Continuous Improvement of Inter-rater Reliability

in Transition Compliance at a State Agency

by

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ABSTRACT

A mixed methods action research study was designed to answer three research questions based on inter-rater reliability (IRR) in compliance calls for transition at a state education agency, perceived confidence levels in making and discussing compliance calls, and perceived confidence in sharing transition resources. An innovation based on andragogy and frame of reference training (FOR) was designed and implemented with twelve participants to answer these questions. To measure the effects of the innovation, participants completed a pre-and post-innovation review of five student files, analyzing the IRR for the group as compared with a gold standard (GS) both before and after the innovation. Additionally, a smaller group sample for the same five files post-innovation was collected to compare group results for IRR with the GS to the combined individual results. A retrospective survey was also utilized in which participants rated their confidence in each component pre- and post-innovation. Based upon analyses of these data, several key findings were identified. Higher inter-rater reliability was noted when participants reviewed files within small groups and in the area of annual Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals aligned with measurable post-secondary goals. Lower IRR was reported in nuanced files, files for students with low-incidence disabilities, and files with more instances of non-compliance. Results indicated that participant confidence in making and discussing transition files in the field improved post-innovation. Lastly, participants indicated higher confidence in sharing best practices in transition with the field post-innovation. Implications for this research include training suggestions, additional practice with low-incidence and nuanced files at the state agency, and group review of files in other state monitoring systems.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband, Jarod, and my two children, Bodhi and Sage. Jarod, I could not possibly have made it through this long and arduous journey without your support. I appreciate every time that we had to rearrange our lives or plans so that I could write a paper or attend a class. I also sincerely thank you for all the times you ensured our kids were happy and healthy when I could not give them the attention they deserved. I have especially appreciated our discussions throughout my study. You have been a sounding board and a critical friend, helping me process and brainstorm during each step. Just having you listen as I talked through my ideas helped me in immeasurable ways, especially as you know and understand firsthand how difficult a doctoral program can be. Thank you for being my life partner and best friend.

Bodhi and Sage, I can't begin to describe how much your support and understanding over the past four years have meant to me. I adore you both and love how inquisitive and thoughtful you are. I have been amazed at your interest during each phase of my program, especially at such young ages. You are both brilliant children with huge hearts, and I am eternally grateful to be your mother. I know that I haven't always been able to engage with you at times, and I know that this has been hard. You have both more than risen to the occasion, and I hope you will remember that some tasks require a lot of time and hard work. I am so thankful that you both will now experience a time when neither of your parents is in graduate school. I could not have accomplished this achievement without you!

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

The ultimate goal of a student with a disability's education is arguably how well

the student transitions into a successful adulthood that includes contributing positively as

an included community member. It makes sense that the full purpose of a student's

education leads to this transition to postsecondary life. That being said, there may be no

part of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2004) that has more

meaning and purpose for students with disabilities than secondary transition. Secondary

transition is defined within the IDEA (2004) as follows:

> a coordinated set of activities for a child with a disability that is designed to be
>
> within a results-oriented process, that is focused on improving the academic and
>
> functional achievement of the child with a disability to facilitate the child's
>
> movement from school to post-school activities, including postsecondary
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> education, vocational education, integrated employment (including supported
>
> employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living,
>
> or community participation; and is based on the individual child's needs, taking
>
> into account the child's strengths, preferences, and interests.

Put another way, secondary transition is an individualized process for supporting students

with disabilities as they transition from school to adult life, including planning related to

employment, education and/or training, and independent living.

Keeping the requirements for transition within the IDEA and the ultimate goal of

a positive post-school outcome for students with disabilities in mind helps set the stage

1

for this action research project. This chapter lays out the study's federal, state, and local context to improve inter-rater reliability and perceived confidence in making and discussing transition compliance calls and sharing transition best practices resources in the field for Program Support and Monitoring (PSM) specialists at the state level.

Transition Planning

In reflecting upon the gravity of comprehensive transition planning, it is crucial to consider that students with disabilities consistently demonstrate poor post-school outcomes. As Newman et al. (2009) reported, postsecondary outcomes for students with disabilities are often reported as lesser than their non-disabled peers. Furthermore, students with disabilities account for over half of high school dropouts (Sitlington & Neubert, 2004) and have lower employment rates than their non-disabled peers (Wagner & Blackorby, 1996). These studies reveal the critical task of effectively supporting students with disabilities toward positive post-school outcomes.

The IDEA is, at heart, a civil rights law ensuring a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) for students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment (LRE) that outlines the requirements that must be addressed for a transition plan to meet the regulations. It is of note that one purpose of the IDEA is "to ensure that all children with disabilities have available to them a free appropriate public education that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living" (U.S. Department of Education, 2022). This assurance aligns the statute's purpose with the goal of positive post-school outcomes for students with disabilities as they transition to adult life.

For compliance purposes, the measurement table provided for state reporting from the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Special Education Programs (OSEP) further outlines the requirements to be included within a transition plan (Indicator 13) as detailed within the IDEA. These include measurable postsecondary goals based upon age-appropriate assessments updated annually, transition services, annual IEP goals and a course of study aligned with these goals, an invitation for the student to attend the IEP meeting, and consent from a parent or adult student to include an outside agency representative at the meeting (OSEP, 2022).

There is also a wealth of literature supporting best practices for improving post-school outcomes for students with disabilities. In 2009, the research of Test et al. found 16 predictors of positive post-school outcomes for students with disabilities in employment, education, and independent living with transition programs correlating positively with education and employment outcomes. Mazzotti et al. (2021) reported that transition planning positively predicts education and employment post-school outcomes. Additionally, a large effect of transition planning related to students earning a high school diploma and post-school employment outcomes continued to be reported. Even though the research on the impact of a compliant transition plan on post-school outcomes is limited, Landmark & Zhang (2012) found a moderate correlation between IEP transition component compliance and transition best practices documented within the IEP. These studies provide a general context for the problem of practice, and a more comprehensive discussion of the transition literature will be addressed within Chapter 2 of this document.

General Supervision

The IDEA charges Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams, Multidisciplinary Evaluation Teams (MET) teams, Public Education Agencies (PEAs), and State Education Agencies (SEAs) with ensuring that students with disabilities are provided equity in access to the general education curriculum and inclusion with their non-disabled peers to the maximum extent possible (IDEA, 2004). Reflecting upon these lofty and essential goals, general supervision of the IDEA at the state level can be seen as a critical responsibility with significant implications for students with disabilities and their families. At the state level, Part B of the IDEA addresses the provisions for children aged three to 21 and has been divided into six unofficial principles (Yell et al., 2018), including "zero reject, protection in evaluation, free appropriate public education (FAPE), least restrictive environment, procedural safeguards, and parent participation" (p. 87). The IDEA also outlines the requirements for SEAs, including general supervision and monitoring. General supervision is defined as the requirement for the SEA to ensure that PEAs follow the requirements within the IDEA. Specifically, within the IDEA, SEAs are charged with

> Improving educational results and functional outcomes for all children with disabilities and ensuring that public agencies meet the program requirements under Part B of the Act, with a particular emphasis on those requirements that are most closely related to improving educational results for children with disabilities. (34 CFR §300.600(b)).

The IDEA (2004) explains that the SEA must ensure that each PEA "meets the

educational standards of the SEA. Although a new general supervision guidance package was provided to SEAs on July 24, 2023, at the time of this study, general supervision activities at the state level were guided by the Office for Special Education Programs (OSEP), including Memo 09-02 (OSEP, 2008, OSEP 2023). Cox (2019) explains that the Education for All Handicapped Children's Act (EHA) of 1975 described the role of the SEA as assuring that students with disabilities have their needs met and that the statute is followed. The EHA required that SEAs provide general supervision to PEAs within the state and included an authorization to conduct enforcement activities, such as withholding funds until PEAs can "demonstrate compliance" (Cox, 2019, p. 41). Monitoring activities were first described within the EHA and further outlined with the IDEA (2004) to include a focus on students receiving a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) and that the state is conducting its general supervision requirements and addressing the over-representation of students identified for special education from racial and ethnic groups (Cox, 2019).

SEAs report compliance and outcome areas within the State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report SPP/APR (OSEP, 2022). The SPP/APR is a requirement of the IDEA that dictates that each state create an annual report "that evaluates the state's efforts to implement the requirements and the purposes of the IDEA" as measured by 17 outcome and compliance-based indicators (see Appendix A) (IDEA Data Center, 2022). General supervision also includes fiscal management, dispute resolution, data management, technical assistance, policies and procedures, corrective action, and integrated monitoring activities in all public districts and charters, including secure care settings.

The Differentiated Monitoring System

 Within general supervision, specific monitoring requirements are also described. States have some flexibility in how they are structured and how they conduct compliance monitoring. The SEA in Arizona is the Arizona Department of Education (ADE). Within ADE, the Exceptional Student Services (ESS) unit is housed within the ESS/Child and Adult Programs division (ADE, 2023). Program Support and Monitoring (PSM) is a specific section within ESS whose role includes providing technical assistance and differentiated monitoring activities to the more than 200 public school districts, 400 charter holders, 15 county-level education agencies, and 14 Career and Technical Education Districts, along with all special education programs within secure care correctional facilities within the state as part of the SEA's general supervision requirements (ADE, 2021) (Appendix B). A PSM specialist is assigned to each PEA within the state. Specialists conduct monitoring activities, file reviews for technical assistance, professional training in compliance-specific topics, and provide general support to the field and other constituents, including parents, on state and federal law regarding special education. As a part of the differentiated monitoring system, PSM implements a six-year monitoring cycle. This means that each PEA is monitored at least once every six years. Monitoring occurs when the PEA is in year 4 of the monitoring cycle. The differentiated monitoring system places PEAs within three types of monitoring based upon a PEA's systems, internal capacity, and Risk Analysis score. Year 4 includes monitoring activities; technical assistance, including file reviews, is conducted in other years. In non-monitoring years (1-3 and 5-6), PSM specialists collect data from PEAs (where applicable) for three of the 17 outcome and compliance indicators (listed in

Appendix A): Indicator 11 (60-day timeline for evaluations), Indicator 12 (in by three for students referred via the Arizona Early Intervention Program - AzEIP), and Indicator 13 (secondary transition components), including a review of a PEA's policies and procedures (year 1) and Child Find procedures (year 2). In addition, they conduct annual site visits (ASVs) to review files with trends of strengths and concerns discussed for technical assistance.

The Risk Analysis (RA) tool (Appendix C) assesses PEAs based on several federal IDEA indicators. PEAs falling one standard deviation or above of the year's state mean RA score in Year 4 are placed into data review, where data is collected and reported for Indicators 11, 12, and 13, where applicable (see Table 1 for a description of the required activities for each type of monitoring). PEAs falling between the state mean and one standard deviation above the state mean are placed in self-assessment monitoring. In self-assessment, PEAs work with PSM specialists to choose a focus area based on RA data. File forms reviewed are targeted to the specific focus area with additional data collected on Indicators 11, 12, and 13. A rubric and action plan (outcome focus area) are also created as a part of the self-assessment monitoring process. PEAs falling at or below the state mean are placed in on-site monitoring. In on-site monitoring, PEA and ADE teams work collaboratively on-site to review files, review systems for strengths and opportunities, and create a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) to address individual and systemic non-compliance levels.

Table 1

The Differentiated Monitoring System

Monitoring Type	On-Site	Self-Assessment	Data Review
Risk Analysis Score	Risk analysis score is at or below the state mean RA score	Risk analysis score is between the state average and one standard deviation above the state mean RA score	Risk analysis score is greater than one standard deviation above the state mean RA score
Outcome Focus Area	PEA self-selects the outcome focus area	PEA self-selects the outcome focus area	No required outcome focus area
Activities	PEA completion of the selected outcome focus area, PEA, and SEA file review to include indicators 11, 12, and 13, classroom observation(s), PEA correction of identified noncompliance, and PEA completion of corrective action plan (if applicable) and associated activities	PEA completion of outcome focus area activities of self-selected outcome area, PEA self-assessment of targeted file review to include indicators 11, 12, and 13, and correction of self-identified non-compliance	PEA self-assessment of data for indicators 11, 12, and 13, correction of self-identified non-compliance

PSM specialists utilize compliance Guide Steps (see Appendix D for the transition components of the Guide Steps for the 2022-2023 school year) that outline the line items and components for specific compliance areas monitored by PSM during the study period. The 54-page Guide Steps document contains references to law, explanations for compliance calls, and examples and non-examples to support making

compliance calls. The student form (see Appendix E for transition section) used in on-site monitoring and for technical assistance purposes contains four sections (Child Find, evaluation, IEP, and procedural safeguards and notices), including fifteen line-item categories with specific components underneath. Line items and components are denoted with an *in*, *out,* or *unreported* call based upon reviewing a full student file, including the evaluation, individualized education program (IEP), prior written notices (PWNs), etc. Some line items (including secondary transition) and/or components are denoted with a 60-day timeline for correcting non-compliance when the identified non-compliance is considered prohibitive for the student receiving a Free and Appropriate Public Education, as required by the IDEA. Files are reviewed in a representative sample with specialists trained to look for trends, including strengths and opportunities. As such, calls are made within the context of the sample and the systems present within the PEA. PSM specialists review files with PEA members and train teams on utilizing the Guide Steps to build compliance capacity within their systems. Following formal monitoring activities, subsequent files are reviewed based on the areas of systemic level non-compliance, along with evidence of individual corrections made.

Program Support and Monitoring Specialists

PSM specialists are typically former special education teachers, school psychologists, related services providers, and special education administrators. Even though all have relevant experience in special education, specialists come to the position with various comfort levels and special education compliance at the required level. As such, new specialists complete small group or one-on-one modules on monitoring systems, compliance calls, applicable statutes and regulations, the relationship between

the SEA and federal partners, and technical training for data management. Depending upon staffing, each specialist carries a caseload of around 20-40 PEAs. PSM is led by a director, including a leadership team of three lead specialists (at the time of the study) and a coordinator for the State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP). Training new specialists is intensive, with mentors assigned to each specialist for support. Specialists often meet with PEAs in person and typically do so in a pair or larger groups to ensure comprehensive guidance. They have the opportunity to meet often with their assigned mentor for support in compliance calls, conversations with PEAs and other constituents, and support in additional tasks required for monitoring and technical assistance. Training is provided monthly, including continuous training in inter-rater reliability for compliance calls. Specialists conduct *desk audits* for data review monitoring and self-assessment monitoring but go on-site in groups to work collaboratively with PEAs in on-site monitoring.

