control and in this way demonstrates an ecological perspective about the way to attain success. Internally, it is shown that re-framing the learning disability is central to bind together desire and goal-orientation into a productive process. Externally, coping strategies are shown to be most efficient when the individual is persistent in using them and is in a responsive and supportive environment.

The study insists that service providers for post-secondary students with learning disabilities consider employing an ecological perspective, one that combines internal and external coping strategies. Service providers should insist on integrated approaches “that more accurately reflect the processes used in attaining success.” As well, a holistic approach also involves allowing students to speak with other adults with learning disabilities who can relate their pathways to success and their own unique strategies.

## IV. TRENDS RELATED TO EDUCATION

Definitions of terms to be used in the following sections:

### **Definitions of Post-Secondary Education Status (PSE) as Defined by Statistics Canada**

A **PSE Graduate** is someone who graduated from a post-secondary institution and includes both Graduate Continuers and Graduate-Non Continuers

A **PSE Graduate Continuer** is someone who has graduated from a post-secondary institution but has chosen to pursue further education at a post-secondary institution

A **PSE Graduate Non-Continuer** is someone who has graduated from a post-secondary institution and is no longer continuing to study at post-secondary

A **PSE Continuer** is someone who is currently attending a PSE institution but has not yet graduated

A **Leaver** is someone who has attended a post-secondary institution but is no longer pursuing it and has never graduated from post-secondary



## **IV. 1. Value of Education:**

*Transitions Trend #1 Participants place a high value on post-secondary education. (Continuing Trend)*

In both 2004 and 2005, 45% of participants reported being in post-secondary education. In 2006, 33% of participants are currently studying, with 24 of these participants having returned to post-secondary after graduation.

## **IV. 2. General Education Statistics:**

In 2005, 88 (45%) participants reported that they were currently studying. Although the current number of participants in post-secondary has decreased in 2006 to 46 (33%) participants, we find this number remains high, as the average age of our participants is now 27.59.

Out of the 46 participants who were in school when they completed the third *Transitions* survey 34 (74%) are registered full-time and 12 (26%) are part-time students. Thirty-two were attending university (70%), thirteen attending college diploma programs (28%) and one participant was finishing a college certificate program (2%).

Forty (87%) of the participants currently studying were registered as a student with a disability with the Special Needs Office at their institution. Of the six participants (13%) who were not registered as students with special needs, four of whom are full-time students and two part-time. These participants are an interesting group, as 5 currently work part-time, one of whom is combining a part-time job, a non-paying internship, and studies. One of these participants also works full-time while attending school. This ability to combine school and work shows great resiliency and good time-management.

### **IV. 3. Accommodations and Assistive Technology:**

Out of the 46 participants currently studying, seventy percent are currently using accommodations and 30% have chosen not to. The percentage of participants using assistive technology is much smaller, with only 46% of participants using assistive technology to help with their studies and 54% reporting they do not. This figure seems low for former pilot program participants, though those who do use assistive technology mentioned the following devices as especially helpful:

- Dragon Naturally Speaking
- Kursweil
- Text-help
- Inspiration
- Read/Write

### **IV. 4. Field of Study:**

The following table reports the number of participants in each discipline as compared to the fields of study data in 2004 and 2005. Arts, social science and education continue to be the main fields of study for *Transitions* participants, and students with learning disabilities generally.

<b>Field of Study</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>
Social Sciences	36	19	8
Education	0*	16	7
Arts	16	12	11
Business	13	7	9
Sciences	6	6	1
Computers	5	4	1
Hospitality/Tourism	5	5	1
Engineering	3	4	3
Math	3	1	1
Healthcare/Medical	3	7	3
Architecture	2	2	0
Trade	2	3	0
Media	1	1	1
<b>Total:</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>46</b>

\* Diplomas/degrees in the education field were placed in the Social Science category in 2004

In terms of fields of study, the figures of 2006 are still comparable to those from 2005 and 2004, however we must note that the decrease in participants in post-secondary corresponds exactly to the increase in participants who have graduated from post-secondary, a trend we were expecting to note this year.

## **IV. 5. Post-Secondary Education Continuers:**

As we were surprised in both 2004 and 2005 to find so many of our participants still in school, a question was directed to participants who had not yet graduated and were still in school: *“if you have not yet graduated and are currently studying, are you will in the program you began as a pilot student?”* The answer to this question in 2006 is vastly different to that from 2005.

In 2005 we noted that of the 88 participants who were currently studying, thirty-six (41%) were still pursuing the program they began as a pilot student and eighteen (20%) decided to switch programs, while 35 (39%) had graduated and returned to school.

In 2006, we noticed that of the 46 participants who were currently studying, 22 (48%) had not yet graduated from any post-secondary program. Of these, 13 (59%) were still in the academic program they began as a pilot student. This number is higher than expected, despite the fact that university programs take longer to complete than most college programs and more of our sample are university students. However, when asked what progress they have made toward finishing their program, the responses of these participants were typical of students in this age group. Five participants who are still in the academic program they began as pilot students responded that they were now in their final year and four that they were entering their final semester. Though it took these participants a long time to finish their program, their achievement shows extraordinary perseverance. The remaining four participants had chosen to extend their degrees for a variety of reasons including dropping from full-time to part-time status for health reasons. Again typical of students in this age group, of the 9 PSE Continuers who were no longer in the program they began as pilot students, all had switched programs, and two had switched schools.

The most common reason cited by PSE Continuers for not yet having graduated was that more time was required to finish due to learning disability, 59%. Eighteen percent said that the decision to switch programs prolonged their studies, and 18% also noted that they have been in their program for the typical time period. Only one participant cited financial reasons for not yet having graduated.

When these PSE Continuers were asked if they intended on pursuing further education after graduation, an amazing 17 participants (77%) said they planned to return to school after graduation. This is similar to the 2005 finding of 83% of PSE Continuers who believed they would possibly or definitely return to post-secondary after graduation. This is a very high statistic, and may attest to the resiliency former pilot students have developed in this challenging aspect of their life, and also display both a love for and valuing of education. However, it could also indicate an unwillingness to enter the workforce, and participants may

be choosing to remain in school because it is comfortable.

That 77% of PSE Continuers express an interest in returning to school, along with the fact that many participants either have returned to school or plan to do so, corroborates *Transitions Trend #2* from the previous reports:

*Transitions Trend #2: Transitions participants have a higher than average retention rate than the general population in post-secondary education. (Continuing Trend)*

#### **IV. 6. Further Education Trend: PSE Graduate Continuers:**

In 2005, we noted that 34 participants (35%) were returning to school after graduation. In 2006 this trend continues with 24 participants (17%) returning to school after graduation. Again similar to the 2005 findings, the majority of participants have returned to school because they require further qualifications for the job they desire, 63%. Seven participants (29%) responded that they wished to become more specialized in their field, while only one participant cited love of education as the reason for continuing in school after graduation. Also reassuring was the fact that only one participant cited concern over leaving school and having to seek employment as their reason for returning to post-secondary. That the majority of former pilot students who return to school do so for career reasons shows a similarity between *Transitions* participants and the general population, where most return to school to enhance their careers or change career direction.

In order to look more deeply into the trend of graduates returning to studies, we inquired when those PSE Graduate Continuers decided to return to school. Sixteen participants (67%) returned to school right after graduation, two (8%) returned one year after graduation, and 6 participants (25%) returned more than one year after graduation.

In addition, a full 50% of *Transitions* PSE Graduate continuers plan to return to school after graduation, many citing the desire to get Master's Degrees and PhD's. This may indicate that *Transitions* participants are life-long learners. Many simply plan to continue taking the occasional course to remain updated in their field, while some feel that a few additional courses outside their program requirements will help them be more qualified for employment. One participant commented: "*There are some career specific courses I would like to take to further enhance my skills such as project management and facilitation.*" For some participants, "*the learning never ends.*"

## **IV. 7. Post-Secondary Education Leavers:**

In the Intake survey, we observed that 22 (10%) of all *Transitions* participants left their programs without graduating, which was notably lower than in the general population at 15%. In the second phase of the *Transitions* study, the percentage of PSE Leavers in our population dropped to 18 (9%) of participants leaving school without graduating. In 2006, we have noted that only 10 (7%) of 141 participants have left school without graduating, a significant decrease in numbers.

As in previous years, PSE Leavers were asked to select their reason for not finishing their program of study from the following categories:

- did not enjoy what I was studying
- financial concerns
- cannot decide what career to pursue
- found part-time employment
- found full-time employment
- Could not pass all of the required courses to obtain degree/diploma/certificate

In 2005, nine *Transitions* participants cited that their inability to complete required courses was the most common reason for not graduating. In order to probe this trend more deeply, in 2006 we asked participants to choose all of six options which contribute to their not having graduated. The most common answers were that participants did not enjoy their program of study (5), they had financial concerns (5) and they could not obtain all the necessary requirements to graduate (4).

Of those who commented that they did not enjoy their program of study, two elaborated saying that they did not like their program because they could not pass required courses to graduate. Neither of these participants selected the answer “could not obtain all the necessary requirements to graduate”, yet their comments on why they did not enjoy their program indicate that their dislike of their program was directly based on not being able to pass course requirements. Thus, when these two participants are added to the four who selected ‘could not obtain requirements to graduate’ as their reason for leaving school, the inability to pass required courses remains the most common reason *Transitions* participants do not graduate. This corroborates *Transitions Trend #3* in 2006.

***Transitions Trend #3: Transitions PSE Leavers cite inability to pass required courses as the most common reason for not graduating. (Continuing Trend)***

Different than in previous years, when PSE Leavers were asked if they intended on returning to post-secondary, the eight of ten PSE Leavers responded that they plan to return to school in the near future, though six of those participants did not yet have definite plans. In 2005, only 44% of PSE Leavers were interested in returning to school.

When asked what they feel they need to do in order to ensure that they graduate from post-secondary, Leavers responses centered around the drive for qualifications, time to focus on studies, and settled finances. One participant responded: “*I know I can’t work and go to school at the same time, so I spoke with family about it and told them that in order for me to do well in this nursing program, I would have to give it my all, which means that I won’t be able to work.*”

One participant who does not plan on returning to school cites being out of school long enough to lose all credits previously achieved, while the other suffers from chronic pain that makes school extremely difficult.

## **IV. 8. Graduation:**

When *Transitions* participants were first surveyed in 2004, 115 had graduated from an Ontario post-secondary institution. In 2005, 124 had graduated. In 2006, 109 participants have graduated -- a decrease in numbers that we attribute solely to survey attrition.

### **“Primary” Graduation Statistics**

Hereafter, participants who have graduated for the first time will be referred to as having graduated with a “primary” degree/diploma/certificate. Twenty-seven participated graduated once, returned to school, and have recently graduated with another degree/diploma/certificate and will be referred to as having graduated with a “secondary” degree/diploma/certificate. Five participants have graduated from three programs, and will be referred to as having graduated with a “tertiary” degree/diploma/certificate.

Of the 77 primary graduates, twenty-six graduated with degrees, forty-five with diplomas and six with certificates.

### **“Secondary” Graduation Statistics**

Of the 27 “secondary” graduates, 12 graduated with degrees, 10 with college diplomas, and five with college certificates. Of all the “secondary” graduates, two males graduated with degrees



and ten females. Additional diplomas were earned by four males and six females, while one male and four females earned “secondary” college certificates. Significantly, seven of the female university graduates achieved degrees in Education.

### **“Tertiary” Graduation Statistics**

Of the five “tertiary” graduates, three males and one female earned college diplomas, and one female earned a college certificate.

### **Expected Graduation**

Those participants presently in school were asked when they expected to graduate. Of the 46 currently studying, 24 had returned to school after graduating at least once, and due to the nature of the survey question querying expected graduation dates, this group was excluded. Of those who had not graduated 15 expected to graduate in 2006, two in 2007, two in 2008, two in 2009/10 and one was unsure at this time.

## **IV. 9. Studying and Working concurrently:**

*Transitions Trend #4: Transitions participants combine post-secondary education and work reasonably well. (Continuing Trend)*

In 2005, we noted that 41 participants, or 53% of those currently studying, were also working. We noted that this corresponds with Sandra Franke’s finding that in the general population 65% of males and 49% of females combine work and school (Franke, p.48). Of those 41 participants, we noted that 39 were working part-time and only eight working full-time. In 2006, the figures

are very similar. Of the 46 participants who are currently studying, 30 are currently employed, a rate of 65%. Of those 30 participants who combine work and school, 22 participants (48% of those studying) are working part-time (six males and 16 females) and eight (15% of those studying) are working full-time (three male and five females). Those employed part-time while studying work an average of 16.75 hours per week and those working full-time while studying work an average of 40 hours per week. That so many participants combine work and school successfully again validates *Transitions* Trend #4: *Transitions* participants combine post-secondary education and work reasonably well.

In 2004, 34% of the participants reported participating in a paid co-op placement. We believe this is significant, for entrance into most co-op programs requires an average of at least A-. In 2005, 8% of those who were studying were participating in a co-op program. In 2006, only two participants are currently in a co-op placement, and three are in unpaid internships, whereas 13% of those studying were in an internship program in 2005. We attribute the drop in numbers of those in co-op placements and internships to the high percentage of participants who have now graduated and entered the workforce in 2006.