Inter-rater Reliability

As compliance data from monitoring is reported to OSEP, is used by the SEA to plan for needed professional development provided to the field, and provides compliance guidance and corrective action to those responsible for special education programs in PEAs, the accuracy of compliance data is imperative. As such, PSM specialists train monthly on specific compliance components, work with partners and in small groups to ensure inter-rater reliability, consult with lead specialists when questions arise, and conduct validation of compliance calls in all monitoring activities. The Guide Steps and student form are updated annually with training provided on any changes in guidance as a result of case law, state complaints, data collected for areas of concern, or changes in

federal guidance. Despite the continuous efforts towards improvement in inter-rater reliability, several areas have been identified as areas in which PSM specialists need to be more consistent in making compliance calls.

Informal data collection with PSM specialists supports a need for IRR training specific to transition-related components (discussed later in Table 2). Indicator 13 is reported to OSEP by the SEA with an expectation of 100% compliance. Indicator 13 is defined as the **"Percent of youth aged 16 and above with an individualized education program (IEP) that includes coordinated, measurable, annual IEP goals and transition services that will reasonably enable the student to meet the postsecondary goals."** (IDEA, 2004).

Within the Guide Steps and student form, the following eight transition components are evaluated for compliance with state and federal regulations:

- Measurable postsecondary goals in education, training, and independent living (when appropriate)
- Measurable postsecondary goals updated annually
- Documentation that the postsecondary goals were derived from age-appropriate assessment(s)
- Documentation of one or more transition services/activities that support the postsecondary goal(s)
- The student's course of study supports the identified postsecondary goal(s)
- Documentation of annual IEP goal(s) that will reasonably enable the student to meet the postsecondary goal(s)
- Documentation that the student was invited to the meeting

11

- Evidence that a representative of another agency that is likely to provide and/or pay for transition services has been invited to the meeting when parent consent has been obtained

PSM specialists review these components with a call of *I* (in compliance), *O* (out of compliance), or *U* (unreported) (ADE, 2022).

In the literature on compliance with the IDEA, a few sources have investigated the ability of organizations to follow the IDEA and the need for support from the SEA. Blake (2012) considered the challenges for PEAs in complying with the IDEA in full within a system that only partially supports the ability to do so. Rose (2017) found that administrators believed compliance monitoring at the state level provided needed support and checks to ensure that districts followed the regulations outlined within the IDEA. Voulgarides (2018) discusses the often-messy business of following the IDEA, citing the idea of "loose coupling" (Weick, 1976) when the influence of people and organizations affects the intent of a particular policy. These studies lend credence to the need for support to PEAs in understanding and following the regulations within the IDEA, which is included in the role of the PSM specialist at the SEA level.

Statewide Transition Data (Indicator 30)

When considering students with disabilities in Arizona, the SEA reports annually to the public and OSEP within the SPP/APR (ADE, 2023). Within the SPP/APR, four indicators (collectively referred to as Indicator 30 based on the sum of the indicators) are related to postsecondary compliance and student outcomes, including the following: Indicator 1 (graduation rates), Indicator 2 (dropout rates), Indicator 13 (transition components) and Indicator 14 (post-school outcomes).

For Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2021, the state reported a graduation rate of 72.41%, which was down from 81.84% in FFY 2020. FFY 2021 data is pulled from the 2020-2021 school year, which means the data is considered "lag" data. SPP/APR. The national target for graduation rate is set at 80%. Over the past several years, the state's graduation rate has hovered around 77%. Graduation rates are calculated for all students with disabilities graduating in the state with a regular high school diploma. Two years ago, this calculation was changed to include all students with disabilities graduating with a high school diploma, regardless of how many years they are in high school, where previously only those graduating within four years were included in this calculation.

For FFY 2021, the dropout rate was 27.24%, up from 18.03% in FFY 2020, with a target of 21.89% or below. The dropout rate has been steadily declining since 2016, with a sharp rise in FFY 2021. As with graduation data, FFY 2021 data is also "lag" data and is pulled from the 2020-2021 school year. FFY 2020 data is based on the 2019-2020 school year. Since both graduation and dropout rate data for FFY 2021 are not meeting targets, the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on students are likely a significant factor.

For Indicator 13 transition data, the target set by OSEP is 100%. The state's data for FFY 2020 (school year 2019-2020) is 61.94%, a sharp decline from 78.03% in FFY 2019. This data has been declining steadily since 2016. Data for Indicator 13 in the FFY2021 (school year 2020-2021) SPP/APR includes a slight uptick, with Indicator 13 at 65.17%. It is important to note that Indicator 13 is only collected and reported based on PEAs in all three types of monitoring during the given year; thus, it is cohort data rather than data of all transition-aged students in the state. This means that Indicator 13 data does not include any PEA data for PEAs not in Year 4 of the 6-year monitoring cycle. To

comply with Indicator 13, a student file must have all eight components counted as *in*. Data is only reported for students 16 years or older during file review.

Indicator 14 measures post-school outcomes for all students based on a statewide survey administered by PEAs with the support of the SEA. The survey is administered to students with disabilities who exited the previous school year. Data reported in the SPP/APR was collected in the 2021-2022 school year for students who exited in the 2020-2021 school year. Indicator 14 data is reported in three parts: A (percent of students enrolled in higher education), B (percent of students enrolled in higher education or competitively employed), and C (percent enrolled in higher education, some other postsecondary education or training program or competitively employed). The SEA data reported in the SPP/APR for FY2021 is meeting targets in all three areas, with 19.69% for 14A, 56.72% for 14B, and 72.40% for 14C. Targets are set to rise around one percentage point per year. Data in all three areas has been slowly declining since 2016 but has improved over FY2020, where 14A was 18.59%, 14B was 56.22%, and 14C was 71.80% (ADE, 2023).

Data trends for Indicator 30 indicate a continued goal for improving graduation rates, reducing drop-out rates, and ensuring positive post-school outcomes for students with disabilities in Arizona. Also, Arizona is not meeting the federal 100% compliance target for transition compliance as a state. Therefore, focusing specifically on transition for the purposes of this action research study seems prudent.

Problem of Practice

As discussed above, a downward trend followed by a slight uptick was noted in the Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2020 and 2021 SPP/APR in monitoring data for Indicator

13. Furthermore, ESS leadership has facilitated data dialogue meetings around Indicator 30 (Indicators 1, 2, 13, and 14). The goal in these data discussions has been to make connections across units and within the agency to more fully support graduation rates and transition outcomes for students with disabilities. These data discussions began in August 2022 with leadership and staff in PSM, along with transition specialists within the Special Projects section, to ensure that all personnel are aware of this data and part of the planning process to address transition outcomes as a state further. Additional data discussions are also planned for the remaining indicators reported in the SPP/APR.

As a part of this larger discussion, the agency has discussed how changes in compliance guidance and PSM inter-rater reliability (IRR) of compliance monitors may be affecting the Indicator 13 data. Based on preliminary information from PSM with a target of at least 90% for transition components, a recent file review showed concerns for IRR in measurable postsecondary goals, transition activities, course of study, and annual goals related to postsecondary goals among PSM specialists. Specifically, IRR for the eight components encompassing Indicator 13, in an informal file review completed by specialists individually, found the following IRR as indicated below in Table 2 in italicized areas indicating IRR targets met.

Table 2

Preliminary IRR Results Indicator 13

Component	IRR	IRR Target
Measurable postsecondary goals in education, training, and independent living (when appropriate)	57%	90%+
Measurable postsecondary goals updated annually	93%	90%+
Documentation that the postsecondary goals were derived from age-appropriate assessment(s)	100%	90%+
Documentation of one or more transition services/activities that support the postsecondary goal(s)	57%	90%+
The student's course of study supports the identified postsecondary goal(s)	79%	90%+
Documentation of annual IEP goal(s) that will reasonably enable the student to meet the postsecondary goal(s)	86%	90%+
Documentation that the student was invited to the meeting	100%	90%+
Evidence that a representative of another agency that is likely to provide and/or pay for transition services has been invited to the meeting when parent consent has been obtained	100%	90%+

These results are based upon one file review, so they should be viewed cautiously, as this may not be a true representation of IRR in these areas and could be indicative of concerns within the specific file. Anecdotally, there are concerns noted in other areas of the transition components; thus, the planned innovation will address the components of Indicator 13 as a whole. A larger sample will be collected prior to the innovation to ensure a more accurate baseline.

Multiple specialists have shared concerns about making compliance calls on transition consistently as a group, especially in more nuanced files. Nuanced files are best defined as files containing documentation that is not representative of what PSM specialists typically encounter in transition files or when a file sample is nuanced because of a call made in the context of a specific systemic trend. They have also expressed feeling unsure about explaining transition components to PEA teams in the field if they have little transition background before joining the PSM team. To effectively explain IDEA requirements and state guidance on Indicator 13 to members of the field, it is imperative that PSM specialists have a thorough understanding of the components. This knowledge could assist with improved confidence in the in-depth discussions required as a part of the PSM role.

As a lead specialist in PSM at the time the study was conducted, I was a part of the leadership team that mentors PSM specialists, along with planning and leading training activities for the team. This role allowed me to directly influence training on IRR for PSM specialists specific to transition outcomes.

Innovation

The Targeted Transition Compliance Training (TTCT) took place over five months, including three in-person lessons (synchronous) and three self-paced modules (asynchronous) with PSM specialists. The training incorporated the principles of adult learning (andragogy) and an adapted Frame of Reference training format to support possible improvement in Inter-rater Reliability (IRR). Data collection included a pre-and post-survey with open-ended questions to assess participants' perceptions of confidence in discussing transition components with the field and making reliable Indicator 13 calls.

Participants reviewed the same set of five transition files pre- and post-innovation to determine whether IRR improved in Indicator 13 after the innovation. Probe data during the innovation, data from group reviews, and confidence scales for each transition component were also collected.

Research Questions

Research questions include one question targeting how the TTCT affects participant IRR, with a second question addressing participants' perceived confidence prior to and after the TTCT. A third addresses perceived confidence in sharing transition resources in the field.

RQ1: What is the effect of a targeted transition compliance training on compliance specialists' inter-rater reliability?

RQ2: How and to what extent does a targeted transition compliance training affect compliance specialists' perceived confidence in making compliance calls reliably and providing technical assistance within transition components to members of the field?

RQ3: How and to what extent does a targeted transition compliance training affect specialists' perceived confidence in aligning transition best practice resources to compliance discussions in the field?

Summary

Chapter 1 clearly outlined the purpose of this study based on the specific, self-identified needs of the PSM unit within ESS. Within the review of the legal requirements of the IDEA, the research base of postsecondary outcomes for students with disabilities and transition best practices, as well as the state-specific data reported in Indicators 1, 2,

13, and 14 for the FFY 2020 SPP/APR, I have explained the context of the study. I have also outlined the needs of PSM specialists specific to IRR for transition components outlined within the IDEA. The following chapters will discuss the theoretical and conceptual frameworks of the study, followed by an outline of the proposed methods.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND SITUATIONAL CONTEXT

Introduction

The theoretical and conceptual bases include a discussion of the requirements for

transition planning within the IDEA and an introduction to seminal works describing best

practices for transition planning. Additionally, a discussion of how andragogy, the theory

of adult learning, connects to the study and how it supports the planned innovation is

included. Studies on inter-rater reliability connected to teacher evaluations are also

reviewed, including Frame of Reference (FOR) training to improve inter-rater reliability.

Lastly, the stages of acquisition of expertise are reviewed to ascertain and discuss stages

of expertise relevant to participants within the study. This review of the literature and the

frameworks discussed serve as the foundation for the proposed innovation.

Transition Planning

An examination of the literature related to the impact of transition supports for

students with disabilities, including the federal regulations requiring transition planning

and services, situates the study within the context of both the requirements and

recommended practices for transition. As previously discussed in Chapter 1, regarding

transition, the IDEA (2004) mandates:

> a coordinated set of activities for a child with a disability that is designed to be
>
> within a results-oriented process, that is focused on improving the academic and
>
> functional achievement of the child with a disability to facilitate the child's
>
> movement from school to post-school activities, including postsecondary
>
> education, vocational education, integrated employment (including supported

employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation; and is based on the individual child's needs, taking into account the child's strengths, preferences, and interests.

The IDEA requires specific activities and planning to support students with disabilities on an individualized level in the transition from high school to adult life. As introduced in Chapter 1, the IDEA specifically requires multiple components within a compliant transition plan. OSEP outlines the following requirements for the reporting of Indicator 13 (transition compliance) in the SPP/APR: measurable postsecondary goals that are updated annually, transition activities, annual goals, a course of study, and age-appropriate assessments aligned to postsecondary goals, evidence that the student was invited to the IEP meeting, and that consent was provided by the parent or adult student for an outside agency invited to the IEP meeting. The ADE outlines these requirements within a transition line item in the Guide Steps and student form with eight components. For a transition plan to be deemed compliant for Indicator 13 reporting, all eight components must be compliant, as shown in Figure 1 below, which illustrates the Indicator 13 portion of the student form ADE uses for monitoring PEAs and providing technical assistance.

Figure 1

ADE Student Form Secondary Transition

Secondary Transition Line Items (III.A.6)

☐   III.A.6 _____   For students 16 years of age or older, documentation of required postsecondary components 60-Day

    ☐   Measurable postsecondary goals

       ☐ No evidence of goals
       ☐ Goal content not postsecondary
       ☐ Not measurable
       ☐ Required goal areas not addressed

    ☐   Measurable postsecondary goals updated annually

    ☐   Documentation that the postsecondary goals were derived from age-appropriate assessment(s)

    ☐   Documentation of one or more transition services/activities that support the postsecondary goal(s)

    ☐   The student's course of study supports the identified postsecondary goal(s)

    ☐   Documentation of annual IEP goal(s) that will reasonably enable the student to meet the postsecondary goal(s)

    ☐   Documentation that the student was invited to the meeting

    ☐   Evidence that a representative of another agency that is likely to provide and/or pay for transition services has been invited to the meeting when parent consent has been obtained

Beyond the legal requirements for transition services for students with disabilities, there is a wealth of literature on best practices in transition planning, focusing on improving post-school outcomes for students with disabilities (Indicator 14 in Appendix A). It is essential to consider the transition literature as a whole to improve student outcomes, support PEAs in transition planning, and foster collaboration among transition and compliance specialists at the SEA level. Kohler (1996) created the Taxonomy for Transition Programming, and it is typically accepted as the most comprehensive and research-backed transition model (Beamish et al., 2010; Kohler & Field, 2003; Test et al., 2009). Kohler's Taxonomy includes family involvement, program structure, interagency collaboration, student development, and student-focused planning (including IEP development), as seen in more detail in Figure 2.

Figure 2

Kohler's Taxonomy for Transition Programming
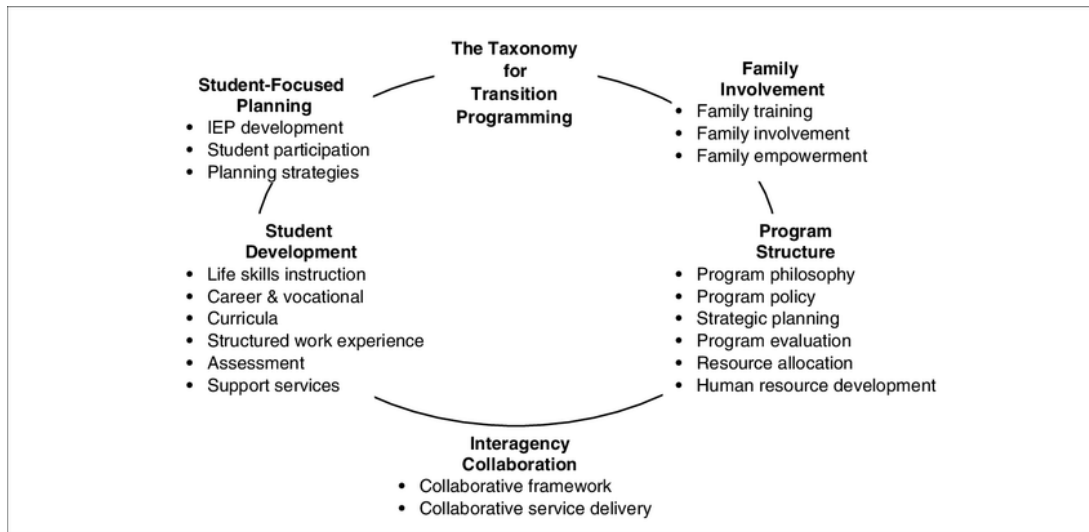
Subsequent research has built upon this taxonomy over time. Test et al. (2009) reviewed 22 empirical studies to identify 16 evidence-based, in-school predictors of positive post-school outcomes in employment, education, and independent living. These 16 predictors have formed the basis for transition best practices within the field. The 16 predictors include inclusion in general education; paid employment/work experience; self-care/independent living skills; student support correlated to employment, higher postsecondary education, and independent living; career awareness; interagency collaboration; occupational courses; self-advocacy/self-determination; social skills; transition program; vocational education correlated to postsecondary education and employment; and community experiences; exit exam requirements/high-school diploma status (Indicator 1 in Appendix A); parental involvement; program of study; and work-study correlated to post-school employment (Test et al., 2009). In studying these 16

predictors, several connect directly to requirements in the IDEA, such as a focus on interagency collaboration, the least restrictive environment and access to general education peers, support related to employment, education, and independent living, and the transition program and the course of study to support the student toward their measurable postsecondary goals, thus tying compliance to best practice to some extent. Wehman et al. (2014) also investigated predictors for post-school employment. They found a positive correlation between parent expectations and high school work experience, which adds to the research base on the original 16 predictors of post-school success. Mazzotti et al. (2021) confirmed research for 14 of the Test et al. (2009) predictors while adding an additional 3, including psychological empowerment, self-realization, and technology skills. Although these additional predictors are not directly addressed within the IDEA, they add to the research base of best practices in transition planning. In line with Test et al. (2009), Morningstar & Benitez (2013) found that strong transition programs led students with disabilities toward independence and community living. Halpern et al. (1995) found that students were more likely to be enrolled in postsecondary education if they received transition planning services the year before exiting school.

When considering transition through the lens of a systems-level perspective, Morningstar et al. (2012) found that to improve transition for students with disabilities, an alignment with educational initiatives is necessary. Benz et al. (2000) reported that students were more likely to be engaged in post-school employment or education when participating in the Youth Transition Program in Oregon and meeting four or more transition goals. Connecting with the research base in transition best practices, including

these predictors of post-school success, could assist in an understanding of the value of transition requirements for both PEAs and PSM specialists.

Transition practitioners have varied results in understanding and implementing best practices in transition. Of note, Sprunger et al. (2018) examined the 16 predictors of post-school success, with results indicating that transition practitioners agreed with the effectiveness of the predictors, with concerns noted in the areas of course of study, inter-agency collaboration, employment experiences, and work-study programs. It is also interesting to note that Mazzotti and Plotner (2014) conducted a multi-state survey of nearly 600 transition practitioners finding that providers had limited exposure to evidence-based practices in transition; however, most participants reported utilizing these evidence-based practices. So, while practitioners need to be made aware of evidence-based practices in transition, these practices are being implemented with students, at least within the Mazzotti and Plotner study. In line with this thinking, Li et al. (2009) found that special educators rated themselves as highly involved in student transition planning. The results of these studies further support the need for technical assistance and training in the field of transition-focused topics.

Based on preliminary discussions with the PSM director, additional areas of transition have been identified as areas to address for PSM specialists as part of the TTCT, including an introduction to the Workforce Improvement and Opportunity Act (WIOA, 2014), which added requirements in pre-transition activities including progress monitoring of transition activities prior to exiting high school including for Vocational Rehabilitation, the creation of youth programs, and restrictions on sub-minimum wages for individuals with disabilities. Furthermore, a review of content on resources provided

by the transition best practices unit at ADE, basic information regarding outside agencies such as Vocational Rehabilitation and the Division for Developmental Disabilities, and a discussion of the Arizona requirements for the Education and Career Action Plan (ECAP) and the availability of the My Future AZ resource and their relationship with transition compliance. A broader understanding of transition is expected to be beneficial for PSM specialists to make connections and fully explain and understand Indicator 13 while supporting PEAs.

When considering transition at the SEA level, Fowler et al. (2014) suggest that SEAs and PEAs should utilize the Morningstar (2011) model for secondary transition planning through an MTSS model and promote research- and evidence-based practices through professional learning and teacher assessments, as well as the NSTTAC (2011) predictors of postschool success in fund allocation, the design of transition programs, and in writing individual transition plans for students with disabilities. This research could further these goals at the SEA level. Within the Arizona Department of Education, work is already ongoing with making connections between PSM specialists and their role in transition compliance with transition specialists under Special Projects within the agency that support transition planning from a best practice lens. Morningstar et al. (2012) recommend three practices to improve the alignment of transition best practices with secondary school reform, including aligning secondary education reforms with the work of the Council for Exceptional Children's Division for Career Development and Transition (CEC DCDT), fostering collaboration between transition practitioners and secondary educators in transition competencies, and working with families and students to allow for advocacy and voice in transition planning. This alignment with secondary

education reforms and transition could be an interesting factor as the SEA works to support improved postsecondary outcomes for students with disabilities in Arizona.

Theoretical Perspectives and Research Guiding the Study

Three frameworks, andragogy, frame of reference training (FOR), and acquisition of expertise, provide an appropriate and effective background on which to base the proposed innovation. As participants were adults with various experiences, the principles of andragogy are key to planning and implementing the innovation. FOR training has demonstrated success in increasing IRR within teacher evaluators and a few additional areas emerging within the literature. Basing the innovation on the FOR framework will provide an evidence-based structure to modify with the goal of improving IRR compliance for PSM specialists. With the goal of improving IRR, the innovation should assist participants in continuing to progress through the stages of learning; thus, a consideration of the acquisition of expertise is an important idea to include as well.

Andragogy

In considering the specific problem of practice, one theoretical framework emerged as the most relevant. The work of Malcolm Knowles and the concept of andragogy, adult learning, fits well with the diverse population of adults within PSM. The planning of the professional learning in inter-rater reliability of transition-specific compliance with the team of monitors will be directly tied to the concepts identified within andragogy.

Malcolm Knowles (1977) describes andragogy as typically prioritizing the adult learner and contrasts it with pedagogy in several ways, including that it is self-directed rather than focused on dependent learners. Knowles built on the work of Linderman

(1926), among others, whose assumptions included that adults have experiences that

motivate them to learn based on their interests and needs, adult learning is centered on

real-world experiences found in life, experiences of adults provide learning opportunities,

adults prefer and need to direct their own learning, and differences in learners become

more pronounced with age. Building on this previous work, Knowles outlined six

assumptions and eight process elements for andragogy, emphasizing how the adult

learner is engaged within the actual learning with real-life goals and self-directed inquiry.

Tables 3 and 4 and Figure 3 respectfully outline andragogy's assumptions and process

elements.

Table 3

Assumptions of Andragogy

Concept	Assumption
The Need to Know	Awareness of why
Learner's Self-Concept	Increasingly self-directed
Learner's Experiences	A rich resource for learning
Readiness to Learn	Develops from life tasks and problems
Orientation to Learning	Task or problem-centered
Motivation	Internal incentives, curiosity

Table 4

Process Elements of Andragogy

Element	Process
Preparing Learners	Set expectations and provide information.
Climate	Informal, mutually respectful, consensual, collaborative, supportive
Planning	By participative decision-making
Diagnosis of needs	By mutual assessment
Setting goals	By mutual negotiation
Designing and learning plan	Learning projects and learning content sequenced in terms of readiness.
Learning activities	Inquiry projects, independent study, experimental techniques
Evaluation	By mutual assessment of self-collected evidence

The andragogical model is explained by Knowles et al. (2005) by the assumptions in Table 3. First, adults need to know the reason behind their learning to engage with the learning; this is discussed in the example "in which learners discover for themselves the gaps between where they are now and where they want to be." (p. 65). In the second assumption, Knowles et al. (2005) explain that adults prefer to be self-directed and resist being directed in their learning. Adult learners are a heterogeneous group, so individualization of learning is vital, and readiness to learn is determined by connections with "real-life situations" (p. 67). Moreover, adults are more problem-centered and connect with learning related to helping them perform a needed task. Lastly, adult learners are more motivated by intrinsic motivators over extrinsic motivators such as raises or benefits. Knowles et al. (2015) studied the perceptions of teachers on andragogy

embedded within professional development with positive results. Teachers appreciated the attention to their own needs as learners and the inclusion of their own learning goals (Knowles et al., 2015).

The Andragogy in Practice Model created by Knowles et al. (2005) in Figure 3 explains the interplay of goals, differences, and core adult learning principles. It is suggested that learners begin with individual, institutional, and societal goals and then move within the graphic toward the middle. In the mid layer, the context is considered, including situational, individual, and subject-matter differences, and the center addresses the six principles of andragogy. Thinking about the process more linearly and planning learning experiences in steps may also be helpful, including the following: mutually assessing needs and setting goals, planning to learn around the specific context, promoting the experience as requiring active engagement, establishing the learning climate, including participant engagement, implementing the learning experience with activities and time to process, and lastly follow up evaluation and reflection of the experience (Kaufman et al., 2009). Utilizing this adaptation of andragogy into a clear process will be helpful for planning the creation and implementation of the proposed innovation.

Figure 3

Andragogy in Practice Model

Goals and Purposes for Learning

Individual and Situational Differences

Andragogy:
Core Adult Learning Principles

1. Learners Need to Know
   - why
   - what
   - how
2. Self-Concept of the Learner
   - autonomous
   - self-directing
3. Prior Experience of the Learner
   - resource
   - mental models
4. Readiness to Learn
   - life related
   - developmental task
5. Orientation to Learning
   - problem centered
   - contextual
6. Motivation to Learn
   - intrinsic value
   - personal payoff

Institutional Growth

Subject Matter Differences

Situational Differences

Societal Growth

Individual Learner Differences

Individual Growth

Pina (2019) conducted an action research project evaluating teacher perceptions of professional learning using the andragogy framework, finding that participants preferred using andragogy within their professional learning, and Beavers (2009) found that teaching teachers entails viewing "adults as unique learners" (p. 28) and recommends teacher input on professional learning, acknowledgment of teacher experience, use of practical topics with real-world implications, support of unique learning styles, the inclusion of dialogue, teacher facilitation of their own learning, a culture of constructive feedback and openness while appreciating diversity, and support for differing theories.

31

These studies strengthen andragogy as an appropriate theoretical framework for this study, especially as most PSM specialists are former teachers. As the participants in the study will come with different experiences within the field, their experiences will likely play a key role in how they gauge compliance. Brockett (2008) builds on Knowles' concept of experience by stating that experience affects how an adult will continue to learn and grow.

Cranton and King (2003) state that "meaningful professional development must involve educators as whole persons - their values, beliefs, and assumptions about teaching" (p. 33), and Lawler and King (2000) conducted a study integrating the following concepts from andragogy into a course including a respectful culture, active engagement, building on previous experience, group discussion and inquiry, real-world application, and practicing reflection and action. These studies applying the principles of andragogy illustrate a need for the proposed innovation to respectfully and actively engage participants, including their values and experiences, and ensure real-world applications with time for reflection.

Frame of Reference Training (FOR)

In addition to utilizing andragogy as a theoretical framework, the frame of reference training conceptual framework will be utilized for the specific design of the innovation. FOR rater training is described by Roch et al. (2012) as including a discussion that job performance is multidimensional, concrete definitions of performance standards, sample behaviors for each standard, and practice and feedback using the framework. FOR training also "typically involves an explanation of the rating system, discussion of avoiding bias and common errors, advice on mental processes for

observation and making judgments, and practice observations" (Graham et al., 2012, p. 15). FOR training creates an alignment among raters based upon consistent standards (Woehr & Huffcutt, 1994). These standards include keeping a diary for observations, a common frame of reference for increased reliability, and training to mastery for raters to improve self-efficacy (Bernardin & Buckley, 1981). The proposed innovation adapts FOR training using examples of often observed transition components within the field to teach schema for likely "in" and "out" of compliance calls. Part of the proposed innovation will also include a session on common biases and errors possibly affecting IRR. Considering biases and errors, low IRR can be attributed to a multitude of issues, including common biases and training in errors has shown consistent promise in improving inter-rater reliability (IRR) for evaluators of teachers (Graham et al., 2012) (Woehr & Huffcutt, 1994), as well as in a few additional areas including assessment centers, selection test cut scores, employment applications, competency modeling, job analysis, interviews, and therapy (Roch et al., 2012; Sulsky & Day, 1994). Sattler et al. (2015) also found a significant effect of using FOR in a training for grant reviewers to improve inter-rater reliability, and Newman et al. (2016) found that FOR training was effective in assessing medical lectures with reliability and accuracy. That these studies demonstrate progress with FOR training in improving IRR outside of teacher evaluations means there is some promise in utilizing this framework for IRR in compliance monitoring as well. Roch et al. (2012) conducted a meta-analysis and found five studies targeting performance evaluations and nine in various settings and contexts. Roch et al. (2012) state that "it appears that FOR training no longer is just a performance appraisal

topic" (p.378). It would seem that FOR training is a logical framework to adapt to improve IRR among PSM compliance specialists.