*Transitions* participants often also combine volunteer work and school. In 2005, we noted that 88% of participants who were currently studying were also doing volunteer work. In 2006, 41% of participants are combining volunteer work and studies. Though this is a drop since 2005, it is worth noting that the majority of those who combine volunteer work and school also are employed at paid positions as well. A full 13 of the 19 participants who combine school and volunteer work are also currently employed in paid positions. This ability to balance school and other commitments speaks to the resilience of *Transitions* participants. Those who volunteer do so at an average of six hours per month.

These participants are included in *Transitions* Trend #17 in the Social Section of this report, which details overall volunteer work statistics.

## IV. 10. Living Arrangements:

*Transitions Trend #5: A high percentage of Transitions participants are living with their parents. (Continuing Trend)*

All previous *Transitions* reports have noted a very high percentage of our participants live at home. In 2004, 49% of participants lived at home, and in 2005 that number had dropped to 39%. In 2006, 44% (62 of our 141 participants) live at home. This percentage remains high relative to the general population where, according to *Time Magazine*, only 20% of adults of a similar age live at home, a percentage that has risen from 11% in 1970 (Grossman, *Time*, Jan 16, 2005). In Ontario, the reported number of individuals age 22-29 living at home is 36.2% (PACFOLD, Ontario, age 22-29, 1).

However, our *Transitions* population figure of 44% living at home is smaller than the LDAC figure of 54.4% of Ontario residents age 22-29 with learning disabilities who currently live at home (PACFOLD, Ontario, age 22-29, 1).

We asked participants who were living at home to elaborate on their reasons for that choice. Participants were asked to choose the following options which applied most directly to their situation and to elaborate in a comments section.

- Financial reasons
- Cultural reasons
- Still dependent on parents (emotionally, etc.)
- Parents are dependent on you (i.e. taking care of a parents)
- Preferred living arrangement at this time

Forty-six participants (74% of those living at home) cited financial reasons as a reason for not moving out of their parent's home. Sixteen of these participants are still in school and state that they cannot afford both tuition and rent. Only six of these participants are not in school and are unemployed. Common comments were made about student debt and low paying jobs; thus for financial reasons participants feel they must remain at home.

The second most common reason participants cite for living at home is that it is their preferred living arrangement, with 30 participants (48%) giving this answer. Six participants cite dependency on their parents as their reason for remaining home, and six also cite that they are taking care of dependent parents as the reason. Four participants are living at home for cultural reasons.

The remaining 79 participants (56%) reported on their current living arrangements as follows: 27 (34%) are living with their spouse/partner, 23 (29%) are living alone, 13 (16%) are living with friends, 12 (15%) are living with spouse/partner and children, two (3%) are living with children, one (1%) living in residence, one (1%) did not specify.

#### **IV. 11. Financial Issues:**

*Transitions Trend #6: Financial concerns are impacting on Transitions participant's life decisions. (New Trend)*

In 2005, 51% of participants reported that they had accumulated student debt, 38% of whom had accumulated a debt of \$20,000 or more. One-half of the participants who incurred debt stated it had a great effect on their life, while the other half responded that it had little to no effect.

In 2006, we again probed the question of student debt. Ninety of 141 participants (64%) reported having student loans, and 71 of that 90 (79%) reported currently being in debt from student loans. The amount of debt reported is as follows:

<b>Amount of Student Debt</b>	<b>% in Debt in 2005</b>	<b>% in Debt in 2006</b>
Under \$5000	15%	17%
\$5000 - \$10,000	17%	17%
\$10,000 - \$15,000	15%	13%
\$15,000 - \$20,000	19%	17%
\$20,000 - \$25,000	7%	4%
\$25,000 - \$30,000	9%	14%
\$30,000 - \$40,000	10%	7%
\$40,000 - \$50,000	4%	8%
Over \$50,000	4%	4%
# participants in debt	100 participants	71 participants

When participants' debt is compared between 2005 and 2006, we see a slight increase in participants who are over \$20,000 in debt, from 38% in 2005 to 40% in 2006. Interestingly, however, in 2006 only 55 of the 71 (77%) participants who are in debt from student loans reported having financial concerns, indicating that some are balancing their debts well at this time.

We asked participants with financial concerns what they are most worried about, and allowed them to check all answers which applied to their current situation. When asked what they were most concerned about financially, those with student loans' responses are interesting to note and then compare with all participants. Forty-five of the 71 participants (63%) with student loans responded that they were financially concerned about paying off their student loans, 38 of the 71 (53%) were concerned with saving for the future, 34 of the 71 (48%) were concerned with paying rent/bills, 31 of the 71 (44%) were concerned with paying for necessities such as food, hydro, transportation, and eight of the 71 (11%) were concerned with providing for their

families.

When all participants were asked what they were most concerned about financially, only 89 of 141 (63%) said they currently had concerns. Of the 89 with financial concerns, 64 (72%) were concerned with saving for the future indicating long-term goal setting. Fifty-two (58%) were concerned with paying rent/bills, 49 (55%) concerned with paying for necessities such as food, hydro, and transportation, 48 (54%) were worried about paying off student debt, and 11 (12%) were concerned with providing for their families.

That 63% of *Transitions* participants report having financial concerns in 2006 is cause for noting a new trend in 2006: *Trend #6: Financial concerns are impacting on Transitions participant's life decisions.* As 50% of all participants (71 of 141) are currently in debt from student loans, it is not surprising that when asked about their financial concerns, 48 participants responded they are most concerned about paying off their student debt. However, we were startled by the number of participants who are concerned about just getting by financially. Fifty-eight percent of participants are worried about paying rent/mortgage, and 55% participants are seriously concerned about paying for necessities. It seems clear that student loans are a significant contributing factor to financial hardships for our participants. As such, on the next survey we will ask the question: “*Does your debt load prevent you from enjoying the lifestyle you want?*” allowing participants to comment on how their debt affects their daily lives.

## **IV. 12. Preparation for employment:**

*Transitions Trend #7: The majority of Transitions participants, upon graduation, feel prepared to seek employment. (New Trend)*

In the 2006 survey we asked participants who were not currently studying and who had graduated from post-secondary if they felt prepared to seek employment after graduation.

Seventy-one of the 95 participants (75%) who have graduated felt prepared to seek employment, while only 14 (25%) felt unprepared.

Participants were given space to comment about this question and despite the fact that 75% said they felt prepared to seek employment, the comments were quite mixed.

Some participants overtly praised university career service centers and disability service centers, stating that help with developing resumes and job portfolios made a difference in their job search. As this participant commented:

*“The most helpful thing I have to help me find employment is a portfolio that better explains my abilities. My portfolio shows examples of all my computer skills and accomplishments. I find people with learning disabilities have a hard time advocating.”*

Many participants also remarked that though their post-secondary education did not lead directly to employment, it did lead to self-confidence and the development of useful job skills. This participant states:

*“Even though I am not employed in my field, I feel that the post secondary education provided me with much confidence in myself, as well as greatly increasing my communication and ethical skills”*

Many participants also credit their success in the job market to post-secondary co-op programs, internships and summer placements. Some also said that the part-time jobs they held while in school really helped them develop a resume while studying. This participant wrote:

*“During my undergraduate degree I worked at a variety of summer jobs. These, pared with the skills I have learned in university have equipped me to gain employment.”*

Of the 14 participants who did not feel their post-secondary prepared them for the job market, many commented on the lack of supports in the workforce. *“I went from having a lot of supports in academia to very little when looking for work even though my LD supports were certainly rooting for me.”* However, the majority who answered that they felt unprepared admit it is merely lack of work experience holding them back: *“They gave me lots of job advice [at school] but I needed real world experience.”*



## V. TRENDS RELATED TO EMPLOYMENT

**Please note:** Information on the general population outlined in the Employment section of this report comes from three major sources. The first is the National Graduates Survey (NGS). This longitudinal study measures the labour market success of graduates from Canadian Universities and Colleges two and five years after graduation. The class of 2000, surveyed initially at the time of graduation, returned results in 2002 about education, employment, debt, and living arrangements. This is the most current National study about the transition from school to work as of the date of this report. At the provincial level, the 2003-2004 Ontario University Graduate Survey and the 2001-2002 Ontario College Graduate Survey are the most recent inter-institutional reports on the transition from school to work.

### V. 1. Salary and *Transitions* Participants:

In Canada, only 47.5% of disabled individuals are employed. Persons with disabilities are, “more than twice as likely not to be working (either unemployed or not in the labour force) as those without disabilities” (Kunin, 6). The average salary of a disabled individual in Canada is \$30,200 annually, compared with \$34,700 as the annual salary of a member of the general population (Kunin, 6).

In the light of these Canada-wide statistics, *Transitions* participants have always been succeeding extraordinarily well in the labour market. In our *First Annual Report* we recorded 121 of 210 (58%) of participants were employed and in the *Second Annual Report*, 142 of 196 (72.4%) were employed. Currently, 112 of 141 (79.4%) participants are employed. This is also a very high percentage when compared to the 2001 Census data for Ontario wherein only 40.5% of individuals age 22-29 with learning disabilities were employed. The *Transitions* employment rate in 2006 is actually higher than the general population employment rate for Ontario in the 2001 Census, which reported 78.6% individuals in that demographic were employed (PACFOLD, Ontario, age 22-29, 3).

The following are highlights from our recent employment data. Figures are calculated out of the total number of 141 participants.

- combine work and school: 30 (21%)
- are no longer in school and employed full-time: 72 (51%)
- are no longer in school and employed part-time: 10 (7%)
- are no longer in school and unemployed: 13 (9%)
- are no longer in school and did not indicate full-time or part-time work: 2 (1%)

In comparison with the employment statistics from previous reports, some changes can be reported, though these may have to do with survey attrition. There was an increase from 38 to 53 participants combining work and school in the *Second Annual Report*. That number has decreased this year to only 30 participants, likely attributed both to a higher rate of graduation and to survey attrition. There has been an increase in participants working full time from 65 in the *Second Annual Report* to 72 this year. There has also been a decrease in participants working part-time, from 18 in the *Second Annual Report* to 10 currently. There has also been a significant decrease in participants who are no longer in school and who are unemployed, 31 in the *First Annual Report*, 19 in the *Second Annual Report*, and only 13 currently.

We have again chosen to discuss primarily the salaries of participants who are working full-time and not studying, as they currently represent those who have made the fullest transition to the workplace – PSE Graduate Non-Continuers and PSE Leavers. This population makes up 64.2% of currently employed *Transitions* participants.

### Salary Ranges for Participants no Longer Studying

Annual Salary Range full-time	#	%
Less than \$5000	3	5%
\$5000 - \$10,000	1	1%
\$10,000 - \$15,000	4	6%
\$15,000 - \$20,000	1	1%
\$20,000 - \$25,000	10	14%
\$25,000 - \$30,000	14	20%
\$30,000 - \$35,000	11	16%
\$35,000 - \$40,000	10	14%
\$40,000 - \$45,000	5	7%
\$45,000 - \$50,000	4	6%
\$50,000 - \$60,000	5	7%
Over \$60,000	2	3%
Total:	70	100%

\* Two participants either filled out their salary incorrectly or did not state their salary.

In order to better gauge the financial status of our participants, in the *Second Annual Report* we reduced the salary range on the survey to \$5000 increments from \$15,000 increments in the *First Annual Report*. However, in this *Third Annual Report*, we asked participants to state their actual gross salary. This has increased our ability to compare *Transitions* participants with the general population, but makes it difficult to compare salaries between years. Thus, to facilitate comparison, the below chart is a comparison of salary ranges at the broadest level, using the \$15,000 increments from the *First Annual Report* done in 2004.

2004 Salary Ranges	2004 #	2004%	2005#	2005%	2006#	2006%
Less \$20,000	14	21%	18	26%	9	13%
\$20,000 - \$34,999	32	48.5%	29	45%	35	50%
\$35,000 - \$49,999	15	23%	15	23%	19	27%
\$50,000 - \$64,999	5	7.55	3	5%	5	7%
\$65,000 - \$89,000	0	0	0	0	2	3%
Total	66	100%	65	99%	70	100%

This general comparison shows a marked improvement in the *Transitions* population from 2005 to 2006. The number of participants working full-time and earning less than \$20,000 annually has decreased, as well as the number of participants earning in each higher salary range has increased. We are happy to report that this may be the final year we corroborate the trend from the first two annual reports that *Transitions* salary figures are currently still lower than those in the general population.

***Transitions Trend #8: Transitions participants have lower salaries and are under-employed compared to the general population. (Continuing Trend)***

When these *Transitions* salary figures are compared with the statistics for Ontario residents age 22-29 with learning disabilities, we see that our *Transitions* population is doing extraordinary well salary-wise. The LDAC report notes that of this demographic, 41.2% are unemployed, 26.3% earn between \$1 – 9999 annually, 32.5% \$10,000 or more (PACFOLD, Ontario, age 22-29, 3). That 87% of employed *Transitions* participants are earning salaries of at least \$20,000 or more annually, reveals what can happen when a learning disabled population in Ontario is given the resources to succeed in school and thus in the job market.