It is essential to consider other factors that have been shown to reduce IRR. Low IRR can be attributed to a multitude of issues, including those noted by Hoyt and Kerns (1999), who assessed participants after an 11-minute training video and identified multiple areas that led to low IRR, including "lack of overlap, dissimilar meaning systems, and the contribution of unique impressions to the rating process" (p. 405). It was critical to consider participants' understanding of the Guide Steps and the components themselves. Schleicher et al. (2002) recognized the "limited information-processing capacity of assessors," noting that the observation and categorization of behaviors is a challenging task, especially when dimensions for each rating are unclear (p. 736). Schleicher et al. (2002) go on to ascertain that "it may be unrealistic to expect assessors to do all of this accurately and reliably, given the basic limitations in human information processing" (p. 736). This provides evidence to support the continued practice needed to improve IRR for PSM compliance specialists and as a possible explanation for why IRR is a continuous concern within PSM. It is also significant to note that Zepeda and Jimenez (2019) found that evaluations of teachers had higher IRR when evaluating higher-quality teaching rather than lower-quality teaching. Anecdotally, this has been a discussion with the PSM compliance specialists that compliant documentation will likely have a higher IRR.

In establishing IRR targets, a review of the work of Hartmann (1977) and Stemler (2004) targeting IRR between 75-90% provided a range in which to focus. Moreover, when the results of the IRR rating are high stakes, rater reliability is imperative

(LeBreton & Sentor, 2008; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Based on this previous research and for the purposes of this study involving high-stakes compliance monitoring, the targeted IRR rate for PSM specialists on transition components will be set at 90% or above.

Previous researchers have also considered the time spent on FOR training towards effectiveness. To be effective, FOR training must last over an hour or two. Researchers have found shorter training ineffectual in calibrating evaluators with each other or gold standard ratings. (Barrett, 2001; Congdon & McQueen, 2000). FOR training sessions within this study will be at least an hour of in-person targeted training with reviews of FOR throughout the five-month innovation. Research on FOR typically supports training in the schema for specific behaviors consistent with specific ratings on teacher evaluations or other evaluative purposes. This study adapts the FOR framework in teaching schema for transition components required within Indicator 13 based on procedures outlined by Pulakos (1984, 1986) and adapted by Graham et al. (2014) (see Appendices F and G for the original and modified versions).

Acquisition of Expertise

How one acquires expertise is important in understanding the participants' progress during and following the innovation**.** Dreyfus and Dreyfus (2005) described a five-stage model of how adult learners acquire skills towards expertise. They explain the novice learner in stage one as when students are learning by "drill and practice" or by "merely following the rules" (p. 782). This over-reliance on facts and rules in the novice stage will only take a learner so far. In stage two, the advanced beginner stage, learners gain knowledge from real-life experiences and start to develop understanding based on

context. While the instructor acts as a guide, the student in the advanced beginner stage "follows instructions" and uses examples provided by instructors (p. 783). In stage three, the competence phase, learners can feel overwhelmed when the rules are not as easy to follow, and they must decide what information to focus on and what they can ignore. This phase can lead to emotional feelings such as deeming oneself a success or a failure based on the decision made. Learners in this stage may react strongly to mistakes and become more risk-averse. In comparison, novice learners are not as emotionally attached to decisions as they typically follow a set of rules without making contextual decisions. To move toward proficiency, the learner must accept and think about mistakes and "let them sink in" (p. 786). In stage four, the proficient stage, learners need to become sufficiently involved to the extent that reliance on rules gives way to looking at the problem that needs to be solved in the given context and deciding on the best course of action. In this stage, learners rely less on rules and gain experience through various specific situations. Lastly, in stage five, or the expertise phase, the learner can quickly assess how to solve a problem or reach a goal relying on a multitude of previous situational experiences. Often an expert can often answer a question without going through the same decision-making processes required in the proficient stage.

Persky and Robinson (2017) utilized the stages of the acquisition of expertise model in a study of pharmacy students, focusing on instruction needed for students within each stage of expertise as identified by Dreyfus and Dreyfus (2005). For learners in the novice stage, they recommended providing basic examples, feedback, step-by-step explanations, helping learners organize and prioritize information, and putting learning into context. In the advanced beginner stage, recommended instructional strategies

36

included helping to manage anxiety, focusing on the "why," providing specific feedback, using uncommon examples, and reviewing trends and subtleties. In stage three, the competence stage, they suggested providing coaching, helping manage emotions, providing authentic experiences, encouraging self-reflection, holding learners accountable, and providing autonomy with appropriate supervision. In the proficient stage, strategies included providing unique and complex experiences, using teachable moments, continuing encouragement of self-reflection, encouraging trust in intuition, and continuing to build confidence. In the last stage, expertise, Persky and Robinson (2017) suggested focusing on supporting others, seeking deep understanding, being challenged by others, and continuing specific development. The stages of acquisition of expertise and the suggested instructional strategies will be discussed further within the discussion in Chapter 5.

Summary

Chapter 2 examined conceptual and theoretical frameworks situating the study. The chapter began with a discussion of transition requirements and elements of best practice based on the literature, which further supports the need for effective transition planning, including compliance with the IDEA. As compliance with the IDEA is required with possible enforcement actions for all PEAs within the state under the SEA's general supervision, monitoring data must be accurate and reliable. The chapter also addressed the theory of adult learning, andragogy, as the basis of the proposed innovation to effectively engage the diverse adult participants within the study. FOR training provides a proven framework that can be adapted to support PSM specialists in improving IRR in transition components for compliance reviews. Together, the aspects of transition,

andragogy, and FOR training will guide the proposed innovation in anticipation of

improving IRR and perceived confidence for the participants. Lastly, a review of the

acquisition of expertise stages was reviewed in order to assist with possible training

implications and discussion.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to explain the methods utilized to address the research questions within the context of the setting. This chapter will outline the local context and the expected participants within the study site. The role of the researcher will be outlined along with the specific plans for the proposed innovation. Data collection and analysis will also be addressed.

Context and Participants

This study took place during the 2022-2023 school year from January to May, encompassing a substantial portion of the agency's October to May monitoring season. A final follow-up survey was also completed in August. The twelve participants were employees of ADE within ESS in the PSM unit. Participants fulfilled the role of PSM specialist and carried a caseload of 20-40 (PEAs) within the state. The PSM specialist participants possessed a variety of educational and occupational experiences and came from diverse backgrounds representing various age groups. The twelve participants were volunteers who provided informed consent from the sixteen PSM specialists employed during recruitment. A thirteenth participant elected to discontinue participation in the study due to an anticipated move and job change. At the time of withdrawal from the study, this participant shared her unique identifier and was removed from any of the data already collected. All twelve participants completed all required activities except for the small group file review, which was completed as an optional volunteer activity due to

participants' time constraints. Half (six) of the participants completed the small group file review in two groups of three.

Inter-rater reliability within the file review process was targeted on the transition components of the file form. As discussed in previous chapters, the following eight components are required within the IDEA and must all comply with a transition plan to comply with the regulations.

- Measurable postsecondary goals in education, training, and independent living (when appropriate)

- Measurable postsecondary goals updated annually

- Documentation that the postsecondary goals were derived from age-appropriate assessment(s)

- Documentation of one or more transition services/activities that support the postsecondary goal(s)

- The student's course of study supports the identified postsecondary goal(s)

- Documentation of annual IEP goal(s) that will reasonably enable the student to meet the postsecondary goal(s)

- Documentation that the student was invited to the meeting

- Evidence that a representative of another agency that is likely to provide and/or pay for transition services has been invited to the meeting when parent consent has been obtained (OSEP, 2022)

As a reminder, PSM specialists utilize the compliance Guide Steps (Appendix C) and student form (Appendix D) to make compliance calls on each component listed above. A line-item call is made based on full compliance of all components below that

line item. As an example, the transition (Indicator 13 components) must all be compliant for the line item to be called *in compliance.* The target set by OSEP is 100% compliance for this line item under Indicator 13. Thus, the SEA target in the SPP/APR is also 100%. PSM specialists continuously provide technical assistance and monitoring on these components, along with the rest of the components found in the student form and Guide Steps. Of note and reported in an earlier chapter, SPP/APR data reports 61.94% in FFY2020, and 65.17% was reported in the FFY2021 submission for Indicator 13 (transition components). This data is based upon monitoring data findings documented during on-site, self-assessment, and data-review monitoring for the FFY. Concerns with inter-rater reliability are one area that the SEA has identified as an area of concern for improving this data by ensuring the fidelity of the data submitted.

Role of Researcher

As a Lead PSM specialist, I carried a large caseload of PEAs (60 or more), including districts, charters, and secure care facilities to support technical assistance and monitoring activities. I served as the designated specialist for all secure care facilities within Arizona charged with providing a FAPE to their incarcerated students with disabilities. In the 2022-2023 school year, I attended six on-site monitoring sessions throughout the monitoring season as a lead with other specialists' caseloads and led three of my own monitorings. During the monitoring season, PSM specialists and leads conducted self-assessment and data review monitoring for PEAs on their caseloads, along with annual site visits providing technical assistance for PEAs. For PEAs requiring corrective action, specialists conducted multiple meetings with PEAs to assess individual and systemic levels of compliance, i.e., ensuring. PEAs are evidencing corrections of

41

non-compliance for individual students as well as changes in systems to evidence

sustainability. Evidence of other corrective action activities, such as training and

completing one or more rubrics and action plans in a chosen area focused on student

outcomes, is also verified. Lead specialists supported PSM specialists in all monitoring

and technical assistance activities by providing resources, guidance, training, and in-

person and virtual support in the field.

As a lead, I collaborated with specialists one-on-one, in small groups, and in

whole-group training within a mentoring/coaching capacity. At the time of the study, I

supported 3-5 PSM specialists as a mentor. As a part of the leadership team in PSM, I

also supported the planning and facilitating our monthly training opportunities throughout

the school year based on specialist needs. Additionally, I worked closely with the

SPP/APR Coordinator in the 2022-2023 school year to lead data dialogue discussions

around Indicator 30 (a sum of Indicators 1, 2, 13, and 14) with ESS staff. I also worked

collaboratively with our secondary transition best practice unit to align transition

compliance with implementing best practices in transition training for the field. This

often involved conversations around best practices and required compliance, including

providing technical support for compliance-based discussions at conference transition

presentations and other training. Lead specialists also supported a variety of agency

activities, such as frequent presentations to the field and other agency units. As I was

working in a variety of areas and with all PSM specialists, this role situated me in an

appropriate position in which to support inter-rater reliability within transition

components and implement training opportunities for PSM specialists. Throughout the

monitoring season, I interacted with and supported all PSM specialists (including all

study participants) in a mentoring role. Having the opportunity to provide training to all specialists ensured that I could carry out the innovation with my participants by utilizing in-person and virtual opportunities.

Research Questions, Hypotheses, and Data Collection

The three research questions are aligned with their respective hypotheses and data sources, as described in Table 5.

Table 5

Research Questions, Hypotheses, and Data Collection

Research Question	Hypothesis	Data Collection
What is the effect of a targeted transition compliance training on compliance specialists' inter-rater reliability?	TTCT will improve inter-rater reliability among PSM specialists.	Pre- and post-innovation data collection of IRR for five files Probes of IRR
How and to what extent does a targeted transition compliance training affect compliance specialists' perceived confidence in making compliance calls reliably and providing technical assistance within transition components to members of the field?	TTCT will improve compliance specialists' perceived confidence in making compliance calls reliably.	Pre- and post-innovation data collection with open-ended surveys assessing participants' perceived confidence.
	TTCT will improve specialists' perceived confidence in providing technical assistance within transition components to members of the field.	Pre- and post-innovation data collection with Likert-type surveys to assess participants' perceived confidence on individual components.

How and to what extent does a targeted transition compliance training affect specialists' perceived confidence in aligning transition best practice resources to compliance discussions in the field?	TTCT will improve specialists' perceived confidence in aligning transition best practice resources to compliance discussions in the field.	Pre- and post-innovation data collection with open-ended surveys assessing participants' perceived confidence. Overall participation, discussion, and submissions of participants in self-paced Moodle courses.

Procedures Overview

The TTCT took place over five months (January to May) and included three in-person lessons and three self-paced modules. For quantitative data, participants reviewed the same set of five transition files pre- and post-innovation to determine whether IRR was improved in Indicator 13 after the innovation. These results were compared to the PSM leadership team's gold standard (GS) calls for individual growth and were also compared for agreement among the participant group.

As participants were required to discuss transition components with parents and members of the field, qualitative data collection included a pre-and post-survey with open-ended questions to assess participants' perceptions of discussing transition components with the field and making reliable Indicator 13 calls. After participants were recruited via informed consent, participants received five files in which they independently made compliance calls on the eight components comprising Indicator 13. A gold standard, or compliant calls of the files made by the PSM leadership team, was used as a comparison for individual growth in IRR compliance before and after the innovation. This exercise was done via a survey where a unique, anonymous identifier

was used to compare results over time. Participants were not given the results of this survey, as they reviewed the same five files post-innovation. I assigned each file a letter A-E, and the Qualtrics survey identified the surveys in this way. No student-specific information was shared within Qualtrics. Following the innovation, participants completed an identical survey to re-review the files. Participants could use outside resources (Guide Steps, etc.) during the file review but were restricted from discussing with others. An eight-question pre-survey with open-ended questions was also administered at this time with the same unique identifier for change over time and correlation of responses with compliance calls. The pre-survey can be found in (Appendix H) and includes questions about familiarity with the content, personal strengths and struggles in making valid compliance calls and explaining components to the field, and personal background and understanding within transition. A similar post-innovation survey with open-ended questions was administered following the TCTT (Appendix I). Additionally, a post-review of the five files reviewed prior to the innovation was re-reviewed by each participant to assess any changes in IRR. Both surveys were administered in late May at the conclusion of all innovation activities. The planned timeline required some adjustments due to planned activities in the January PSM monthly meeting, the monitoring schedule, and the increased workload of a short-staffed PSM team. Allowing more time for participants to complete planned activities pushed data collection into the end of May. Additionally, both probes conducted by small groups were adjusted to two files rather than the planned five to account for the workload of participants. Also, in May, participants expressed a desire to review the five files in a small group. Therefore, six volunteers from the participant group completed small group

file reviews in two groups of three. As a final activity to ensure that data reflected the research questions and assessed confidence at the component level, a final retrospective pre- and post-survey was employed to assess the twelve participants' confidence in each transition component before and after the innovation. Table 6 outlines the timeline of the innovation activities.

Table 6

Study Timeline

Timeline	Actions	Procedures
January – Introduction and Training	• Recruitment of participants • Pre-intervention probe of transition components on five files • Pre-survey	• Informed consent requests sent to all PSM specialists. • Individual file review sample to participating PSM specialists with five files • Pre-survey with open-ended questions sent to all participating specialists
February - Training	• Lesson 1 – transition legal background • Module 1 - ECAP	• One-hour training reviewing the legal background of Indicator 13 • Self-paced Module 1: ECAP
March - Training	• Lesson 2 – Research-based tools for improving IRR • Module 2 - WIOA • Probe 1	• One-hour training on IRR biases, errors, etc. • Self-paced Module 2: WIOA • Probe 1 (2 files with a small group)
April – Follow Up	• Lesson 3 – Transition components	• One-hour training targeting transition-specific components

	• Module 3 - Outside Agencies • Probe 2	• Self-paced Module 3 – Outside Agencies • Probe 2 (2 files with a small group)
May – Follow Up	• Follow-up survey • Follow up on all components – 5 files • Follow up group survey – 5 files	• Post-survey with open-ended questions • Individual file review sample to participating PSM specialists with five files (post-innovation of first file sample) • Voluntary small group review of all five files.
August – Final Follow Up	• Follow up survey of pre- and post-innovation confidence in all eight components	• Retrospective pre- and post-survey retrospective sent to participants to assess confidence in each component.

Targeted Transition Compliance Training (TTCT)

The training phase contained three in-person, one-hour training sessions that took place at monthly PSM meetings with three additional, self-paced modules that participants completed on their own. Lesson 1 was a legal framework exploration of each component of Indicator 13, Lesson 2 was a training on inter-rater reliability strategies along with an exploration of biases and Lesson 3 focused on training and practice on the eight specific components of Indicator 13 using file samples to assist with making compliance calls via schema as outlined in FOR training. Participants also completed three self-paced modules using a Moodle classroom set up for each module. Modules included lessons on Education Career Action Plans (ECAP) and the My Future AZ assessments, the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA), and the principles of Employment First, as well as a module on outside agencies utilized in transition planning such as DDD and Vocational Rehabilitation and applicable ADE transition best practice

resources. All lessons and modules included components consistent with andragogy, including interactive, problem-solving activities and understanding the "why" of the learning. They were designed to foster the learner's self-concept and need to be self-directed in their learning (Knowles et al., 2015). Learning from the self-paced modules was assessed via pre- and post-innovation surveys. Two probes following the first two lessons included a small group probe of two files for a total of four files to assess IRR further as the innovation progresses and allow for practice that mirrors the collaborative work of specialists in their role. Probe data were discussed and shared with each participant group. The probe data served as a general guide to how the innovation was progressing and allowed for additional practice time in a small group setting for participants.

In-person Training

The first in-person training took place at the February PSM meeting and examined the legal framework for transition within the IDEA, including the comments within the Federal Register. Through group discussion and interactive sharing of experiences related to the legal transition framework, specialists utilized the zone of proximal development and the sharing of varied experiences throughout the learning process. Lesson 1 began with a thinking prompt of a time when participants struggled to make a transition compliance call or explain a transition compliance component to the field. Following an explanation of the learning objectives and the eight components that made up Indicator 13, participants were asked to self-rate their confidence levels on a scale of 1-10 for each component. This exercise was planned to help participants self-assess their strengths and needs in the content prior to the small group activity. Using the

Guide Steps, IDEA regulations, Federal Register, and NSTACC Indicator 13 checklist, participants worked with assigned partners on one of the eight transition components. They were asked to review the above resources and then prepared and presented a short presentation (five minutes) for their peers in a jigsaw format using heterogeneous pairing based on experience within PSM. Partners were provided access to and utilized technology and chart paper to facilitate the presentation in the way that they chose. As a follow-up to the lesson, participants connected with real life by sharing at least one way to use the information gained in conversations with PEAs for each component in an anonymous survey. Of note, three participants participated in this training session via a virtual make-up session due to weather and illness that prevented their in-person participation. Lesson 1 contained the principles of adult learning previously discussed in Figure 3.

Table 7

Lesson 1 – Legal Framework of Indicator 13

Lesson 1 – Legal Framework of Indicator 13						
Adult Learning Principle	**Need to Know**	**Self-Concept**	**Prior Experience**	**Readiness to Learn**	**Orientation to Learning**	**Motivation to Learn**
Lesson Component	Participants reviewed objectives of lesson.	Participants rated self-confidence in each component.	Participants reflected on a time they struggled to explain or make a transition compliance call.	Participants presented with a partner explaining the assigned component and referenced resources used.	Participants created a presentation on the assigned component.	Participants evaluated their learning in relationship to their role.

The second in-person training included an introduction to numerous factors from the research base on improving inter-rater reliability. Additionally, specific biases and errors that could affect IRR were explored. The training began with sharing thoughts on what words IRR evoked among participants. After reviewing the objectives, participants reviewed the definition of IRR and discussed potential barriers and solutions to improved IRR within compliance calls. Participants also discussed their ideas of why high IRR is important in their work and how IRR might change based on a sample of files reviewed within a monitoring-specific setting versus a small sample of files or an individual file. Then, the following biases and errors were introduced: attribution bias, similar-to-me bias, leniency errors, strictness bias, halo bias, pitchfork bias, rater drift, contrast effect, rater personal bias, recall bias, confirmation bias, and recency bias. See Appendix G for definitions of each bias and error. Participants discussed each of the biases and errors, including examples of each. Discussing how particular biases and errors might affect personal compliance calls was facilitated, with participants joining in and adding to the discussion. A discussion of true and false statements regarding how compliance calls are made was also discussed by the group. Within table groups, participants discussed how potential biases and errors were relevant to their work in PSM. At the end of the discussion, table groups were shared out with the larger group. Of note, two participants participated in this training session via a virtual make-up session due to weather that prevented their in-person participation.

Table 8

Lesson 2 – Common Biases and Errors Affecting IRR

Lesson 2 – Common Biases and Errors Affecting IRR						
Adult Learning Principle	**Need to Know**	**Self-Concept**	**Prior Experience**	**Readiness to Learn**	**Orientation to Learning**	**Motivation to Learn**
Lesson Component	Participants reviewed objectives of the lesson.	Participants discussed specific biases and errors and how they may affect IRR.	Participants reflected upon 3 words that they relate to IRR from past experiences.	Participants discussed how IRR affects the work of PSM specialists.	Participants problem solved on how biases and errors can be avoided in their work.	Participants shared out how the discussion supported their work in PSM.

The final in-person training included a review of the eight components of Indicator 13, including sample student files with a variety of documentation compliance. Following a discussion of the learning objectives with a focus on practicing rather than being "right," the team reviewed meeting norms and worked on not taking feedback personally. Files for this practice exercise were chosen to be representative of files seen in the field and included students with both mild/moderate to significant disabilities from three different PEAs. Participants began by participating in a facilitated discussion, making compliance calls on each of the eight components while explaining their thinking for each call. The first file reviewed as a group was fully compliant in all eight components. This file allowed participants to discuss and ask questions about the eight components while allowing for a fairly easy file for review. The second group file contained a few areas of non-compliance and compliance across components. During this vigorous discussion, specialists received clarification and asked questions on compliance calls, especially in the course of study and age-appropriate transition assessments. The

last file, for a student with a significant disability, was the most nuanced as it was not as representative of files typically encountered by PSM specialists. Table groups were provided a copy of the IEP and meeting notice and discussed calls as a group before determining compliance. Specialists had access to the Guide Steps and other relevant resources. Following small group calls, a whole group discussion was facilitated. Participants were highly engaged in the discussion, provided examples, and some discussed and explained their disagreements with the calls. Leadership team members helped to further explain more nuanced calls with examples and personal reflections. During the review, specialists were encouraged to reflect upon biases and strategies for IRR, as well as the previous discussions of the legal background and other resources for each component. With their table group, specialists were given a scenario to further explain their calls to a PEA member who disagreed, connecting the learning to real-life job-related tasks. At the conclusion of the lesson, all specialists had the opportunity to reflect upon their learning. Two participants needed to participate virtually on a make-up day due to illness and personal commitments.

Table 9

Lesson 3 – Practicing Compliance Calls for Indicator 13

Lesson 3 – Practicing Compliance Calls for Indicator 13						
Adult Learning Principle	**Need to Know**	**Self-Concept**	**Prior Experience**	**Readiness to Learn**	**Orientation to Learning**	**Motivation to Learn**
Lesson Component	Participants reviewed the objectives for the lesson including the goal of practice and learning for all participants.	Participants worked together to review one challenging file.	Participants connected prior learning of biases/errors and the requirements for transition compliance.	Participants reviewed scaffolded files from a fully compliant file to a more challenging file.	Participants considered the context of explaining the components to members of the field.	Participants shared out on how the discussion supports them in their work in PSM.

Self-paced Modules

Following each in-person training, participants were assigned a module from the TTCT online interactive course. The online course was facilitated using Moodle and included discussions, quizzes, a review of resources, and multimedia components. Each module included a question prompt prior to beginning the module to set expectations for learning and access to prior knowledge. Along with short open-ended quizzes, modules contained an asynchronous discussion forum where participants answered prompts about their learning and replied to at least one of their colleagues in the discussion. Discussion topics were designed to allow peer interaction and connect content with job duties. Each module took participants approximately one hour to complete. Modules closed on May 15th.

The first module included resources related to the Education Career Action Plan (ECAP) requirement for all Arizona high school students, including those with

disabilities. In addition to content connecting the ECAP to the transition process outlined in the IDEA, participants reviewed and discussed materials on My Future AZ, a free resource available for Arizona high school students. By the end of the module, participants were expected to have a clear understanding of the ECAP requirement, My Future AZ resource, and be prepared to appropriately discuss the content with members of the field in relation to transition planning for students with disabilities.

Module 2 reviewed the Workforce Innovations Opportunity Act (WIOA), including the law's implications for transition planning. Participants were asked to make connections through the content within the Arizona Employment First framework and the requirements within WIOA related to the support provided by outside agencies prior to employment. By the end of the module, participants were expected to be able to understand the basic tenets of WIOA and make connections to transition planning, as well as be able to articulate the meaning of the Employment First framework and its implications for students with disabilities.

The final self-paced module introduced participants to outside agencies and their work related to transition, such as the Division of Developmental Disabilities, Vocational Rehabilitation, Social Security Disability Administration, and independent living centers. Additionally, participants reviewed relevant content on the Special Projects secondary transition website. At the completion of the module, specialists were expected to understand basic qualifications for accessing outside services related to transition, as well as where to direct constituents for additional information on transition best practices. Following the completion of all modules, an hour-long virtual group discussion

facilitated by the researcher was held with all participants to ensure that the content was understood and could be utilized within the PSM specialist's role.

Data Collection

Quantitative

Quantitative data collection was aligned with the first and second research questions specific to IRR as indicated below:

- What is the effect of a targeted transition compliance training on compliance specialists' inter-rater reliability?

- How and to what extent does targeted transition compliance training affect compliance specialists' perceived confidence in making compliance calls reliably and providing technical assistance within transition components to members of the field?

Quantitative data was collected in the form of file reviews for percentages of agreement (IRR). The treatment variable was the TTCT innovation, with the dependent variable measured being the IRR of PSM specialists. Prior to the beginning of the innovation, participants reviewed a sample of five files for all eight transition components (Indicator 13). Using a unique identifier, participants entered compliance calls based on the Guide Steps criterion for the five files in an anonymous survey. These same five files were reviewed at the conclusion of the innovation using the same unique identifiers to assess growth among participants in IRR. Calculations were completed on individual changes in IRR and for the participants as a group per component. As a group, IRR percentages of agreement per component of Indicator 13 were calculated for each of the five files both before and after the proposed innovation. Individually, participants were compared with

55

the gold standard (PSM leadership calls) of what was considered correct compliance calls for each file by the PSM leadership team both before and after the innovation. Additionally, probe data was included for analysis of changes in IRR throughout the training. Probe data collection was completed in four groups of three and was only analyzed for the whole group IRR to determine if the group agreed. The purpose of the small groups was to practice mimicking the way in which specialists review files in their role, as well as to support best practices in IRR as they learned. The small groups allowed for a safer space to make mistakes and discuss compliance calls with peers. Finally, a retrospective survey assessing pre- and post-confidence levels was used to assess participants' perceived confidence before and after innovation in each of the eight components.

Qualitative

Qualitative data collection was aligned with the second and third research questions as follows:

- How and to what extent does targeted transition compliance training affect compliance specialists' perceived confidence in making compliance calls reliably and providing technical assistance within transition components to members of the field?

- How and to what extent does a targeted transition compliance training affect specialists' perceived confidence in aligning transition best practice resources to compliance discussions in the field?

Pre- and post-surveys were completed with open-ended questions to allow for comprehensive responses. Surveys used a unique identifier to provide anonymity in

responses that would not be possible with focus groups or interviews. This method

ensured that respondents were not influenced by the researcher being in a leadership

position in their responses. The treatment variable was the TTCT innovation. The

dependent variable was the self-identified participant's confidence in reliably making

Indicator 13 compliance calls and providing technical assistance to the field in transition.