***Transitions Trend #9: Compared to other Ontario Residents age 22-29 with learning disabilities, Transitions participants have a high rate of employment and good salaries. (New Trend)***

In order to have a clearer picture of how each segment of the employed *Transitions* population is faring in relation to the general population, it is necessary to separate employed participants into PSE Leavers and PSE Graduate Non-Continuers who are employed full-time, as was done in the previous two *Annual Reports*.

## V. 2. Post Secondary Education Leavers:

In the *First Annual Report*, we noted that only 22 (10%) of *Transitions* participants had left their programs of study without graduating. Similarly, in the *Second Annual Report* we noted that only 18 (9%) of participants were PSE Leavers. Thus, we concluded in each year that our *Transitions* population had a lower post-secondary attrition rate than the general population, which is 15% (Allen “YITS” pp. 6-9).

In 2006, only 10 participants reported being PSE Leavers. Of last year’s 18 PSE Leavers, only five continue in this category. One Leaver returned to post-secondary in 2006. The remaining seven PSE Leavers from 2005 succumbed to survey attrition. There are five new PSE Leavers in 2006.

Of the 10 PSE Leavers in 2006, two are unemployed, one is working part-time, and the remaining seven are employed full-time.

In the General Population, PSE Leavers are most likely to be male. However, for the past two years we noted that this trend is reversed in the *Transitions* population, with 59% of Leavers being female in 2004 and 61% in 2005. This is not the case in 2006, where 50% of Leavers are male and 50% female.

*Transitions Trend #10: PSE Leavers employed full-time are generally earning salaries that are compared to graduates in the general population.  
(Continuing Trend)*

Though the number of PSE Leavers is significantly less this year, it is still useful to look at the salaries of full-time employed *Transitions* PSE Leavers.

### PSE Leavers Salary Figures

<b>Annual salary for full-time PSE Leavers</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
\$10,000.00 - \$15,000.00	1	14%	1	14%	2	29%
\$15,000.00 - \$20,000.00	0	0	0	0	0	0
\$20,000.00 - \$25,000.00	0	0	0	0	0	0
\$25,000.00 - \$30,000.00	2	29%	1	14%	3	43%
\$30,000.00 - \$35,000.00	0	0	1	14%	1	14%
\$35,000.00 - \$40,000.00	0	0	0	0	0	0
\$35,000.00 - \$40,000.00	1	14%	0	0	1	14%
Total full-time PSE Leavers:	4	57%	3	42%	7	100%

Though it is difficult to compare between years as this year the number of PSE Leavers is significantly less than in both previous years, we will note that in 2005, 50% of participants earned between \$20,000 - \$34,999 annually. That figure has increased this year to 57% of Leavers earning in this salary range. There is no marked change in those earning more than \$35,000 annually. The biggest change is the decrease in the number of PSE Leavers earning less than \$20,000 annually. Last year, 40% of PSE Leavers reported earning salaries less than \$20,000 annually, and currently only 29% earn in that salary range.

### What are the Leaver's Reasons?

Specific questions were asked of participants who left school without graduating. Participants were able to indicate more than one reason and the responses are as follows:

- Did not enjoy program of study: 5
- Financial Concerns: 5
- Cannot decide what career to pursue: 1

- Found part-time employment: 1
- Found full-time employment: 2
- Could not obtain all necessary requirements to graduate: 4

### **V. 3. PSE Graduate Non-Continuer Statistics:**

A total of 109 participants responded that they have graduated from post-secondary education at least once. These graduates will be referred to as having graduated with a “primary” degree/diploma/certificate. Twenty-eight of these participants graduated, returned to school, and have also graduated with another degree/diploma/certificate and will be referred to as having graduated with a “secondary” degree/diploma/certificate. A further five participants graduated twice, returned to school and have now graduated again. They will be referred to as having a “tertiary” degree/diploma/certificate.

Of the 77 primary graduates, twenty-six graduated with degrees, forty-five with diplomas and six with certificates. Of the 27 “secondary” graduates, 12 graduated with degrees, 10 with college diplomas, and five with college certificates. Of the five “tertiary” graduates, three earned college diplomas, and one earned a college certificate.

Of the 109 graduates in 2006, only 74 are currently employed, 11 are unemployed, and 24 returned to school. Of those who are currently employed, 65 (68%) are employed full-time, which is an increase from the 2004 figure of 48% and the 2005 figure of 61%.

That 68% of *Transitions* graduates are employed full-time is a significant achievement when compared with Canada-wide employment statistics for individuals with disabilities. As Roslyn Kunin reports, 51.8% of disabled male post-secondary graduates and 41.1% of disabled female post-secondary graduates are employed year-round (Kunin, 8). Kunin writes: “it is clear that

higher education benefits persons with disabilities in the labour market far greater than persons without disabilities” (Kunin 8).

As salary is what is being assessed in this section, the question of where to place those who have graduated with a secondary or tertiary degree/diploma/certificate was again raised. We have decided to rank those with secondary and tertiary qualifications by the qualification that typically results in the highest paying job, beginning with degree, and moving to diploma, and certificate. Thus, if a participant graduated first with a diploma and then with a degree, for salary purposes, they are in the degree category. However, if someone graduated with a degree and then received a certificate, though those extra qualifications will no doubt be helpful for getting a job, the salary will still be assessed by the qualification that statistically pays the most, a degree.

#### **Status of PSE graduates for Salary Evaluation**

<b>Graduates</b>	<b>Degree</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Diploma</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Certificate</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
In school	15	33%	8	13%	1	20%	24	22%
Employed	28	62%	44	75%	2	40%	74	68%
Unemployed	2	4%	7	11%	2	40%	11	10%
Total	45	99%	59	100%	5	100%	109	100%



## **V. 4. PSE Graduate Non-Continuer Salary Statistics:**

As in the *First* and *Second Annual Reports*, we feel that the salaries of PSE Graduate Non-Continuers working full-time are the best indicator of the success of *Transitions* participants in the workplace.

### **Annual Salaries of Full-time PSE Graduate Non-Continuers**

<b>Annual salary full-time</b>	<b>Uni Grads</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Diploma</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Cert.</b>	<b>%</b>
Under \$5000.00	1	4%	2	5%	0	0
\$5000.00 - \$10,000.00	1	4%	0	0	0	0
\$10,000.00 - \$15,000.00	1	4%	0	0	1	50%
\$15,000.00 - \$20,000.00	1	4%	1	2%	0	0
\$20,000.00 - \$25,000.00	2	7%	5	14%	1	50%
\$25,000.00 - \$30,000.00	6	23%	7	19%	0	0
\$30,000.00 - \$35,000.00	6	23%	5	14%	0	0
\$35,000.00 - \$40,000.00	4	15%	6	16%	0	0
\$40,000.00 - \$45,000.00	1	4%	4	11%	0	0
\$45,000.00 - \$50,000.00	1	4%	3	8%	0	0
\$50,000.00 - \$60,000.00	1	4%	4	11%	0	0
Over \$60,000.00	1	4%	0	0	0	0
Total full-time:	26	100%	37*	100%	2	100%

\* One participant with a diploma who indicated full-time work did not include a salary.

In order to analyze PSE Graduate Non-Continuers properly, this group has been divided into categories, similar to the *First* and *Second Annual Reports*:

- University versus College Graduates
- Field of Study
- Gender

## University Graduates

It continues to be the case that in the general population university graduates have higher earnings, despite both college and university graduates being equally likely to find work upon graduation. The median earnings of university graduates across Canada two years after graduation are \$39,000 (Allen “Class of 2000” p. 12). As reported in the chart below, the highest percentages of our university graduates (46%) are under-employed compared to their peers in the general population, earning between \$25,000 - \$35,000 annually.

It is again worth noting, however, that when compared with Ontario residents with learning disabilities ages 22-29, our *Transitions* population of university graduates far exceeds the highest salary figure listed in the LDAC report: 32.5% of individuals with learning disabilities in this demographic earn over \$10,000 annually, 26.3% earn \$1-\$9999 annually, and 41.2% are unemployed. The successful salaries of *Transitions* University graduates is testament to what can happen when a highly intelligent population is given the tools for success in school that directly translate to labour market success.

### Salary of Full-time University Graduates

Annual salary range full-time	University Graduates	%
Under \$5000.00	1	4%
\$5000.00 - \$10,000.00	1	4%
\$10,000.00 - \$15,000.00	1	4%
\$15,000.00 - \$20,000.00	1	4%
\$20,000.00 - \$25,000.00	2	7%
\$25,000.00 - \$30,000.00	6	23%
\$30,000.00 - \$35,000.00	6	23%
\$35,000.00 - \$40,000.00	4	15%
\$40,000.00 - \$45,000.00	1	4%
\$45,000.00 - \$50,000.00	1	4%
\$50,000.00 - \$60,000.00	1	4%
Over \$60,000.00	1	4%
Total full-time:	26	100%

Despite the fact that *Transitions* University graduates are under-employed when compared with the general population, this group's salaries have increased annually over the course of the two existing *Transitions* reports. In the *First Annual Report*, we noted that the highest percentage of university graduates was earning less than \$20,000 annually. In the *Second Annual Report* we noted that the highest percentage was earning \$15,000 - \$20,000 annually. The 2006 figure of 46% of university graduates earning \$25,000 - \$35,000 annually is a marked improvement in this population.

Only a very small percentage of *Transitions* University graduates may now be said to be extremely under-employed – four participants earning less than \$20,000 annually (15%). Another four University Graduates are earning salaries higher than the general population average for university graduates.

We indicated in the *First* and *Second Annual Reports* two factors that we believed influenced low salaries of *Transitions* university graduates. The first factor was that the national salary figures we compare our population with were figures reported for two years after graduation. We estimated that many of our graduates were earning low salaries due to just entering the work force. This may indeed have been the case. This year, 11 of our participants have been with their current employer for more than two years and have been finished their studies for at least two years. Of this 11, eight are earning salaries of \$30,000 or more annually, one earns \$20,000, another \$25,000 and another \$29,000 annually.

In addition, wages have been increasing in high-knowledge industries, but not increasing in low-knowledge industries. Thus, lower earnings also depends on the type of work being performed by graduates.

The second factor we indicated as having an influence on the low salaries of our graduates was field of study. Field of study might have something to do with these low salaries, and will be analyzed after first looking at the salary rates of College graduates.

For a qualitative and subjective perspective of University Graduates we asked participants whether or not they consider themselves to be under-employed. We defined under-employment as *being employed at a level lower than your education and work experience warrants*. Sixteen university graduates consider themselves under-employed. As one participant commented:

*Because I moved up within my company, my current salary does not reflect what my job is worth in the market. If I was able to find the same job with another company, I would be making up to \$10,000 more than I currently make in a year now. Having said that, it is not easy to find another job (due in part to my LDs). So although I am not underemployed in title, I am in pay.*

Ten university graduates do not consider themselves under-employed, though by our definition, four are extremely underemployed (less than \$20,000 annually) and 18 fall below the median earning of university graduates in the general population. One participant commented:

*Although I would like to have more constant hours, with only one employer, I think that I am doing quite well to have the number of hours I do, at the rate I get paid considering that it is my first year in the work force. I am pursuing more training so that I can meet those goals.*

In terms of career goals, participants were asked where they aspire to be in five years. Of our 26 full-time employed university graduates, 10 would like to be in a different career, or in a different position in the same field. Six would like to continue in their same position but with more responsibility. Four were unsure about career goals, two would like to remain in the same position, one is working at opening a small business and another would like to return to school. However, though there remains a high amount of under-employment in this group, only four reported wanting a higher income as a career goal.

Some participants would like to change careers due to having a difficult time in their current position. One participant commented:

*Probably in a new profession because this has been the hardest year for me because of my disability. There's a chance I might lose my job because I'm not able to meet some expectations which I thought I was meeting.*

## **College Graduates**

While the median earnings of university graduates in the general population is \$39,000 annually, the median earning for someone with a college degree in the general population was \$31, 200 (Allen, “Class of 2000” p. 12).

It is again worth noting, however, that when compared with Ontario residents with learning disabilities ages 22-29, our *Transitions* population of college graduates far exceeds the highest salary figure listed in the LDAC report: 32.5% of individuals with learning disabilities in this demographic earn over \$10,000 annually, 26.3% earn \$1-\$9999 annually, and 41.2% are unemployed. The successful salaries of *Transitions* college graduates is testament to what can happen when a highly intelligent population is given the tools for success in school that directly translate to labour market success.

As demonstrated in the chart below, 15 of the 37 participants with diplomas (41%) who are working full-time are earning less than the average in the general population, with three participants earning less than \$20,000 annually. However, the majority of participants with college diplomas, 22 (59%) are earning the average salary for the general population or above. This is higher than in the *Second Annual Report*, where 50% were earning in that salary range.

## Salary of Full-time College Graduates

Annual Salary Range full-time	Diploma	%	Certificate	%
Under \$5000.00	2	5%	0	0
\$5000.00 - \$10,000.00	0	0	0	0
\$10,000.00 - \$15,000.00	0	0	1	50%
\$15,000.00 - \$20,000.00	1	2%	0	0
\$20,000.00 - \$25,000.00	5	14%	1	50%
\$25,000.00 - \$30,000.00	7	19%	0	0
\$30,000.00 - \$35,000.00	5	14%	0	0
\$35,000.00 - \$40,000.00	6	16%	0	0
\$40,000.00 - \$45,000.00	4	11%	0	0
\$45,000.00 - \$50,000.00	3	8%	0	0
\$50,000.00 - \$60,000.00	4	11%	0	0
Over \$60,000.00	0	0	0	0
Total full-time:	37*	100%	2	100%

\* One participant with a diploma who is employed full-time did not specify a salary.