Results were analyzed using coding to establish themes for responses applying the

principles of grounded theory (Strauss & Glaser, 2017). Based on Saldaña (2021), the

first method of coding was descriptive or in vivo. The descriptive coding involved

reviewing the data for themes and coding based on those themes. In vivo, coding

included taking actual wording or phrases from the data to create the codes. Following

the first round of coding and a transition, a second coding method was completed. Figure

4 outlines this method of qualitative coding in grounded theory:

Figure 4

Qualitative Coding in Grounded Theory
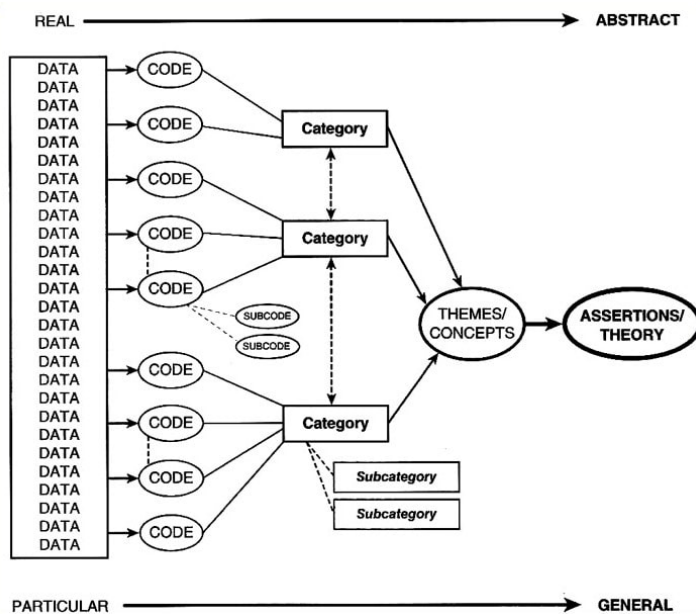
As participants had a unique identifier, results were compared across surveys for individuals. Qualitative results were paired with quantitative results using the unique identifier to assess trends in participant IRR and perceived confidence. Qualitative results further explained any changes in IRR based on the proposed innovation. Survey questions addressed general perceptions of components, including strengths and struggles, confidence in explaining components to the field, and knowledge base in transition-specific topics that will be targeted in the innovation. Post-survey questions were somewhat modified to assess perceptions following the innovation (see Appendices H and I).

Quantitative results and qualitative results were combined within an explanatory sequential design (Creswell & Clark, 2018). An explanatory sequential design emphasizes the quantitative data collected with qualitative data analyzed to help explain the quantitative results. In this study, this method was a useful technique to explain outliers within quantitative results, as well as in helping to further explain differences in quantitative results based on participants' perceptions. Following the quantitative data analysis of individuals (compared to the gold standard (GS)) for agreement) and group IRR (participants compared to each other for agreement) on the five files. The GS was calculated by utilizing leadership calls made on the same files. Qualitative open-ended survey results were analyzed using qualitative coding. As the quantitative and qualitative results were aligned to the same unique identifier, these results were compared and integrated for individuals as well as the group. Within the quantitative analysis, pre- and post-file reviews (sample of 5 files) were compared across individuals, comparing the before and after innovation results. The individual qualitative results for the individuals

(via a unique identifier) were aligned to quantitative results to assess whether confidence

increases for individuals when individual IRR improves. In reviewing both sets of data

(quantitative and qualitative) for the group, results were compared to determine if IRR for

the group aligns with the qualitative results.

Summary

In summary, a mixed methods approach of qualitative and quantitative data

assessed the three research questions before and after the TTCT for compliance

specialists at the Arizona Department of Education. The innovation utilized the concepts

of transition planning, adult learning, and Frame of Reference Training.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Introduction

In this action research study, I asked three research questions and examined data through a mixed methods design. To target RQ1, I collected quantitative and qualitative data through pre- and post-innovation file reviews, pre- and post-innovation open-ended surveys, and two additional group file review probes during the innovation. For RQ2 and RQ3, qualitative data included the pre- and post-innovation surveys, which were analyzed using grounded theory. This chapter first presents an analysis of the PSM specialists' inter-rater reliability. An analysis of the qualitative data follows.

RQ1: What is the effect of a targeted transition compliance training on compliance specialists' inter-rater reliability?

RQ2: How and to what extent does a targeted transition compliance training affect compliance specialists' perceived confidence in making compliance calls reliably and providing technical assistance within transition components to members of the field?

RQ3: How and to what extent does a targeted transition compliance training affect specialists' perceived confidence in aligning transition best practice resources to compliance discussions in the field?

Quantitative Data Analysis

Participants individually and anonymously reviewed five files before and after the innovation for the quantitative data. These five files were student IEPs that the participants had not seen or reviewed prior. Participants also reviewed the five files in

small groups to ascertain if group review affected IRR compared to the gold standard (GS). To begin the analysis, I calculated the IRR for each of the five sample files by comparing all participant calls to those of the GS. Figures 5-9 include IRR calculations for individual review before and after the innovation. To calculate group IRR, the IRR for each participant was combined in each component and averaged to determine the IRR for the group of participants in each component. I completed this calculation both before and after the innovation. I calculated IRR based on the participants' agreement with a gold standard (GS) of calls the leadership team made. All calculations were noted in percent agreement with the GS. As there was an indication in open-ended survey questions that some types of files were more challenging to review, a basic description of the student information, including grade level, school attended, gender, eligibility categories, least restrictive environment, and primary transition goals, were included for context. Some transition goal information was redacted or replaced with similar language to protect students' identities where necessary. Additionally, I included data from small group reviews (two groups) for comparison of IRR when participants had access to colleagues for discussion. I calculated the IRR based on the groups' agreement with the GS. Therefore, when files were reviewed individually, I calculated percentages using all twelve participants for agreement with the gold standard. For the group review data, two groups of three reviewed the five files; therefore, percentages of agreement only represent agreement out of two rather than twelve.

In addition to the five files utilized in the pre- and post-file reviews, participants also completed small group probe reviews during the innovation. These four groups of

three were consistent throughout both probes. IRR was calculated by comparing the group calls with the GS. IRR was reported as a percentage of agreement.

Reliability

To ensure reliability, participants made compliance calls on each file using Qualtrics with settings on anonymous, so no IP addresses, etc., were collected by the program. Participants used the unique identifiers they created from an anonymous previous survey to conduct the file reviews. Before beginning the review, participants agreed they would not discuss these five files with anyone until the full completion of the study to ensure that their thoughts were their own. I shared files with participants through ADE's Biscom system, ensuring sensitive student information remained confidential. Biscom is the system PSM specialists use to share any student-identifiable information. For group reviews of the five files, participants were randomly assigned to a group where they discussed and reviewed files within their group. They were not permitted to contact the other group for help. For probe reviews, groups of randomly assigned participants discussed and reviewed the probe files only within their group to ensure that outside influences did not affect calls. Based on pre-innovation survey results that indicated concerns with files including low-incidence disabilities, I chose a representative sample of files to include low-incidence disabilities. All files represented student files from PEAs on leadership caseloads, had not been previously reviewed by participants, and had been reviewed by the leadership team to determine the GS measure for IRR prior to these probe reviews.

IRR Analysis of Five Sample Files

For graphing purposes, the eight transition components were identified with coinciding numbers that are used in all accompanying graphs for ease of description. Their full descriptions were noted in previous chapters but are also restated below.

1. Measurable postsecondary goals (MPGs) in education, training, and independent living (when appropriate)

2. Measurable postsecondary goals updated annually

3. Documentation that the postsecondary goals were derived from age-appropriate assessment(s)

4. Documentation of one or more transition services/activities that support the postsecondary goal(s)

5. The student's course of study supports the identified postsecondary goal(s)

6. Documentation of annual IEP goal(s) that will reasonably enable the student to meet the postsecondary goal(s)

7. Documentation that the student was invited to the meeting

8. Evidence that a representative of another agency that is likely to provide and/or pay for transition services has been invited to the meeting when parent consent has been obtained

Formula. IRR was calculated as a percentage of agreement with the GS; therefore, a "correct call" (CC) is the same as the GS call (CC=GS). The GS was calculated by using leadership calls on the same files as the "correct calls." IRR for each participant, file, and component were calculated using the following formula.

$$IRR = \frac{CC}{possible\ calls} \times 100$$

File A. File A was an IEP from a ninth-grade male student enrolled in a small charter school. The student had a Mild Intellectual Disability (MIID) and Speech Language Impairment (SLI). He had access to his general education peers less than 79% of the day and more than 40%, a Level B placement in Arizona, and was eligible for an alternate state assessment. The student's MPGs were to be a mechanic, and he planned to attend a trade school. The student also had an independent living goal to live independently following graduation.

Figure 5 illustrates the results of the pre-innovation individual reviews calculated by group IRR with the GS, the post-IRR innovation individual reviews calculated by group IRR, and the small group reviews. Of note, the IRR of the small group included 100% IRR except for the course of study (Component 5). The course of study needed clarification in this file, as an advisory class was mentioned; however, to be compliant, the course needed to be connected within the documentation to the MPGs (Component 1) or listed among the courses for the student. Additionally, less agreement with individual reviewers on the age-appropriate transition assessments (Component 3) is demonstrated. This file lacked documentation aligning the student's strengths, preferences, and interests to his MPGs. On their own, participants only showed reduced IRR post-innovation in consent to invite an outside agency (Component 8). For the course of study (Component 5), in the group calculation, it is important to note a 50% agreement with the GS indicates that one group agreed with the GS and one did not, as only two groups of three participated in the group review. All small group calculations within the following file

review graphs include only two groups of three for calculating agreement with the GS. Recall that participant groups were outlined within Chapter 3.

Figure 5

File A – Pre, Post and Group IRR

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
■ Pre-Review (n=12)	92	92	42	92	58	100	100	100
■ Post-Review (n=12)	100	100	42	100	67	100	100	92
■ Group (n=2)	100	100	100	100	50	100	100	100

Transition Component
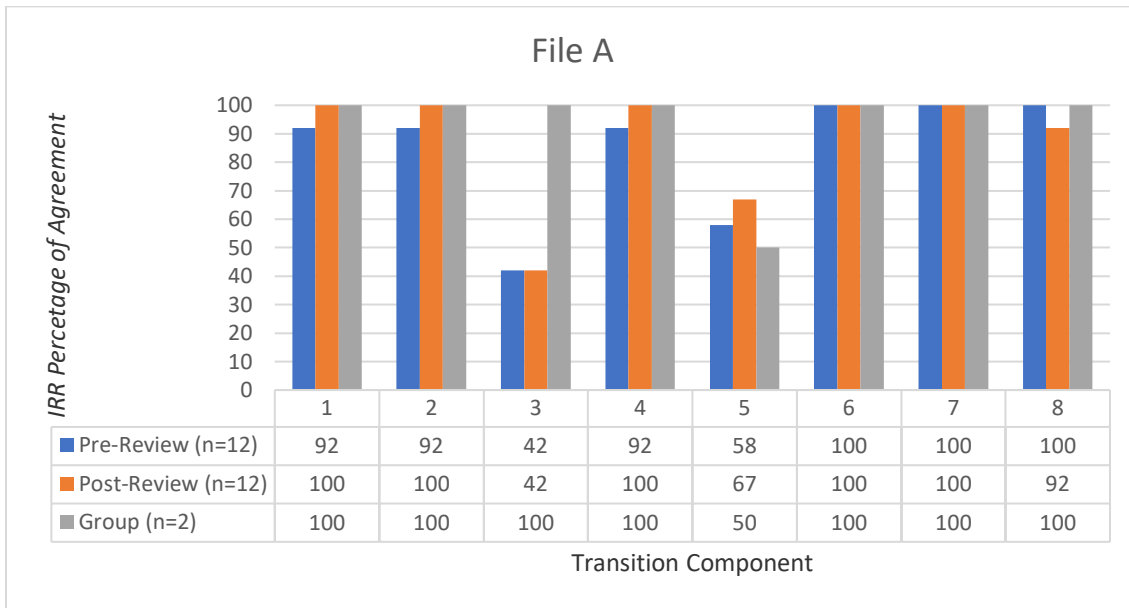
File B. File B was an IEP from a 12th-grade male student enrolled in a medium-sized high school district. The student was eligible under the categories of Multiple Disabilities with a Severe Sensory Impairment (MDSSI), a Visual Impairment (VI), A Severe Intellectual Disability (SID), and a Speech Language Impairment (SLI). He had access to his general education peers less than 40% of the day, a Level C placement in Arizona, and was eligible for an alternate state assessment. The student's MPGs were to attend a day treatment program using choice buttons[1]. The student also had an independent living goal to utilize a transportation system.

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[1]Transition area changed to protect student specific information.

65

Figure 6 illustrates the results of the pre-innovation individual reviews calculated by group IRR with the GS, the post-IRR innovation individual reviews calculated by group IRR, and the small group reviews. Of note, the IRR of the small group included 100% IRR except for the MPGs (Component 1) and transition activities (Component 4). In this file, the MPGs were based on a task at a day treatment center without alignment to an employment activity. Transition activities were not aligned to MPGs as the MPGs were unclear for employment, and activities addressed only social and personal care activities. In the post-innovation file review, participants showed reduced IRR in MPGs (Component 1) and transition activities (Component 4).

Figure 6

File B – Pre, Post and Group IRR

File B

IRR Percentage of Agreement

Transition Component	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Pre-Review (n=12)	33	92	58	67	50	92	100	92
Post-Review (n=12)	25	100	83	42	67	92	100	100
Group (n=2)	50	100	100	50	100	100	100	100
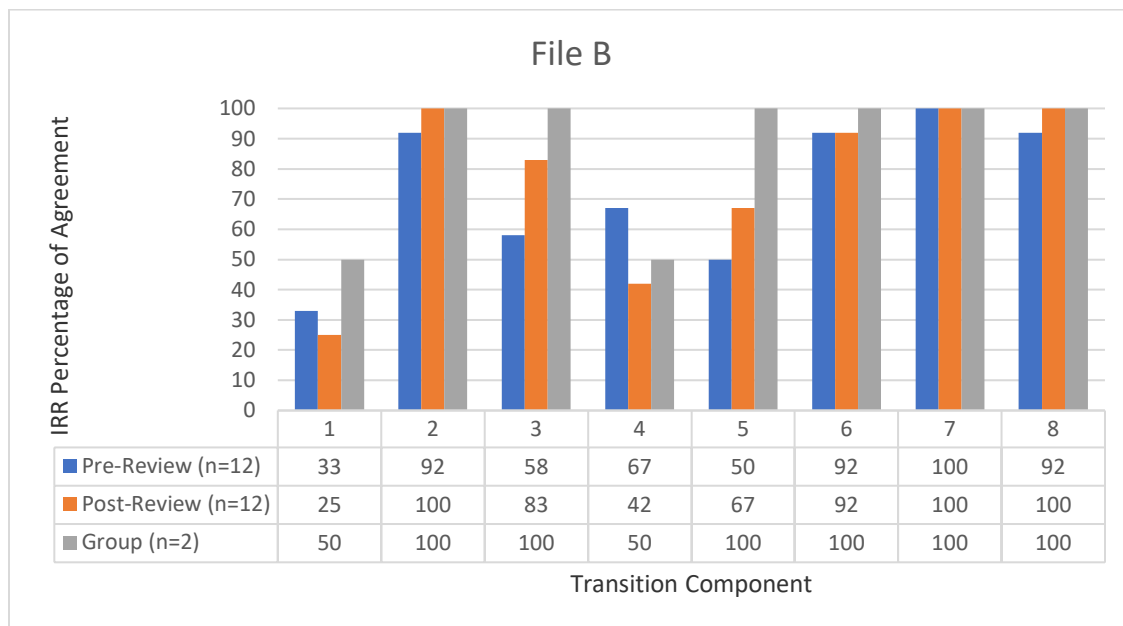
File C. File C was an IEP from a 10th-grade male student enrolled in a small charter school. The student was eligible under the category of Autism (A) and was an English Language Learner. He had access to his general education peers 80% or more of

the day, considered a Level A placement in Arizona, and was eligible for the standard state assessment. The student's MPGs were to take HVAC classes and own his own repair shop. He also had an independent living goal of living at home to save money for his own place.

Figure 7 illustrates the results of the pre-innovation individual reviews calculated by group IRR with the GS, the post-IRR innovation individual reviews calculated by group IRR, and the small group reviews. Of note, small group IRR was 100% except for the MPGs (Component 1) and the student invited to the meeting (Component 7). MPGs contained an extraneous statement about the music industry that did not align with the goals. Also, the invitation for the meeting did not provide evidence that the invitation was addressed to the student and, therefore, was considered *out* by the leadership team. Participants had lower IRR in age-appropriate assessments (Component 3), transition activities (Component 4), course of study (Component 5), and student invited to the meeting (Component 7).

Figure 7

File C – Pre, Post and Group IRR

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
■ Pre-Review (n=12)	50	92	83	75	67	92	25	100
■ Post-Review (n=12)	50	100	42	67	58	100	17	100
■ Group (n=2)	50	100	100	100	100	100	0	100

Transition Component
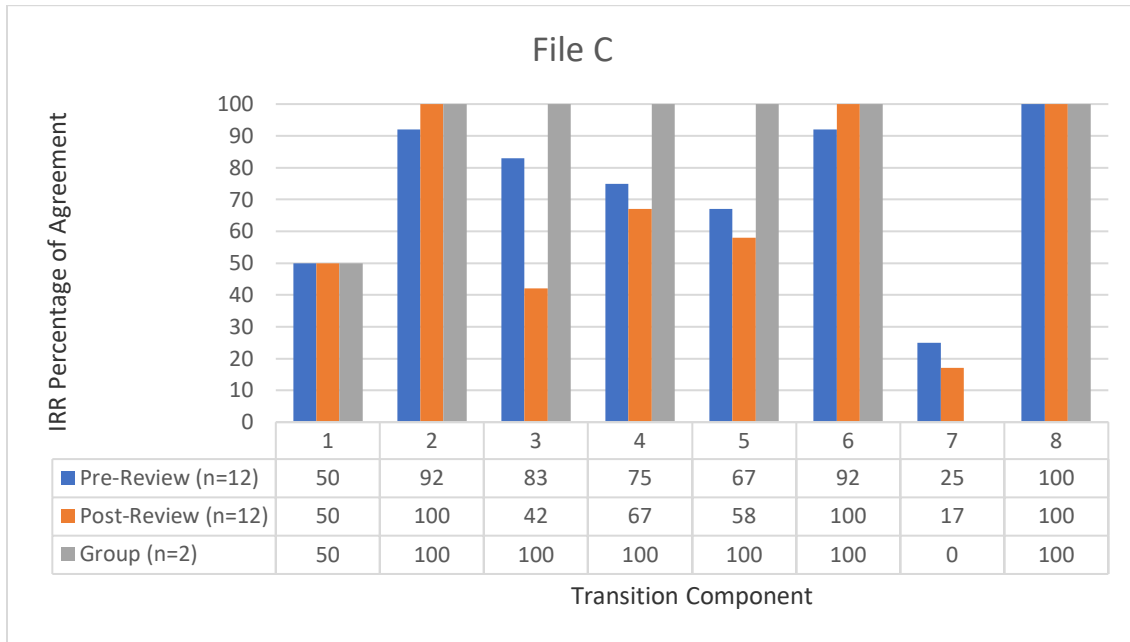
File D. File D was an IEP from an 11th-grade male student enrolled in a small charter school. The student was eligible under the category of Specific Learning Disability (SLD). He had access to his general education peers 80% or more of the day, considered a Level A placement in Arizona, and took the standard state assessment. The student's MPGs were unclear, as art, technology, and gaming are all discussed within the documentation.

Figure 8 illustrates the results of the pre-innovation individual reviews calculated by group IRR with the GS, the post-IRR innovation individual reviews calculated by group IRR, and the small group reviews. Of note, the small group IRR was 100% except for the course of study (Component 5) and the student invited to the meeting (Component 7). Without clear MPGs, courses did not have evidence of connection to goals. Also, the

invitation for the meeting did not evidence that the invitation was addressed to the student and, therefore, was considered *out* by the leadership team. Participants showed a reduction in IRR in MPGs (Component 1), transition activities (Component 4), course of study (Component 5), and students invited to the meeting (Component 7) post-innovation.

Figure 8

File D – Pre, Post and Group IRR

File D

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Pre-Review (n=12)	58	92	33	92	67	92	25	100
Post-Review (n=12)	50	100	83	25	50	100	8	100
Group (n=2)	100	100	100	100	50	100	0	100

Transition Component
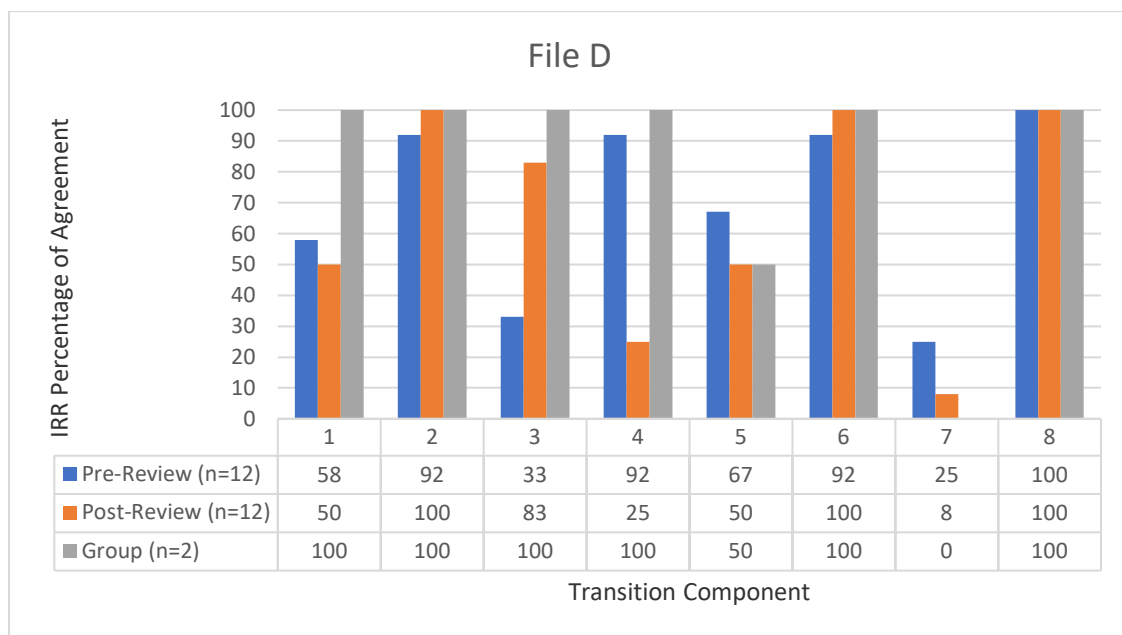
File E. File E was an IEP from a 10th-grade male student enrolled in a medium-sized district. The student was eligible under the category of Specific Learning Disability (SLD). He had access to his general education peers 80% or more of the day, considered a Level A placement in Arizona, and took the standard state assessment. The student's MPGs focused on college and becoming a cardiologist.

Figure 9 illustrates the results of the pre-innovation individual reviews calculated by group IRR with the GS, the post-IRR innovation individual reviews calculated by

group IRR, and the small group reviews. Of note, the small group IRR was 100%, except for the MPGs (Component 1) and course of study (Component 5). The MPGs did not contain an employment goal, and additional documentation included information for a basketball career that did not align with the MPGs. Participants showed a reduction in IRR in MPGs (Component 1), transition activities (Component 4), and course of study (Component 5) post-innovation.

Figure 9

File E – Pre, Post and Group IRR

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Pre-Review (n=12)	58	92	50	75	33	67	92	100
Post-Review (n=12)	42	100	92	33	0	100	100	100
Group (n=2)	50	100	100	100	0	100	100	100
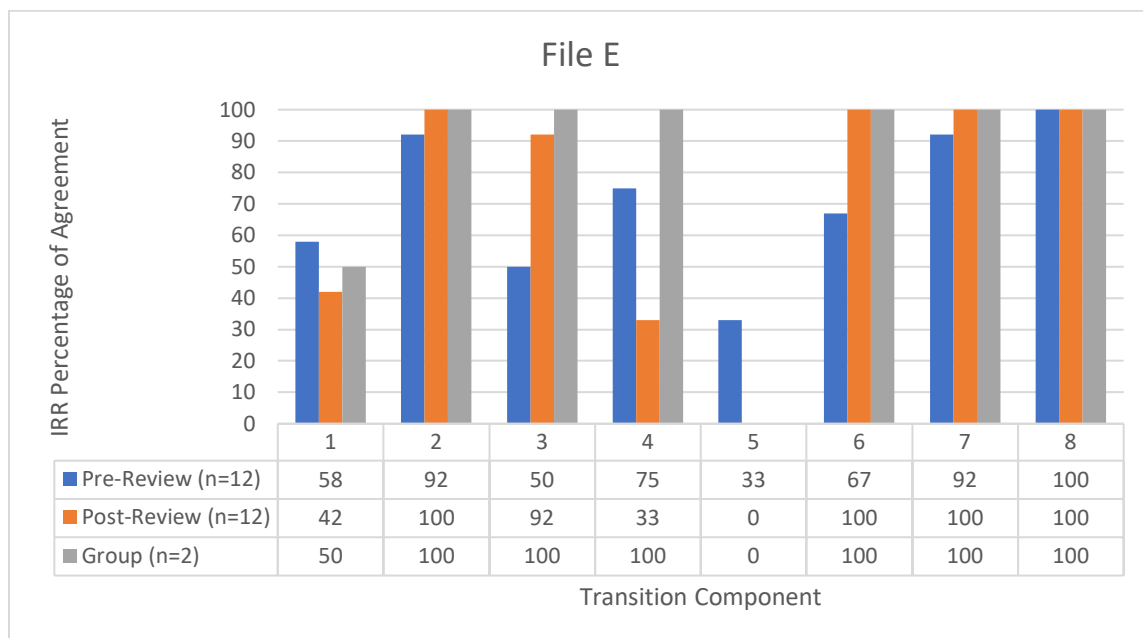
Combined IRR by Component

Figure 10 illustrates the combined IRR for all five files reviewed pre- and post-innovation for all twelve participants. By combining these files, a general view of the effect of the innovation can be seen. As indicated below, participants showed improved IRR in all areas except for transition activities (Component 4) and course of study (Component 5). Of note, previous uncertainty in MPGs updated annually (Component 2),

annual goals aligned to MPGs (Component 6), and consent to invite an outside agency (Component 8) seems to have been alleviated for the most part post-innovation. Taken as a whole, the combined results indicate that the TTCT had some effect on improving IRR in transition components.

Figure 10

Combined IRR for Five Files, Pre- and Post-innovation

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Pre-Review (n=12)	58.2	92	53.2	80.2	55	88.6	68.4	98.4
Post-Review (n=12)	53.4	100	68.4	53.4	48.4	98.4	65	98.4
Group (n=2)	70	100	100	90	60	100	60	100
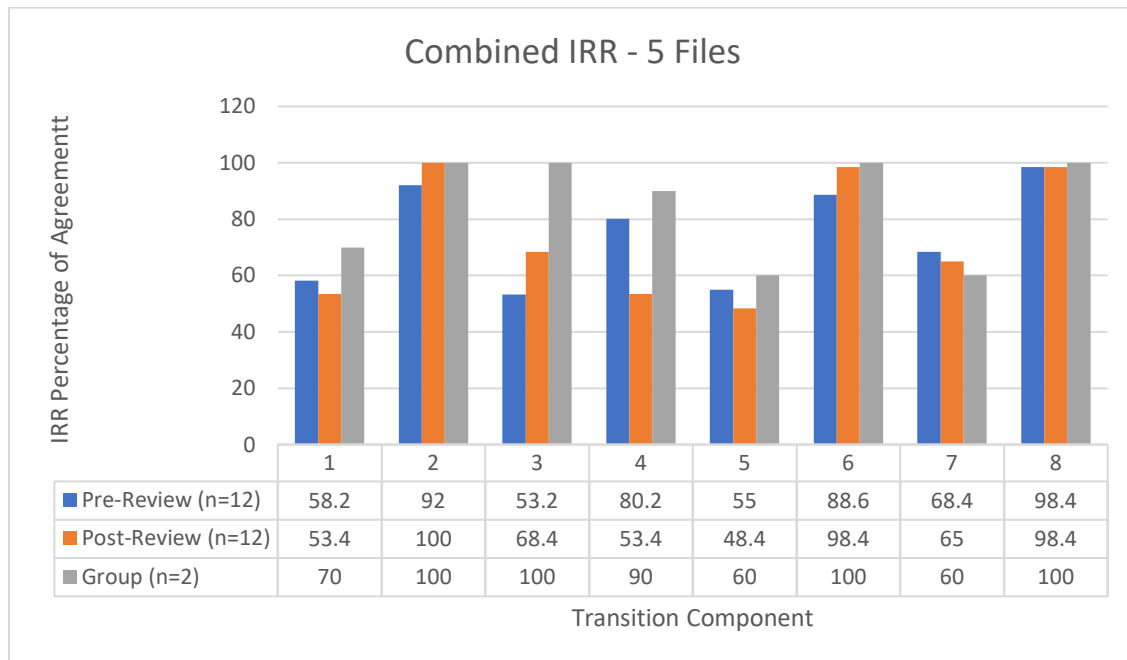
Summary of File Review Data

In considering the results of the five file reviews, overall, participants have stronger IRR when part of a group review, as seen in Figure 10. When reviewing individually, participants have an overall lower IRR.