In our *Second Annual Report*, we noted that like our university graduates, many *Transitions* college graduates are well below the national median annual earnings for college graduates in the general population. The national 25<sup>th</sup> percentile of college graduates earns \$24,000 annually. However, in 2006, we notice that only three college graduates with diplomas are earning under this salary range, indicating that under-employment has gone down significantly in this group.

On a provincial level, the 2001-2002 Provincial Overview of Survey Results of Ontario College Students reveals that the average annual salary of a college graduate employed in a full-time job related to their field of study was \$31, 040. Though this survey shows that 87.2% of college graduates are employed, only 73% are employed full-time and of those employed full-time, only 54% are employed in a related field. Therefore, as noted in our last report, though the survey criteria for the Provincial and National surveys regarding college graduates' salaries were different, the reported earnings were remarkably close: \$31,200 as the median of the national study and \$31, 040 for the average earnings in the Provincial Study.

Since the national trend toward low wages and temporary positions for recent entrants into the workforce holds for college graduates, it is important to look at whether those earning lower salaries are doing so because of having recently graduated. Not all participants included the year they graduated in their data. In fact, only twenty-one of the thirty-eight participants with diplomas working full-time included the year they graduated.

Of those who reported a graduation date, only four earn less than \$24,000 annually, and have been out of school since 2002 (2), 2004 (1) and 2006 (1) respectively. However, most participants report having graduated since 2003, and are earning salaries equivalent, or higher, than the average for the general population. Three participants who have been in the workforce full-time since 2003 are earning \$57,000, \$55,000, and \$50,000 annually. Another graduate from 2002 is earning \$45,000 annually, all of which are excellent salaries for this group. It is interesting also to note that all of these high earners are primary college graduates who have been out of school for at least three years.

Of participants who are currently working full-time and who graduated with certificates, their earnings are quite low compared to those who graduated with degrees. The two participants, each of whom has earned a primary college certificate, are earning under \$24,000 annually.

Again, we felt it important to consider if our college graduates feel themselves to be under-employed. Both participants with college certificates consider themselves under-employed, while 11 (28%) with college diplomas consider themselves under-employed. Of those ten, we would consider seven under-employed, meaning they earn less than the national median of \$31,200 annually.

One participant with three diplomas who is earning \$17,000 annually commented: *I have had difficulty having the courage to seek jobs that I am capable of doing. I always sell myself short.* Another participant who has earned two diplomas and one certificate, and who is currently earning \$26,000 annually wrote: *I feel that the company I work for now is not properly paying fare and should be.*

One participant who is earning \$39,000 annually after graduating with a primary diploma, and who considers herself under-employed, wrote: *because I am on contract at my work I get a lower wage.* Another participant earning \$37,000 annually, considers himself under-employed, and commented about not using his skills at an adequate level in his current job: *For the skills I learned in my college program, I'm doing welding work that is far too simple. I do work that basic welding training could have taught me, so I feel like my diploma was a waste of money. My work is too simple for my level of education as a welder.*

Twenty-seven of those with diplomas who are currently working full-time do not consider themselves under-employed, though we might consider ten to be under-employed (earning less than the national median of \$31, 200 annually).

One participant earning \$24,000 annually commented: *What I graduated from is the field I'm in, and I'm certified as an Early Childhood Educator (2004). In some sense I'm more qualified because I've been certified which gets me into different things (e.g. workshops) which I don't have to pay for because of my membership, and it gives me more opportunities as well to try/learn new things.*

In terms of career goals, participants were asked where they aspire to be in five years. Most participants were interested either in remaining in their current job (11) or remaining in the same company but in a higher position (nine). Five participants were hoping to find other work, four wish specifically to be earning higher salaries, while two wish to own their own companies. Only three participants stated that they did not know what they wished to be doing, one wished to return to school, while another desired to get further professional certification.

Overall, the response was positive about future career goals. One participant who is intent on moving up in his current position wrote: *I want to learn more from this company and move up in a more senior position. Now I am a mechanical designer and I am hoping I can get to level two or three.*



Many participants also included goals besides career goals, often citing a desire for family, and to pay off debt. One participant, who desires a managerial position in his current job, wrote that he would like to be *in a managers position, with a family and living a wonderful life with only debt of a mortgage.*

## Field of Study

*Transitions Trend #11: Field of Study likely influences low salaries of Transitions participants. (Continuing Trend)*

As indicated in all previous *Transitions Reports*, field of study strongly influences overall low salaries of *Transitions* PSE Graduate Non-Continuers. We believe this is because many were in the Arts and Social Sciences whose average annual earnings are lower than the earnings of those in professional programs. For example, the average salary six months after graduation for a student with a university Bachelor of Arts degree working in Ontario in 2003-2004 was \$32,249, and for a college arts graduate it was approximately \$27,237 annually. In comparison, the average salary for an architecture or engineering graduate was \$51,540 for university graduates and \$38,000 for college graduates (*OUGS* and *2001-2002 College Graduates*). Thus, *Transitions* Trend # 11 remains the same in 2006.

Similar to the *First* and *Second Annual Reports*, a high number of *Transitions* participants are employed in their field of study. Participants who are currently employed were asked to answer the question: Does your current employment build upon your post-secondary program? This year, 70 (63%) of the 112 employed participants indicated that they were working in a field related to their post-secondary education, while 40 (36%) responded they were not. These figures are very close to the 2005 figures of 67% employed in a related field, while 31% are not.

## Gender

As gender is often a determining factor when salary is considered in many Statistics Canada reports, we believe it continues to be important to see if gender plays a role in determining the salaries of *Transitions* participants. There continue to be indications that gender could end up being significant when trying to understand why so many of our participants are under-employed.

Women in the general population make significantly less money annually than men do – usually between \$4000 - \$8000 less. Only 41.1% of female post-secondary graduates with disabilities are employed year-round in Canada, compared with 51.8% of male post-secondary graduates with disabilities (Kunin 8).

Forty-six PSE Graduate Non-Continuers, or 42%, are female. It is necessary to note that there has been a drop in female PSE Graduate Non-Continuer participation in this study, down from 55% in the *Second Annual Report*.

We reported in 2005 that of the 12 university graduates working full-time, seven (58%) were female and five (42%) were male. This year, of the 26 university graduates working full-time, seventeen (65%) are female and nine (35%) are male. In 2005, of the 42 college graduates with diplomas working full-time, twenty-seven (63%) were female and fifteen (35%) were male. In 2006, of the 38 graduates with college diplomas working full-time, seventeen (45%) are female and twenty-one (55%) are male. In 2006, both participants working full-time with college certificates are female, and in 2005 one was male and the other female.

***Transitions Trend #12: Female Transitions graduates are more likely to experience high rates of under-employment than male participants.  
(Continuing)***

In 2005, we reported that 19% of female graduates were significantly under-employed (less

than \$20,000 annually) while only 7% of the male graduates were significantly under-employed. Again, in 2006, 8% of female graduates were significantly under-employed, while only 4% of male graduates were significantly under-employed. However, it must be noted that the gap has decreased *considerably*.

The following two tables detail the difference between male and female salaries of graduates employed full-time.

### Annual Salary of Female Graduates Employed Full-time

<b>Annual Salary Range full-time</b>	<b>Uni</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Diploma</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Certificate</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
Less than \$5000.00	1	4%	1	3%	0	0	2	3%
\$5000.00 - \$10,000.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
\$10,000.00 - \$15,000.00	1	4%	0	0	1	50%	2	3%
\$15,000.00 - \$20,000.00	1	4%	0	0	0	0	1	2%
\$20,000.00 - \$25,000.00	2	8%	2	5%	1	50%	5	8%
\$25,000.00 - \$30,000.00	4	15%	3	8%	0	0	7	11%
\$30,000.00 - \$35,000.00	3	11%	2	5%	0	0	5	8%
\$35,000.00 - \$40,000.00	2	8%	3	8%	0	0	5	8%
\$40,000.00 - \$45,000.00	1	4%	1	3%	0	0	2	3%
\$45,000.00 - \$50,000.00	1	4%	2	5%	0	0	3	5%
\$50,000.00 - \$60,000.00	0	0	2	5%	0	0	2	3%
Over \$60,000.00	1	4%	0	0	0	0	1	2%
<b>Total M+F:</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>38*</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>56%</b>

\*One female with a diploma did not indicate a salary

### Annual Salary of Male Graduates Employed Full-time

Annual Salary	university	%	Diploma	%	Total	%
Less than \$5000.00	0	0	1	3%	1	2%
\$5000.00 -	1	4%	0	0	0	0
\$10,000.00 -	0	0	0	0	0	0
\$15,000.00 -	0	0	1	3%	1	2%
\$20,000.00 - \$25,000.00	0	0	5	13%	5	8%
\$25,000.00 -	2	8%	2	5%	4	6%
\$30,000.00 -	3	11%	3	8%	6	9%
\$35,000.00 -	2	8%	3	8%	5	8%
\$40,000.00 -	0	0	3	8%	3	5%
\$45,000.00 -	0	0	1	3%	1	2%
\$50,000.00 -	1	4%	2	5%	3	5%
Over \$60,000.00	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total M+F:	26	35%	38	56%	64	47%

### Gender and University graduates

The median annual salary for a female university graduate in the general population remains \$37,000 for a full-time worker, whereas the median salary for a full-time employed male university graduate is \$42,000 annually.

We can see that three (12%) of our female graduates earn above \$40,000 annually, though 2 (8%) earn in the salary range of \$35,000 - \$40,000. This indicates that our female university

graduates seem to be competing well in the job market, similar to their male peers in the general population.

However, when compared to the *Transitions* male population, it seems that in 2006 only one participant (4%) earned above the general population median salary for men of \$42,000 annually. The majority (27%) of our male population earned between \$25,000 - \$40,000 annually.

Thus, we have no reason to conclude from this round of surveying that there is any significant gender difference in terms of university graduate salaries, except to again note that there are more women under-employed (less than \$20,000 annually) than men.

### **Gender and College Graduates**

The median annual salary of a female college graduate in the general population is \$28,600 annually, whereas a male college graduate's full-time salary is \$35,000.

We can see that three females with college diplomas earn less than \$25,000 annually. However, this is a significant decrease from the 2005 figure of 11 (28%) earning in that salary range. Nine (24%) of male college graduates earn less than the average median salary for men, and seven of these earn less than \$25,000 annually, similar to the 2005 figure of six (15%).

In 2006, it seems that gender does still play a role for college graduates, however, this role is reversed. Whereas in 2005, we noted that many more women were under-employed than men, in 2006 we can say that more men were under-employed than women.

It is also worth noting that nine men (24%) and eight women (21%) earn above the college male average yearly earnings of \$35,000 annually. This does seem to indicate that though some have

fallen behind the general population, many of both sexes are faring very well, and are exceeding average earnings in the general population.

## Gender and Unemployment

### PSE Graduate Non-Continuer Unemployment by Gender

Unemployment	Uni	% /30	Dip	% /51	Cert.	%/4	Total	%/85
Female	1	3%	1	2%	0	0	2	2%
Male	1	3%	6	12%	2	50%	9	11%
Total:	2	6%	7	14%	2	50%	11	13%

*\*The unemployment rate on this chart is taken from all PSE Graduate Non-Continuers including those who work part time. Overall unemployment rate for PSE Graduate Continuers is 13% while overall unemployment rate for all participants is 9.5%.*

Although the overall unemployment rate for PSE Graduate Non-Continuers has shrunk since the *Second Annual Report*, the majority of those who are unemployed are male at 11% verses 2% of females. In the *Second Annual Report*, we noted that 14% of male PSE Graduate Non-Continuers were unemployed and 5% of females.

Across Canada, 5.5% of male post-secondary graduates with disabilities are unemployed for part or all of the year, and 30.3% are not in the labour force, while 5.7% of female post-secondary graduates with disabilities are unemployed for part or all of the year, and 40% are not in the labour force.

Again in this report, due to the small sample size, we cannot extrapolate a definitive result for whether or not the higher male unemployment rate indicates that males are having a more difficult transition to the workplace. We encountered a similar problem in the previous two reports.

## V. 5. Unemployment and *Transitions* Participants:

*Transitions Trend #13: Transitions participants have a high unemployment rate compared with the general population. (Continuing Trend)*

### ***Transitions* Unemployment Rate**

Unemployment	Uni	%	Dip/	%	Leavers	%	Total	%/141
Female	1	.7%	1	.7%	1	.7%	3	2.1%
Male	1	.7%	8	6%	1	.7%	10	7.4%
Total:	2	1.4%	9	6.7%	2	1.4%	13	9.5%

\* Unemployment percentages on this chart are calculated out of all 141 *Transitions* participants

In the *First Annual Report* we noted that 15% of *Transitions* participants were unemployed. In the *Second Annual Report*, that number had decreased to 10%. In 2006, at a rate of 9.5% unemployment, *Transitions* participants still have a higher rate of unemployment than the general population at 7% (Allen “Class of 2000” 28), which corroborates *Transitions Trend #13*, though at a much lower rate.

Unemployment remains highest in those who earned college diplomas/certificates, as was the case in the previous two reports. This may indicate that some of these participants are experiencing difficulties with the school-to-work transition.

The LDAC report states that 41.2% of Ontario residents age 22-29 with learning disabilities are unemployed (PACFOLD, Ontario, age 22-29, 3). The *Transitions* unemployment rate of 9.5% is remarkably low in comparison and is testament to the fact that when governments invest in post-secondary programs which provide students with learning disabilities with the tools to succeed in the labour market, there is a direct correlation between supports given and employment.

*Comparative Unemployment figures for PSE Graduate Non-Continuers and PSE Leavers:*

*2004 Unemployment*

- \* 36% of university graduates
- \* 30% of graduates with college diplomas
- \* 33% of graduates with college certificates
- \* 18% of PSE Leavers

*2005 Unemployment*

- \* 21% of university graduates
- \* 17% of graduates with college diplomas
- \* 33% of graduates with college certificates
- \* 36% of PSE Leavers

*2006 Unemployment*

- \* 6% of university graduates
- \* 14% of graduates with college diplomas
- \* 50% of graduates with college certificates
- \* 20% of PSE Leavers

In 2006, *Transitions* directed a number of new questions at participants who are unemployed and who are not currently studying. First, we asked if there were any extenuating circumstances related to unemployment. Four participants responded that severe injury has caused their current unemployment. One participant cited extreme anxiety, an anxiety also related to job searching. This participant wrote: *The circumstances for me would be emotional or mental, or the anxiety of it job searching. I have sometimes, when I do the job hunting thing I get stressed out and can't leave the house. Not only do I have LD, I do have other issues.*

We also asked unemployed participants to tell us which factors they believe will help ensure a successful job search. The most common answers were as follows, ranked in order of importance:

- Resume Reviews/Tutorials
- Networking (i.e. job fairs)
- Information Sessions/Workshops



- Job Websites
- Mock Interviews

Eleven of the thirteen unemployed participants cite that they have used all of these options in their job searches to date.

We also asked these participants “do you feel hindered in the workplace on account of your LD?” Nine participants said they do feel hindered as a result of their LD, while four do not.

Participants were asked to choose from the list below which ways they feel their LD hinders them in the workforce. Participants were able to select all answers which applied to their situation.

- Slows down your speed of completing tasks: 7
- Difficult to gain access to the job you want: 3
- Prevents you from getting a promotion: 2
- Makes it difficult to interact with coworkers: 1
- Other: memory problems (1), difficulty with math (1)

We also asked the four participants who do not feel hindered by their LD in the workforce why not. They responded overwhelmingly that their LD does not limit their ability to do a good job.

One participant commented: *In the work force everything is done via computer and as someone with dyslexia this is the great equalizer. Spell check has been and will continue to be my saving grace.*

## VI. GENERAL TRENDS RELATED TO LEARNING DISABILITY

### VI. 1. Self-Advocacy and Resiliency:

In 2005, we defined resiliency as “the competencies and abilities that some people possess which enable them to cope in the face of significant adversity and risk” and we found that the *Transitions* population as a whole is quite resilient. This remains true in 2006.

#### **Life Goals**

*Transitions Trend #14: Transitions participants place great emphasis on educational and career goals, while social goals remain relatively low.  
(Continuing)*

We again asked participants to tell us their life goals, as a means for us to assess how well our population balances education and career with personal satisfaction and personal goal setting. In 2005, we put no restrictions on the goal-setting question, and participants responded with a wide range of future goals, the major ones being career goals 33%, academic goals 21% and social goals like marriage and children 14%. This year, we wanted to focus on our participants goals in their personal lives apart from career. Thus the question we asked was: “What kind of goals (other than career) do you wish to achieve in the near future?” Participants were able to choose any goal on this list, and their responses are as follows:

- Buy property (house, apartment, condo etc) – 81
- Get married - 64
- Have a steady relationship - 50
- Start a family - 55
- Travel – 86

- Finish school – 46
- Pursue further education – 66
- Be debt free—79

It is not surprising that 46 participants cited finishing school as a current goal, as it is exactly the number of participants currently studying in 2006. It is interesting how many participants wish to pursue further education, again revealing that this population has a life-long interest in learning. Also worth noting is the high number of participants who cite being debt free as a current goal. While our cohort values education, that education does not come without cost. Also, the majority of participants value buying property and travel, which indicates that people recognize that goals may only be achievable once student debt is eliminated.

## **VI. 2. Impact of Learning Disability on Social Life:**

In order to understand how participants engage in their social life we asked participants if they consider themselves to be more social or solitary in nature. Fifty-four of 141 (38%) responded that they were more solitary by nature, and 87 (62%) responded they were more social. There is no change to report in these numbers since 2005, which are similar to the general population figures, with 61% preferring social activities and 38% preferring solitary ones (2003 General Social Survey).

Participants' comments indicated a balanced approach to life. One participant commented, *"When I want to be social I will be social and when I want my time to myself I want my time to myself."* A few participants did note that they felt their learning disability shaped their personality, making them less social. One participant wrote: *"I have always had trouble making friends, have always felt like a social outcast and believe that my LD has much to do with this."* Some comments displayed that participants know themselves well. *"I'm more of an introvert but I have strong social skills. I'm the kind of person that rejuvenates from being by myself."*

Similarly, participants were asked how they choose to spend their free time from the following four options:

- with others
- alone
- both equally
- don't have free time

Thirty-five participants (25%) said they prefer to spend their time with others. Though this number seems small, and initially seems to contradict the above answers to “social” or “solitary”, the majority of participants 75 (53%) chose the answer “both equally,” thereby validating the finding above that participants are quite balanced in their social/solitary preferences. Twenty-six (18%) prefer to spend their free time alone, and only 5 (3%) responded that they have no free time. Overall, this population seems to strike a good social balance.

## **Volunteer Work**

*Transitions Trend #15: A high number of Transitions participants engage in volunteer work. (New Trend)*

In 2005, we found that 23% of participants preferred to spend their free time doing volunteer work. To probe this trend in more detail, we asked all participants whether or not they do volunteer work. We found that 54 participants (38%) do volunteer work at an average time of 6-10 hours a month, with 11 of those participants volunteering between 15 and 30 hours a month.

Participants who do volunteer work were asked to select from a list of five answers, the major reasons they choose to volunteer. Thirty-nine of the 54 participants who volunteer do so for the

opportunity to help others. Thirty-four volunteer in order to gain work experience. Thirty do so for the sense of satisfaction that comes with volunteering, and 19 selected “opportunity to meet people” as their reason for volunteering.

## Exercise

*Transitions Trend #16: A high number of Transitions participants engage in physical activity. (Continuing)*

In 2005, we learned that our participants showed a greater prevalence toward physical activities than in the general population, where 29% of individuals spent their free time exercising (2003 General Social Survey). In the 2005 *Transitions* population, 38% incorporated physical exercise into their daily routines.

In 2006, we decided to look more closely at participants’ interest in physical activity. We first asked participants “*do you participate in a physical activity on a regular basis?*” Eighty-nine participants (63%) said they do.

The number of *Transitions* participants who engage in physical activity on a regular basis is higher than the LDAC figure that 46.3% of Ontario residents with learning disabilities age 22-29 who consider themselves physically “healthy.” (PACFOLD, Ontario, 22-29, 5)

We also asked those participants “*what kind of exercise/physical activity do you do and how often?*”

As this was an open-ended question, responses ranged from walking, running, and occasional group sports, to daily gym routines and competitive sports. Below is a breakdown of their responses, grouped into the most common answers:

Gym or home gym workout: 39  
Solo sports (no running/walking): 32  
Walking: 22  
Group sports: 18  
Running: 10  
Dance: 3  
Referee/coach: 3  
Gardening: 2  
Drums: 1

### **Relationship satisfaction**

*Transitions Trend #17: Transitions participants appear to be resilient in social relationships. (Continuing)*

In order to assess the impact of learning disability on social life, we have asked participants to rate their current level of satisfaction with friends, relationships and family members. Participants were forced to select from six options, identical to options available in 2004 and 2005. With regard to friendships, the majority of participants, 59%, reported that they are satisfied or very satisfied with their friendships:

- Very Satisfied: 33 (23%)
- Satisfied: 51 (36%)
- Somewhat Satisfied: 36 (26%)
- Not Satisfied: 14 (10%)

- Very Dissatisfied: 4 (3%)
- No Friends: 3 (2%)

That 59% report being very satisfied or satisfied with their friendships is a drop from the 2005 number of 71% reporting high rates of satisfaction. Though the rates of dissatisfaction with friendships remains the same this year, those who now report being somewhat satisfied with their friendships has increased from 19% in 2005 to 26% in 2006. Over time, as more participants graduate and move away from their social safety nets, it will be interesting to note if the level of satisfaction with friendships increases or decreases in response to work and family pressures.

When asked to rate their current level of satisfaction with relationships, including spouses/boyfriends/girlfriends, the responses in 2005 and 2006 were somewhat different. In 2005, 'no relationship' was the most popular answer, with 36% of participants responding they had no relationship at that time. In 2006, only 31% report having no relationship, and the amount who are very satisfied with their relationship increased from 28% in 2005 to 32% in 2006.

- Very Satisfied: 45 (32%)
- Satisfied: 32 (23%)
- Somewhat Satisfied: 14 (10%)
- Not Satisfied: 4 (3%)
- Very Dissatisfied: 2 (1%)
- No relationship at this time: 44 (31%)

In 2004 and 2005, a significant amount of participants indicated their family as a significant support, and it was not surprising to find that 82% of participants were either satisfied or very satisfied with their family relationships. In 2006, 76% of participants were either very satisfied

or satisfied with their family relationships, though there is no significant increase in any other categories, and we can thus conclude that the rate of satisfaction with family remains comparatively high between all years of *Transitions* reports.

- Very Satisfied: 46 (33%)
- Satisfied: 60 (43%)
- Somewhat Satisfied: 25 (18%)
- Not Satisfied: 6 (4%)
- Very Dissatisfied: 4 (3%)
- No family relationships at this time: 0

### **Social Challenges related to Learning Disability**

In 2006, we asked a series of new questions relating to learning disability and social life. We began by asking participants if they felt they faced any challenges in their social life as a result of their learning disability. Sixty-five participants (46%) reported learning disability related challenges to their social life. However, seventy-six (54%) responded their learning disability presents no challenge to their social life.

To question further those who responded that their learning disability presents challenges to their social life, we asked the question: “what would you say are the biggest challenges you currently face in social situations due to your learning disability?” As participants could respond freely, the list below is a compilation of the most common answers:

Shyness: 15

Self-consciousness: 12

Memory problems (words, faces, etc.): 9

Problems with self-expression: 6

Social anxiety: 5



Distracted: 4

Others speak too fast: 4

Over analyzing everything: 2

Loner: 2

Reading in public (menus, signs): 2

We also asked all participants “do you feel that your learning disability has given you an advantage in social situations?” Though the majority, 106 participants (75%), responded in the negative, thirty-five participants (25%) did feel their learning disability has given them an advantage in social situations. Participants commented extensively about the advantages, and the list below is a compilation of the most common responses:

Less judgmental/more empathetic: 9

Abstract/creative thinking: 5

Forced to be confident: 4

Better memory/more observant: 3

People skills: 3

Assertive: 2

Increased intelligence: 2

Sense of humor: 2

Two participants also commented that their learning disability has made them who they are, and thus they feel they have been given the advantage of spending more time than others learning about themselves. This has increased their self-confidence.

## **VI. 3. Impact of Learning Disability on Employment:**

### **Areas of Strength and Difficulty**

We suggested in the *First Annual Report* that a possible indicator of a good school-to-work transition would be the number of participants who felt their employment built on their areas of strength and interest and allowed them to avoid their area of greatest difficulty. In 2004, 70% of participants, and in 2005, 73% of currently employed participants felt their work built on their areas of strength and interest. In 2006, 70 of 141 participants responded that they do not face challenges at work related to their learning disability.

In 2006, 53 of the 112 (47%) currently employed participants responded that their current work allows them to avoid their area of greatest difficulty. This is similar to 2005, where 50% of participants responded they were able to avoid their area of greatest difficulty at work. Only 30 PSE Graduate Non-Continuers who are currently employed are working in a job where they are able to avoid their area of greatest difficulty. Of the 44 PSE Graduate Non-Continuers who are unable to avoid their greatest difficulty at work, similar to 2005, many are very resilient about their problems at work. One participant wrote: *“Well yes and no, I don’t write or read a great deal of information, but I do have to spell check all my work. In regards to math, I don’t have to do a lot of math but I do deal in money and insurance checks. Phonics is the big one, I sometimes have trouble pronouncing patients names.”*

When asked specifically if they faced any challenges related to their learning disability at work, 42 currently employed participants responded that they do face challenges, while 70 responded that they did not. Of those who felt they had learning disability related challenges at work, the biggest challenges listed were:

Memory/concentration: 11

Spelling errors: 7

Phonics: 5

Editing: 5

Coworkers who do not understand: 4

Time management: 3

Hiding learning disability: 2

Reading: 2

Paperwork: 1

Not bilingual: 1

### **Disclosure at work**

*Transitions Trend #18: Transitions participants disclose their learning disability at work only when necessary for the job. (Continuing)*

All 112 currently employed participants were asked about disclosure of their learning disability at work. Fifty-three participants (48%) who are currently employed responded that they have disclosed that they have a learning disability at work. This is very similar to the 2005 rate of disclosure which was 38%, and much higher than the 2004 number of 30%. Of those who disclosed their learning disability, only one received a negative response. That 99% of those who disclosed found the reaction positive is an incredible percentage, up 4% since 2005. This indicates a positive transition from school to work for these participants.

Fifty-nine participants (42%) have not disclosed. Of those participants who have not disclosed, the majority (46 of 59) said disclosure is not necessary, 78%. Only five responded that they were worried about different treatment in the workplace, three worried about condescending co-workers and 5 were concerned that disclosure could jeopardize future promotions or wage

increases. Twelve participants who had not disclosed were planning on disclosing their learning disability at work in the future. Hopefully, these people will be encouraged by the 99% positive reaction other *Transitions* participants have had to their disclosure and we hope to highlight this positive figure on the *Transitions* portal ([www.transitionsportal.ca](http://www.transitionsportal.ca)).

***Transitions Trend #19: Significantly more women working full-time disclose their learning disability at work than men working full-time. (Continuing)***

Disclosure at work may be more important for individuals who work full-time rather than at a part-time job. In the *First Annual Report* we noted that more female participants (25) working full-time had disclosed that they had a learning disability at work. In 2005, this trend remained true, with 33 women disclosing their learning disability at work, versus 13 males employed full-time. In 2006, 26 women employed full-time indicated they had disclosed at work, while only seven men had disclosed. Thus in 2006, the trend is again validated that more women disclose their learning disability at work than men.

### **Accommodations at Work**

Of the 112 participants who are currently employed, only 24 (21%) use accommodations at work, though this is an increase from 2005 where only 18% used accommodations.

The most common accommodations used at work are as follows:

- Computer/laptop
- Assistive technology
- More time
- Flexible deadlines

Six male PSE Graduate Non-Continuers who are currently employed are using accommodations at work, an increase of five men since 2005. Thirteen female PSE Graduate Non-Continuers who are currently employed are using accommodations. For those who are using accommodations, it seems they have made the transition from school to work successfully using accommodations, though they are a small percentage of employed participants.

Still, the majority of participants do not use accommodations in the workplace. Forty-eight PSE Graduate Non-Continuers who are employed full-time are not using accommodations. Only three participants who are not using accommodations asked for them and had their request rejected. We do not know what particular accommodations these participants requested that were rejected.

*Transitions Trend #20: Few participants who are currently employed use accommodations and/or assistive technology at work. (New Trend)*

### **Assistive Technology at Work**

Only 27 participants of the 112 (24%) who are currently employed use assistive technology at work. This is an increase since 2005, when only 15% used assistive technology in the workplace. The most common assistive technology used was:

- digital organizers/palm pilots: 18
- Speech-to-text: 8
- Text-to-audio: 6
- Concept mapping: 5
- Other: spellcheck: 3
- Franklin: 3

- Computer: 2
- Calculator: 2
- Paper and pen: 1

Of those who are using assistive technology in the workplace, only one requested assistive technology from their employer, while 26 installed it themselves or brought their own from home. This shows the independence of *Transitions* participants, likely attributable to the excellent training on assistive technology in the pilot programs.

Similar with accommodation use at work, of the 85 currently employed participants who do not use assistive technology at work, the majority, 79 (93%), do not use it because it is not necessary for their current employment. Only four stated that there is no assistive technology available, and two responded they do not use it because they did not disclose that they have a learning disability at work.

### **Relationship with Co-workers**

In 2005, 94% of participants described their working relationship with their colleagues as “comfortable.” In 2006, 96% have a comfortable working relationship with their co-workers.

*Transitions Trend #21: Transitions participants have good relationships with their coworkers. (New Trend)*

This year we asked participants if they interact with their co-workers outside of the workplace. Sixty-eight of the 112 employed participants (61%) responded that they do spend time with their co-workers outside of work. We also asked how much time participants spend with their co-workers outside of work, and the most common response was “more than 3 times a month” (27), closely followed by “1 to 3 times a month” (22), and the rest responding “less than

once a month” (19).

## General Job Satisfaction

*Transitions Trend #22: An overwhelming percentage of Transitions participants experience job satisfaction. (New Trend)*

Participants were asked in 2006 “are you satisfied with your job?” An overwhelming 82 of the 112 (73%) currently employed participants responded that they are satisfied. Only 30 (27%) indicated dissatisfaction.

## VI. 4. Additional concerns related to learning disability:

At the end of the 2006 survey, we asked participants the following question:

*“Earlier in the survey, you were asked what specific challenges you currently face in terms of school, employment and social situations. Are there any other ways you feel that your LD affects you at this time that you did not mention above?”*

Only 35 participants felt there were other ways their learning disability was affecting them that they did not get to mention in other questions in our survey. Common responses were as follows:

- Problematic family relationships: 8

- No sense of direction (especially when driving): 5
- Self-expression: 3
- Self-esteem: 3
- Prioritizing: 2
- Sexual relationships difficult to maintain: 2
- Changing field of study difficult: 1
- Counting money: 1
- Decision making: 1
- Hard to read signs: 1
- Money management: 1
- Easily distracted: 1
- Math: 1
- Memory problems: 1
- Filling out applications difficult: 1
- Finding an adult ADHD doctor difficult: 1

We also asked participants: “*Do you feel that you have learned how to manage your LD?*” An overwhelming 123 of 141 participants responded that they have learned to manage their learning disability. These participants were asked to describe in detail the ways they have learned to handle their learning disability, and the following list is a compilation of the most common responses:

- Coping skills: 18
- Ask for help: 18



- Adaptive technology/computer: 17
- Know own strengths/weaknesses: 15
- Being very open/ self-advocate: 14
- Give myself more time for tasks: 8
- Ask people to repeat themselves: 7
- Suck it up and move on: 6
- Learning strategies: 5
- Support group: 5

In conclusion, we are excited to note a new trend in 2006:

*Transitions Trend #23: Overall, Transitions participants feel they have learned how to manage their learning disability. (New Trend)*

## VII. CONCLUSION

The LDAC study, “Putting a Canadian Face on Learning Disabilities,” includes a section which attempts to calculate the economic costs of having a learning disability over the lifespan for individuals, families and society. The estimated costs are extremely high, ranging from \$444,274 to \$1.951 million for individuals, and from \$690 billion to \$3,031 billion to society. What is implied by calculating these figures is that there would be a saving to individuals or their families and to society of these very high amounts if only governments would act on their recommendations. To give some perspective to just how high these projections are, the upper end of the calculation to society is approximately three times Canada’s gross national product.

We certainly acknowledge that there are very real costs related to learning disabilities to individuals, families and to society. We would also like to see many of LDAC’s recommendations adopted by governments at all levels. But we take issue with the amounts cited and the assumptions that underlay the cost analysis of having a learning disability.

LDAC’s calculations are not real costs, but represent an assumption of primarily lost income due to unrealized or lost opportunity. Certainly our cohort is not representative of the LD population, but if *Transitions* is demonstrating one just fact at this still early phase, it is that persons with learning disabilities, properly supported, can be as highly educated and successful as the general population.

Certainly much rests on what exactly properly supported means. We believe that early identification and appropriate supports throughout primary, secondary and post-secondary education are imperative. And while we do not wish to minimize or trivialize the costs or complexity of finding solutions to LD problems, there is no advantage in overstating the case in order to draw attention to the issue. Rather, we believe that profiling our *Transitions* cohort, its successes, and its ability to compete, work and thrive with the general population provides more convincing ammunition for government to act than placing undue emphasis on the consequences of inaction. The supports that have made *Transitions* participants successful are tangible, modest in cost, and most of all, have left the recipients of former LOTF programs and services with the skills, education and personal motivation to continue to be successful on their own.

## VIII. LOOKING AHEAD

Children and adults with learning disabilities face very real challenges in education and in the workplace. The LDAC study, “Putting a Face on Learning Disabilities,” profiles many of the barriers and consequences of lost potential in Ontario and in Canada. But the *Transitions* cohort is a notable, even dramatic exception to the rule. As researchers, and as concerned citizens, we are excited about the possibilities to realize potential from what we are learning about the successes of our Transitions participants as they move forward with their lives. What may be regarded as commonplace success for many of our study participants from today’s perspective, might have been regarded as unachievable for a person with a learning disability only 20 years ago. We hope you are as excited as we are about how *Transitions* evolves in the coming years.

## IX. BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Adelman, Pamela B. and Susan A. Vogel. "Adults with Learning Disabilities 8-15 Years after College." in *Learning Disabilities*. 10:3. pp. 165-182.
- Allen, Mary and Chantal Vaillancourt. "Class of 2000: Profile of post-secondary graduates and student debt." *Culture, Tourism and the Centre for Education Statistics Division: Statistics Canada*, 2004. Catalogue no. 81-595-MIE – No. 016.2004.
- Allen, Mary, Mylene Lambert, Klarka Zeman, Patrick Bussiere. "Who Pursues post-secondary education, who leaves and why: Results from the Youth in Transition Survey." *Statistics Canada*. 2004. Catalogue no. 81-595-MIE2004026.
- Archer, Armstrong, Furrie, Walcot-Gayda, and Wilson. "Putting a Canadian Face on Learning Disabilities" [www.pacfold.ca](http://www.pacfold.ca). March 2007.
- Asher, Gregg, Robert J. Miller, Stephanie Corbey. "Promoting Post-secondary Education For High School-Aged Youth With Disabilities: A Model of Empowerment." 13:1. 1994. p. 57.
- Baer, Robert M. et al. "A Collaborative Follow-up Study on Transition Service Utilisation and Post-school Outcomes." in *CDEI*, 26:1. 2003. pp. 7-25.
- Blackorby, J. "Disability, special education, and social class: Their relationship to post school status." Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, University of Washington, Seattle, 1991.
- Bruininks, R.H., Wolman, C., & Thurlow, M. L. "Consideration in designing survey studies and follow-up systems for special education service programs." in *Remedial and Special Education*, 11:2. 1990. pp. 7-17, 46.
- Casey, Jack, et al. "Individualized Transition Planning for Students with Learning Disabilities." in *The Career Development Quarterly*, 49. 2004. pp. 60-72.
- Cook, Bryan G. et al. "Backlash against the inclusion of students with learning disabilities in higher education: Implications for transition from post-secondary environments to work." in *Work*, 14. 2000. pp. 31-40.
- Cummings, Rhoda., Maddux, Cleborne D., Casey, Jack. "Individualized Transition Planning for Students with Learning Disabilities." in *The Career Development Quarterly*, 49. 2000.

- Franke, Sandra. "School, work and the school-work combination by young people." *Housing, Family and Social Statistics Division. Statistics Canada*. 2004. Catalogue no. 89-584-MIE – No.3.
- Goldberg, Roberta J. et al. "Predictors of Success in Individuals with Learning Disabilities: A qualitative Analysis of a 20-Year Longitudinal Study." in *Learning Disabilities Research and Practice*. 18:4. 2003. pp. 222-236.
- Grossman, Lev. "Grow Up? Not so Fast." *Time Magazine*. January 24, 2005.
- Haller, E.J., & Virkler, S.J. "Another look at the rural-non-rural differences in students' educational aspirations." in *Journal of Research in Rural Education*, 9:3. 1993. pp. 170-178.
- Halpern, A.S. "A methodological review of follow-up and follow-along studies tracking school leavers from special education." in *Career Development of Exceptional Individuals*, 13. 1990. pp. 13-27.
- Janz, Teresa. "Low-paid employment and moving up: A closer look at full-time, full-year workers." *Statistics Canada*. 2004. Catalogue no. 75F0002MIE – 2004009.
- Klarka Zema, Tamara Knighton, and Patrick Bussiere. "Education and labour market pathways of young Canadians between age 20 and 22: an Overview." *Culture, Tourism and the Centre for Education Statistics Division, Statistics Canada*. 2001. Catalogue no. 81-595-MIE – No. 018.
- Kunin, Roslyn & Associates. "Literature Review on the Impact of Post-Secondary Education on Labour Market Attachment for Persons with Disabilities." Presented to The Disability Resource Network, February 2006.
- Levine, P. "Gender Differences in long term post school outcomes for youth with mild mental retardation, learning disabilities and no disabilities: Myth or reality?" Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Washington, Seattle. 1993.
- Levine, Phyllis, Camille Marder, and Mary Wagner, "Services and Supports for Secondary School Students with Disabilities: A Special Topic Report of Findings from the National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS2)", May 2004.
- Levine, Phyllis and Nourse, Steven W., "What follow-up study say about post school life for Young Men and Women with Learning Disabilities: A Critical Look at the

- Literature.” in *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 31:3. 1998. pp 212-233.
- Madaus, J. W., Foley, T. E., McGuire, J. M., & Ruban, L. M. “A follow up investigation of university graduates with learning disabilities.” *Career Development of Exceptional Individuals*, 24:2. 2001. pp. 133-146.
- Morissette, Rene and Anick Johnson. “Are Good Jobs Disappearing in Canada?” *Business and Labour Market Analysis Division: Statistics Canada*, 2005. 11F0019MIE—No. 239. pp. 5-21.
- Mull, Charlotte A. and Patricia L. Sitlington. “The Role of Technology in the Transition to Post-Secondary Education of Students with Learning Disabilities: A Review of the Literature.” in *The Journal of Special Education*, 37:1. 2003. pp. 26-32.
- Raskind, Marshall H., Goldberg, Roberta J. Goldberg, Higgins, Eleanor L., Herman, Kenneth L. “Patterns of Change and Predictors of Success in Individuals with Learning Disabilities: Results from a Twenty-year Study,” in *Learning Disabilities Research & Practice*, 14:1. 1999. pp. 35-49.
- Raskind, Marshall H, Paul J. Gerber, Roberta J. Goldberg, Eleanor L. Higgins, and Kenneth L. Herman, “Longitudinal Research in Learning Disabilities: Report on an International Symposium.” in *Journal of Learning Disabilities* 31: 3. 1998. pp. 266-277.
- Reisman, Elaine S. and Frances T. Yuan. “Transition to Adulthood: Outcomes for Graduates of a Non-degree Post-secondary Program for Young Adults with Severe Learning Disabilities.” in *Learning Disabilities*, 10:3. pp. 153-163.
- Rojewski, Jay. “Occupational and Educational Aspirations and Attainment of Young Adults With and Without LD 2 Years After High School Completion.” in *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 32:6. 1999. pp. 533-552.
- Stacey, Wendy. “The Stress of progression from school to work for adolescents with learning disabilities...What about life progress?” in *Work*, 17. 2001. pp 175-181.
- Stevens, Gillian and Joo Hyun Cho. “Socioeconomic Indexes and the New 1980 Census Occupational Classification Scheme.” in *Social Science Research*, 14. 1985. pp. 142-168.
- Vogel, S.A. “Adults with learning disabilities: Research questions and methodological

- issues in planning a research agenda for 2000 and beyond.” in *Canadian Journal of Special Education*, 11:2. 1996. pp. 33-54.
- Vogel, Susan A, Faith Leonard, William Scales, Peggy Hayeslip, Jane Hermansen, and Linda Donnell, “The National Learning Disabilities Post-Secondary Data Bank: An Overview.” in *The Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 31:3. 1998. pp. 234-247.
- 2001 Census: analysis series. “Education in Canada: Raising the Standard.” *Statistics Canada*. 2001. Catalogue no. 96F0030XIE2001012. (Author Not-Available)
- Provincial Overview of Survey Results Ontario. “Employment Profile: 2001-2002 College Graduates.” *Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities*. 2003. (Author Not-Available)
- “Highlights from the 2003-2004 Ontario University Graduate Survey.” *Council of Ontario Universities*. (Author Not-Available)

## X. APPENDICES

### X. Appendix 1: Validation Status, Documentation and Definition of a Learning Disability

There were **1242** students deemed eligible, and served by the pilot programs between 1998 and 2002. It is from this pool of persons with learning disabilities that the *Transitions* cohort was created. We contacted as many former pilot students as we could find and asked if they would agree to participate in the longitudinal study. All former LOTF pilot students are welcome to become involved in *Transitions* at any time in the study.

However, it is important to remember that this cohort has been carefully selected in the sense that all participants have previously undergone a rigorous process to determine the validity of their learning disability. In examining the literature on learning disabilities, this issue is often not dealt with. Studies generally report on populations of persons or, more likely, students with learning disabilities without referencing how it was determined that they have a learning disability. This is a critical piece for researchers to consider in the field of learning disabilities.

Relying on secondary-school assessments, IPRC identification, I.E.P.s, etc. will not provide dependable information on the validity of claim to learning disability. Incredibly, during the pilot years, between 70% to 100% of the newly enrolled pilot students had inadequate or no documentation of their learning disabilities. For this reason, LOTF imposed a stringent documentation criterion for pilot projects before they could claim a student eligible for entry into the program. (See LOTF Diagnostic and Documentation Criteria for Pilot Project Eligibility for Students with Specific Learning Disabilities, LOTF, January, 2000). There is no precedent in the field and practice of providing service to students with learning disabilities for such a documentation requirement to be fulfilled before a student becomes eligible for inclusion into a program.

The following is a breakdown of the culminate data showing how the number 1242 was arrived at in determining a validated population of students with learning disabilities:



Students deemed eligible through the validation process: 987

- Students who met the first year participation criteria and were exempted from the formalised validation process, usually because they did not continue beyond the first year: 138
- Students exempted from the validation, since they were only involved in the summer projects: 117
- Students who were deemed ineligible through the Validation process, i.e. excluded from the database: 302

The Enhanced Services Fund has maintained LOTF's commitment to serving a validated population of students with learning disabilities. All colleges and universities in Ontario are eligible to receive funding to create two specialised positions to assist students with learning disabilities, those of Learning Strategist and Assistive Technologist, based on the recommendations within LOTF's Final Report. Currently, all 45 post-secondary institutions have these positions, or a combination of these positions in place. This support structure is unique in the world.

In order to qualify for funding, post-secondary institutions must currently adhere to the Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario's definition of a learning disability. Psychoeducational assessments use the following LDAO definition in its diagnosis of learning disability:

## **LDAO Definition of Learning Disabilities**

“Learning Disabilities” refers to a variety of disorders that affect the acquisition, retention, understanding and organization or use of verbal and/or non-verbal information. These disorders result from impairments in one or more psychological processes related to learning in combination with otherwise average abilities essential for thinking and reasoning. Learning disabilities are specific, not global, impairments and as such are distinct from intellectual disabilities.

Learning disabilities range in severity and invariably interfere with the acquisition and use of one or more of the following important skills:

- oral language (e.g., listening, speaking, understanding)
- reading (e.g., decoding, comprehension)
- written language (e.g., spelling, written expression)
- mathematics (e.g., computation, problem solving)

Learning disabilities may also cause difficulties with organisational skills, social perception and social interaction.

The impairments are generally life-long. However, their effects may be expressed differently over time, depending on the match between the demands of the environment and the individual’s characteristics. Some impairments may be noted during the pre-school years, while others may not become evident until much later. During the school years, learning disabilities are suggested by unexpectedly low academic achievement or achievement that is sustainable only by extremely high levels of effort and support.

Learning disabilities are due to genetic, other congenital and/or acquired neuro-biological factors. They are not caused by factors such as cultural or language differences, inadequate or inappropriate instruction, socio-economic status or lack of motivation, although any one

of these and other factors may compound the impact of learning disabilities. Frequently, learning disabilities co-exist with other conditions, including attentional, behavioural and emotional disorders, sensory impairments or other medical conditions.

For success, persons with learning disabilities require specialised interventions at home, school, community and workplace settings, appropriate to their individual strengths and needs, including:

- specific skill instruction;
- the development of compensatory strategies;
- the development of self-advocacy skills;
- appropriate accommodations.

## **Appendix Two: Annual Follow-up Questionnaire for *Transitions* Participants 2006**

### **SECTION I: PERSONAL INFORMATION**

1) Name: \_\_\_\_\_

2) Gender:    Male ☐ Female ☐

3) Age: \_\_\_\_\_

4) Pilot Institution: \_\_\_\_\_

### **SECTION II: EDUCATION**

5) Are you currently studying?                      ☐ Yes                      ☐ No\*

\*If you answered No, please skip to **Question #6**

#### **IF YOU ARE CURRENTLY STUDYING**

5a) Are you attending:                      ☐ University                      ☐ College                      ☐ Certificate Program

5b) Field of study: \_\_\_\_\_

5c) Are you registered:                      ☐ Full-time                      ☐ Part-time                      ☐ Special Student

5d) Are you registered as a student with a disability?                      ☐ Yes                      ☐ No

5e) Do you use accommodations provided by the Special Needs Office at your institution?  
☐ Yes ☐ No

5f) Do you use assistive technology to help with your studies? ☐ Yes ☐ No

5g) If yes, what kinds of assistive technology do you use (i.e. Dragon Naturally Speaking, Inspirations, Kurzweil, etc.)?

---

5h) Are you currently working part-time while studying? (i.e. Less than 35 hours per week together with classroom study. This does not include summer employment unless one is taking classes during the summer semester.)  
☐ Yes ☐ No

5i) Are you currently working full-time while studying? (i.e. 35 hours per week or more together with classroom study. This does not include summer employment, unless one is taking classes during the summer semester.)  
☐ Yes ☐ No

5j) Are you currently working at a non-paying internship/placement? ☐ Yes ☐ No

5k) Do you currently have a paid co-op placement? ☐ Yes ☐ No

5l) Do you feel prepared to seek employment after graduation? ☐ Yes ☐ No

(Please be as specific as possible about your reasons why or why not.)

---

5m) Do you face any challenges at school due to your LD? ☐ Yes ☐ No

---

6) Have you graduated from a college or university program?

☐ Yes      ☐ No\*

\*If you answered No, please skip to the ***Specialized Education Questions*** below and follow the instructions

### **IF YOU HAVE GRADUATED**

7) If yes, please tell us if you graduated from more than one program:

☐ 1 program    ☐ 2 programs    ☐ 3 programs

7a) If yes, please select the type of each program year of graduation, and institution. (If you selected more than one program, remember to write the year of graduation and the school you graduated from for each. If you graduated with two degrees, diplomas, or certificates, just write between the lines)

a) <input type="checkbox"/> University Degree	Year/Institution _____
b) <input type="checkbox"/> College Diploma	Year/Institution _____
c) <input type="checkbox"/> College Certificate	Year/Institution _____

### **IF YOU ARE CURRENTLY STUDYING AND DID NOT GRADUATE**

8a) Are you still in the academic program you began as a pilot student?    ☐ Yes    ☐ No

8b) If yes, please explain what progress you have made towards finishing your program.

---

8c) If no, please elaborate on your decision to leave the program. (i.e. Did you switch programs?)

---

9a) Which factors have contributed to you still being in school? (Please choose only one reason that best describes your situation.)

- a) ☐ Decision to switch programs has prolonged studies
- b) ☐ Have been in my program for the typical time period
- c) ☐ More time required to graduate due to LD (i.e. reduced course load)
- d) ☐ Financial concerns (i.e. must work a lot, difficulty paying tuition)
- e) ☐ Love of education
- f) ☐ Concern over leaving school and having to seek employment

9b) Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

10) When do you expect to graduate? (Please include the month and year.)

---

11a) Do you intend to pursue further education after graduation?    ☐ Yes                      ☐ No

11b) Please elaborate on your reasons why or why not.

---

**IF YOU ARE CURRENTLY STUDYING AND HAVE GRADUATED IN THE PAST**

12) When did you return to school?

- a) ☐ immediately after graduation
- b) ☐ one year after graduation
- c) ☐ more than one year after graduation

13a) Why did you choose to return to school after graduation? (Please choose the one answer that best describes your situation and then expand on your choice as best you can in the *Comments* section.)

- a) ☐ Require further qualifications to attain the job I want (i.e. B.Ed., trade certificate)
- b) ☐ To become more specialized in my field (i.e. graduate school)
- c) ☐ To obtain higher pay in my field
- d) ☐ Love of education
- e) ☐ Concern over leaving school and having to seek employment

13b) Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

14) When do you expect to graduate? (Include month and year)  
\_\_\_\_\_

15a) Do you intend to pursue further education after graduation? ☐ Yes ☐ No

15b) Please elaborate on your reasons why or why not.

\_\_\_\_\_

### **IF YOU ARE NOT CURRENTLY STUDYING AND DID NOT GRADUATE**

16a) Why did you leave your program without graduating? (Please choose any reasons that apply and then expand on your choice as best you can in the *Comments* section.)



- a) ☐ did not enjoy program of study
- b) ☐ financial concerns (i.e. must work a lot, difficulty paying tuition)
- c) ☐ cannot decide what career to pursue
- d) ☐ found part-time employment
- e) ☐ found full-time employment
- f) ☐ could not obtain all necessary requirements to graduate

16b) Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

17) Do you want to graduate from the program that you began as a pilot student?

☐ Yes ☐ No

18a) Do you plan on returning to school in the future? ☐ Yes ☐ No

18b) If yes, when do you plan on returning? (Include month and year)

\_\_\_\_\_

18c) If yes, what program do you plan to pursue? \_\_\_\_\_

18d) If yes, what do you feel you need to do to ensure that you successfully graduate?

\_\_\_\_\_

18e) If no, why do you not wish to return to school?

\_\_\_\_\_

### **IF YOU ARE NOT CURRENTLY STUDYING AND HAVE GRADUATED**

19a) Did you feel prepared to seek employment after graduation? (Please be as specific as

possible about your reasons why or why not in the *Comments* section below.) ☐ Yes ☐ No

19b) Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

20a) Do you plan on returning to school in the future? ☐ Yes ☐ No

20b) If yes, why do you plan to return to school? (Please choose the one answer that best describes your reason for returning to school.)

- a) ☐ To obtain further qualifications to attain the job I want (i.e. B.Ed., trade certificate)
- b) ☐ To become more specialized in my field (i.e. graduate school)
- c) ☐ To obtain higher pay in my field
- d) ☐ Love of education
- e) ☐ Difficulties seeking employment

20c) Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

20d) If yes, when do you plan on returning to school? (Include month and year)  
\_\_\_\_\_

20e) If yes, what program do you plan to pursue? \_\_\_\_\_

### SECTION III: FINANCIAL CONCERNS

23) Have you ever had any student loans? ☐ Yes ☐ No

24a) Are you presently in debt from student loans? ☐ Yes ☐ No

24b) If yes, what is the amount of debt you have incurred from student loans? (Please be as exact as possible.)    \$ \_\_\_\_\_

24c) If yes, what effect does your student debt have on your life at this time?

---

25) If you are not in debt from student loans, are you in considerable debt from other sources?  
☐ Yes                      ☐ No

26a) Do you currently have financial concerns?            ☐ Yes                      ☐ No

26b) If yes, what are you most concerned about? (You may choose more than one)

- ☐ paying off student loan/debt
- ☐ paying for rent/mortgage
- ☐ paying for necessities (i.e. food, hydro, transportation, etc.)
- ☐ providing for family
- ☐ saving for the future

27a) Does your debt load prevent you from enjoying the lifestyle that you want? (Please elaborate in the *Comments* section below.)                      ☐ Yes                      ☐ No

27b) *Comment* \_\_\_\_\_

#### **SECTION IV: EMPLOYMENT**

28) Are you currently employed?                      ☐ Yes                      ☐ No

### IF YOU ARE CURRENTLY EMPLOYED

29) What is your current employment status? (Please choose the one response that best describes your current situation. Remember full-time is considered 35-hours or more per week.)

- |   |   |                                      |
|---|---|--------------------------------------|
| a) <input type="checkbox"/> Full-time permanent | c) <input type="checkbox"/> Part-time Permanent | e) <input type="checkbox"/> Contract |
| b) <input type="checkbox"/> Full-time temporary | d) <input type="checkbox"/> Part-time Temporary | f) <input type="checkbox"/> Casual   |
| g) <input type="checkbox"/> Paid Apprenticeship | h) <input type="checkbox"/> Paid Co-op          | i) <input type="checkbox"/> Seasonal |
- j) ☐ Summer Employment (choose this if you are currently studying and know that you will be working only during the summer months and not during the academic year)

30) What type of work do you do? (Please choose the category that best fits your job)

- |                           |                                  |                |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------|
| a) Security/Corrections   | c) Retail/Customer service/Sales | e) Healthcare  |
| b) Restaurant/Hospitality | d) Office/Administrative         | f) Education   |
| g) Health and fitness     | h) Construction/Factory/Trade    | i) Agriculture |
| j) Computers/Internet     | k) Media/Communications          | l) Automotive  |
| m) Childcare/recreation   | n) Accounting/Finance            | o) Government  |
- p) Other: \_\_\_\_\_

31) How long have you been with your current employer (in years)? \_\_\_\_\_

32) On average, how many hours do you work in a week? \_\_\_\_\_

33) What is your expected annual gross salary for 2006? (Please provide exact figure or approximate within \$5000.00.) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

34a) For the purposes of this study, *underemployment* is defined as “employed at a lower level than your education or work experience warrants.”

As such, would you consider yourself to be underemployed at this time? ☐ Yes ☐ No

34b) If Yes, please expand on your answer. (i.e. Discuss whether you are where you should be in your career based on your level of education, both in status and salary.)

---

34c) If no, please expand on your answer. (i.e. Discuss whether you are where you should be in your career based on your level of education, both in status and salary.)

---

35a) Does your current employment build upon your post-secondary program?  
☐ Yes ☐ No

36b) If yes, please elaborate: \_\_\_\_\_

35c) If no, is this a choice on your part or are you unable to find work in your field? (Please discuss.)

---

36) In terms of career goals, where do you aspire to be in 5 years?

---

37a) Will your current employment help you to reach your career aspirations?  
☐ Yes ☐ No

37b) If yes, please elaborate: \_\_\_\_\_

37c) If no, please elaborate: \_\_\_\_\_

39a) Does your current work allow you to avoid areas of difficulty related to your LD?

(i.e. reading, spelling, math, etc.)    ☐ Yes            ☐ No

39b) Please elaborate: \_\_\_\_\_

40a) Have you disclosed that you have a LD at work?            ☐ Yes            ☐ No

40b) If yes, when did you disclose? \_\_\_\_\_

40c) If yes, was the reaction negative or positive?            ☐ Negative    ☐ Positive

Please elaborate: \_\_\_\_\_

40d) If no, why have you chosen not to disclose? \_\_\_\_\_

40e) If no, do you plan to inform your employer about your LD in the future?

☐ Yes            ☐ No

41a) Do you use any accommodations at work due to your LD?            ☐ Yes            ☐ No

41b) If yes, which ones specifically? \_\_\_\_\_

41c) If yes, how was your request for accommodations treated? \_\_\_\_\_

41d) If no, have you requested accommodations at work?            ☐ Yes            ☐ No

41e) If no, why not? \_\_\_\_\_

42a) Do you use any assistive technology to help you with your work on account of your LD?  
☐ Yes ☐ No

42b) If yes, what type of assistive technology do you use? (choose any that apply)

a) ☐ Dragon Naturally Speaking

b) ☐ Inspirations

c) ☐ Kurzweil

d) ☐ Spell-checker

e) ☐ Palm Pilot

f) ☐ Others: \_\_\_\_\_

42c) If yes, did you:

a) ☐ Request assistive technology to be provided by your workplace

b) ☐ Install it yourself (i.e. bring in your own)

42d) If no, (you do not use any assistive technology to help you with your work), why not?

\_\_\_\_\_

43a) Do you *currently* face any challenges related to your LD at work? ☐ Yes ☐ No

43b) If yes, what would you say are the biggest challenges you currently face at work?

\_\_\_\_\_

44) Do you have a comfortable working relationship with your colleagues? ☐ Yes ☐ No

45a) Do you interact with your colleagues outside of the workplace? ☐ Yes ☐ No

45b) If yes, how often do you interact with your colleagues outside of the workplace?

a) ☐ Less than once a week

b) ☐ 1 to 3 times a week

c) ☐ More than 3 times a week

46) Are you satisfied with your job? ☐ Yes ☐ No

(Please elaborate on why or why not in the *Comments* section below.)

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

**IF YOU ARE CURRENTLY UNEMPLOYED**

47) What has been your employment history since graduating or leaving school?

\_\_\_\_\_

48a) Are there extenuating circumstances related to your unemployment? (i.e. health, injury, maternity leave)? ☐ Yes ☐ No

48b) If yes, what are they? \_\_\_\_\_

49a) Please rank in order of importance which factors you believe will help ensure a successful job search: (1 being the most important and 7 as least important)

\_\_\_ Information Sessions/Workshops on employment skills/job search tools

\_\_\_ Resume Reviews/Tutorials

\_\_\_ Networking (i.e. job fairs)

\_\_\_ Mock Interviews

\_\_\_ Internet Job Sites

\_\_\_ Campus Career Centre

\_\_\_ Participation in a mentorship program

49b) Have you used any of the above strategies to help you find employment?

☐ Yes

☐ No



49c) If yes, which ones? \_\_\_\_\_

50a) Do you feel hindered in the workforce on account of your LD? ☐ Yes ☐ No

50b) If yes, in what ways does your LD hinder you in the workforce? (chose any that apply)

- ☐ Difficult to gain access to the job that you want
- ☐ Prevents you from getting a promotion
- ☐ Slows down your speed of completing tasks when compared with other co-workers
- ☐ Makes it difficult to interact with your co-workers (i.e. you're self-conscious about your LD)
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

50c) If no, why not? \_\_\_\_\_

## SECTION V: SOCIAL LIFE

51a) Do you do volunteer work? ☐ Yes ☐ No

51b) If yes, how many hours per month do you volunteer?

- a) ☐ 0-5 hours/month
- b) ☐ 6-10 hours/month
- c) ☐ 11-15 hours/month
- d) ☐ 16-20 hours/month
- e) ☐ 21-25 hours/month
- f) ☐ 26-30 hours/month
- g) ☐ over 30 hours/month

51c) If yes, what are your reasons for volunteering?

a) ☐ Opportunity to helping others

b) ☐ Sense of satisfaction

c) ☐ Gain experience/skills

d) ☐ Opportunity to meet people

e) ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

52a) Do you participate in a physical activity on a regular basis? (i.e. regular basis = once a week or more and can include exercising, playing sports, swimming, etc.)

☐ Yes

☐ No

52B) If yes, what kind of exercise/physical activity do you do and how often? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

52) Would you describe yourself as more of a social person or solitary person?

☐ Social

☐ Solitary

Please explain if possible: \_\_\_\_\_

52) If you have free time, do you generally choose to spend it:

a) ☐ With others

b) ☐ Alone

c) ☐ Both equally

d) ☐ Don't have free time

## LIVING ARRANGEMENTS

53a) Do you currently live with your parents or other family members? ☐ Yes ☐ No

53b) If yes, please explain why and elaborate if possible in the *Comments* section:

- a) ☐ Financial reasons (i.e. can't afford to live on your own)
- b) ☐ Cultural reasons
- c) ☐ Still dependant upon parents (emotionally, etc.)
- d) ☐ Parents are dependent on you (i.e. you're taking care of your parents)
- e) ☐ Preferred living arrangement at this time

53c) Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

53d) If no, please chose the answer that best describes your current living arrangement. (Please elaborate if possible in the *Comments* section below such as why did you choose to live with friends?)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| a) <input type="checkbox"/> In residence                     | d) <input type="checkbox"/> With spouse/partner |
| b) <input type="checkbox"/> With spouse/partner and children | e) <input type="checkbox"/> With children       |
| c) <input type="checkbox"/> With friends                     | f) <input type="checkbox"/> Alone               |

54e) Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

---

## RELATIONSHIPS

54) Regarding your *friendships*, how would you rate your current level of satisfaction?

- a) ☐ Very Satisfied
- b) ☐ Satisfied
- c) ☐ Somewhat Satisfied
- d) ☐ Not satisfied
- e) ☐ Very Dissatisfied
- f) ☐ No friends

55) Regarding your *relationships* with spouse/partner/boyfriend/girlfriend, how would you rate your current level of satisfaction?

- a) ☐ Very Satisfied
- b) ☐ Satisfied
- c) ☐ Somewhat Satisfied
- d) ☐ Not satisfied
- e) ☐ Very Dissatisfied
- f) ☐ No relationships at this time

56) Regarding your relationships with *family* members, how would you rate your current level of satisfaction?

- a) ☐ Very Satisfied
- b) ☐ Satisfied
- c) ☐ Somewhat Satisfied
- d) ☐ Not satisfied
- e) ☐ Very Dissatisfied
- f) ☐ No family relationships at this time

57a) Do you face challenges in social situations as a result of your LD?    ☐ Yes    ☐ No

57b) If yes, what would you say are the biggest challenges you *currently* face in social situations due to your LD?

---

58a) Do you feel that your LD has given you an advantage in social situations?

☐ Yes    ☐ No

58b) If yes, how has your LD given you the advantage in social situations?

---

59) What kind of goals (other than career) do you wish to achieve in the near future? (i.e. in 5 years)

a) ☐ Buy property (i.e. house, apartment, condo etc.)

b) ☐ Get married

c) ☐ Have a steady relationship

d) ☐ Start a family

e) ☐ Travel

f) ☐ Finish school

g) ☐ Pursue further education

h) ☐ Be debt free

i) ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## IMPACT OF LEARNING DISABILITY

60a) Earlier in the survey, you were asked what specific challenges you currently face in terms of school, employment and social situations.

Are there any other ways you feel that your LD affects you at this time that you did not mention above? (i.e. your relationships with family and friends, grocery shopping, etc.)

☐ Yes      ☐ No

60b) If yes, please elaborate: \_\_\_\_\_

61a) Do you feel that you have learned how to manage your LD?   ☐ Yes      ☐ No

61b) If yes, please describe the ways that you have handled your LD?

\_\_\_\_\_

62) Are there any supports that you used in the pilot program (i.e. accommodations, assistive technology, learning strategies, etc.) which you do not have access to now but which you feel you would benefit from at this time?

\_\_\_\_\_

63a) Did you participate in our *Transitions* Trends Discussion on the Portal? (i.e. contributed answers or read other participants responses)   ☐ Yes      ☐ No

63b) If yes, what are your thoughts? \_\_\_\_\_

64) Would you like to see more discussions happening on the *Transitions* Portal?

☐ Yes

☐ No

65) Please select the items that you would most like to see on the *Transitions* Portal. (You may select more than one item.)

a) ☐ Employment Information/Tips

b) ☐ Awards and Scholarship Information

c) ☐ Financial/Budgeting Tips

d) ☐ More interaction with other participants (i.e. forum discussions)

e) ☐ Progress updates on the Study

f) ☐ Others: \_\_\_\_\_

## **SECTION VI: CONCLUSION**

66) Additional Comments/Suggestions: \_\_\_\_\_

## **SECTION VII: CONTACT INFORMATION**

Permanent Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Current Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Telephone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Alternate Telephone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Most Current Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Secondary Email: \_\_\_\_\_

***THANK YOU!***