The lower individual post-review IRR for components 1 (MPGs), 3 (age-appropriate assessments), 4 (transition services), and 5 (course of study) in Figure 10 were affected by the IRR from files A, B, and C, which were files for students with low-

incidence disabilities. The final TTCT in-person session included a group review and discussion of a file of a student with a low-incidence disability, but results were mixed in the post-innovation review.

For MPGs updated annually (Component 2), annual goals aligned to MPGs (Component 6), and consent to invite an outside agency (Component 8), IRR was high both for individuals and in the group review. These calls are rarely considered *out;* therefore, IRR appears to be stronger. Of note, PEAs throughout the state rarely include outside agencies in transition plan discussions; therefore, the sample does not represent the required consent. A file with an outside agency included could not be located to include within the sample. MPGs are considered updated annually if they are included within the files, as PSM specialists are not asked to go back to the previous IEP for comparison. In the first in-person TTCT session, a review of the OSEP measurement table and transition requirements assisted participants in understanding the purpose of including this component in monitoring. Additionally, annual IEP goals that are loosely aligned to MPGs would be considered *in* compliance based on current guidance. IEP goals aligned to MPGs (Component 6) were addressed and discussed within the TTCT final session, which may have cleared up any remaining confusion in this area.

In inviting the transition-age student to the meeting (Component 7), results for this sample were mixed. In two of the files, C and D, documentation was deemed to be unclear by leadership for the GS as there was no evidence that the student was invited to the meeting. All groups and most individuals had low IRR in this area on these two files. A similar file was included and discussed with the final in-person TTCT training, but it does not appear that this learning was generalized to these files. This is also something

that PSM specialists do not often see, as most of the software programs utilized by PEAs in Arizona include explicit documentation that a student is invited to the transition meeting rather than the vague documentation found in two of the sample files.

Based on the file review results, IRR decreases when there is information for MPGs that are not aligned or includes extraneous goals that do not align with the MPGs. Files B, C, D, and E contained unclear MPGs. When MPGs were unclear, the leadership team called *out* age-appropriate assessments (Component 3), transition services (Component 4), and course of study (Component 5) in these examples. GS calls on these files indicated calling *out* other aligned areas when MPGs are not measurable. For instance, if a file contained an education goal that was unrelated to the employment goal, additional components would likely be out, as these components require alignment with MPGs for compliance purposes. This appears to be an area of confusion for PSM specialists.

Within the TTCT final session, areas of continued confusion and disagreement were determining if strengths, preferences, and interests in assessments were explicitly aligned to MPGs and how to ascertain whether a course is related to MPGs, especially when little explanation is included in the documentation. The low IRR in File A was used as an example of this issue; age-appropriate assessments (Component 3) and a vague course listed in the course of study (Component 5) were not aligned with the MPGs (Component 1).

Pre- and Post-innovation Confidence

As a final data collection tool, participants completed an additional survey for retrospective confidence in each of the eight components and a post-innovation

73

confidence level. They selected a Likert-type scale value for each component for whether they felt that they were *very confident*, *somewhat confident*, or *not confident* before and after the innovation in each of the eight components. They could only select one choice per component. Figure 11 represents the number of participants who rated their confidence in each component using the assigned qualifiers before and after the TTCT innovation.

Figure 11

Pre- and Post-innovation Confidence by Component
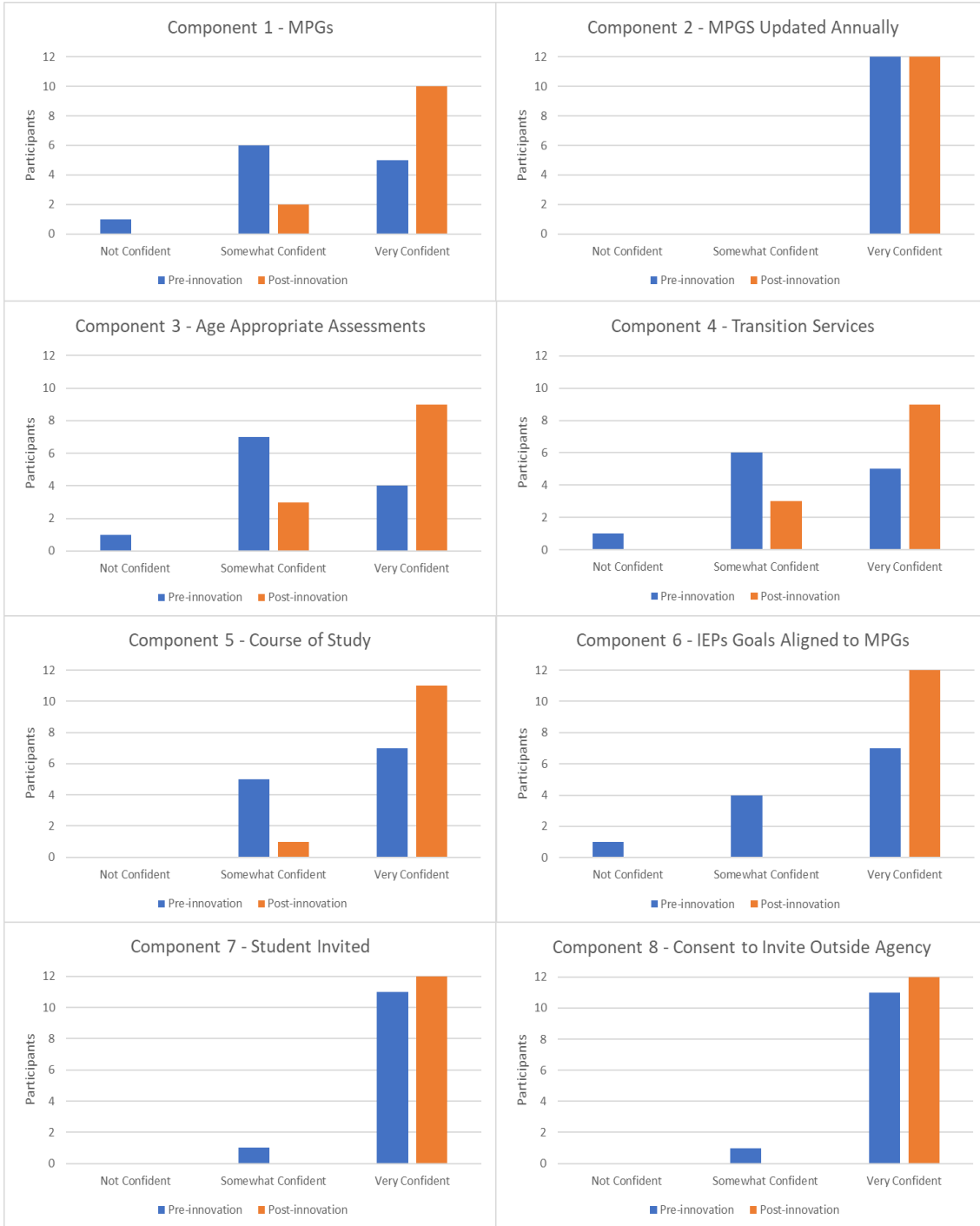
Although some participants indicated *not being confident* prior to the innovation, none indicated *not being confident* post-innovation. Also, more participants indicated a level of *very confident* following the innovation when compared to pre-innovation perceptions. Post-innovation participants indicated a rating of *somewhat confident* in multiple components, including MPGs (Component 1), age-appropriate transition assessments (Component 3), transition activities (Component 4), and course of study (Component 5). These results are well aligned with the results of combined IRR as indicated in Figure 10, as components 1, 3, 4, and 5 indicated the lowest combined IRR both pre- and post-innovation. Of note, the student being invited to the meeting (Component 7) is somewhat of an outlier to these results. This is likely due to the somewhat unusual documentation in the sample for lack of documentation in a student being invited to the meeting. Although training was provided within the TTCT to reflect the reasons for the GS calls, confusion in this area is still observed post-innovation. When rating themselves in this component, it is likely that participants were reflecting upon their overall confidence in this area rather than focusing on this unique occurrence.

Effect Size

I analyzed data in SPSS by component to determine effect size. Each component was analyzed using an average of IRR percentages for all twelve participants. Results can be seen in Table 10.

Table 10

Effect Size by Component

Component	Avg Pre-IRR	Avg Post-IRR	Mean Difference	t	2-sided p	Cohen's d
1 MPGS	58.20	53.40	-4.80	-1.18	0.31	-0.53
2 MPGS updated annually	92.00	100.00	*	*	*	*
3 Age-appropriate assessments	53.20	68.40	15.20	0.92	0.41	0.41
4 Transition activities	80.20	53.40	-26.80	-2.05	0.11	-0.92
5 Course of study	55.00	48.40	-6.60	-0.74	0.50	-0.33
6 IEP goals aligned to MPGs	88.60	98.40	9.80	1.62	0.18	0.72
7 Student Invited	68.40	65.00	-3.40	-0.80	0.47	-0.36
8 Consent for an outside agency	98.40	98.40	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00
Total	74.25	73.18	-2.37	-0.32	0.43	-0.14

As indicated in Table 10, the difference in means for the total file review is -2.371, which, although not statistically significant, indicates a lower IRR following the innovation. IEP goals aligned to MPGs (component 6) demonstrated a medium to large effect size following the innovation where d=0.722 using the guide of small (d=0.2), medium (d=0.5), and large (d=0.8), as suggested by Cohen (1988). Age-appropriate transition assessments (component 3) indicated a small to medium effect size with d=0.413. MPGs updated annually (component 2) could not be calculated as the standard error of difference was 0. Consent to invite an outside agency (component 8) indicated zero change. Interestingly, the mean differences for MPGs (component 1), age-appropriate transition assessments (component 3), transition services (component 4), course of study (component 5), and student invited to the meeting (component 7) indicate a negative mean difference and negative effect size indicating that post-innovation IRR was lower.

Transition services (component 4) indicated a large effect in the negative direction d=*0.917.*

Probes

As specialists typically review files in a small group setting, probes during the innovation were provided for a group practice to assess the progress of IRR within the innovation and to assess group-based IRR further. Participant groups completed two separate probes with two files each. Participants were randomly assigned to four groups of three each for small-group probe activities. The same groups were used in both Probe 1 and Probe 2. For Probe 2, participants reviewed both files as a sample as they were both from the same PEA to mimic further how files are evaluated within the PSM specialists' role.

Probe 1, File 1. File 1 of Probe 1 was for a 12th-grade student attending an online dropout recovery program associated with a medium-sized charter school. The student was eligible under the category of a Mild Intellectual Disability (MIID). She had access to her general education peers 80% or more of the day, a Level A placement in Arizona, and took the standard state assessment. The student's MPGs focused on becoming a sales associate at a retail store and attending college classes.

The IRR results displayed in Figure 12 indicate the four groups' IRR with the GS. All results were 100% except for age-appropriate assessments (Component 3), course of study (Component 5), and consent to invite an outside agency (Component 8). The file did not contain strengths and preferences for age-appropriate assessments. For the course of study, a career planning course was aligned with her MPGs, but in a very general way. Lastly, one group counted the consent to invite an outside agency as *in* rather than

unreported. PSM specialists use the word *unreported* when a particular component does not apply; in this case, as an outside agency was not invited, it did not apply.

Figure 12

IRR small group, probe 1, file 1
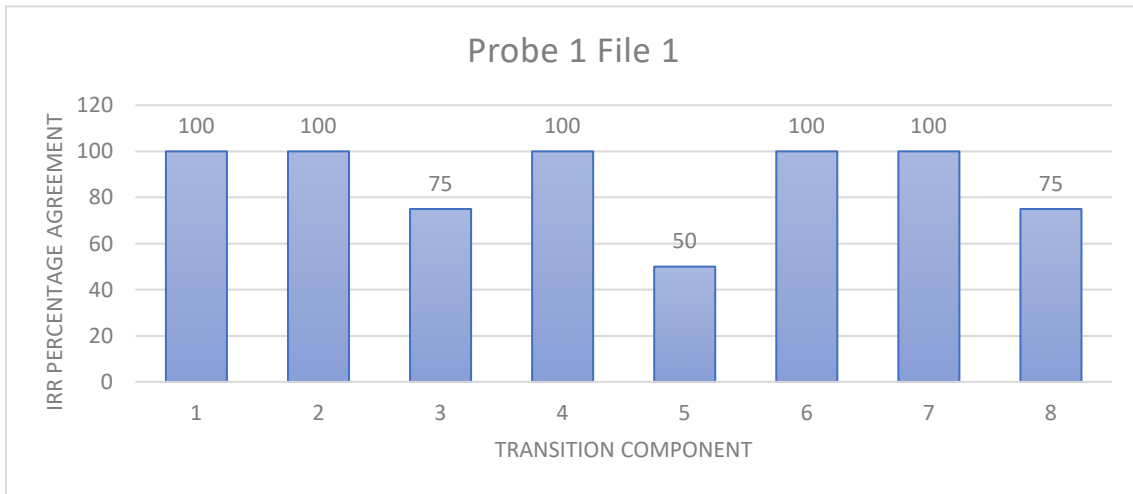
Probe 1, File 2. File 2 of Probe 1 was for an 11th-grade student attending a medium-sized high school district. The student was eligible under the category of an Orthopedic Impairment (OI). She had access to her general education peers less than 80% and more than 40% of the day, considered a Level B placement in Arizona, and took the alternate assessment. The student's MPGs focused on an art career.

The IRR results in Figure 13 show the four groups' IRR with the GS. All results were 100% except for age-appropriate transition assessments (Component 3) and transition activities (Component 4). Although the student's interests and strengths were included in the documentation, there was no inclusion of evidence that her MPGs were aligned with her preferences. Her transition activities did not have any activities related to her MPGs.

Figure 13

IRR small group, probe 1, file 2
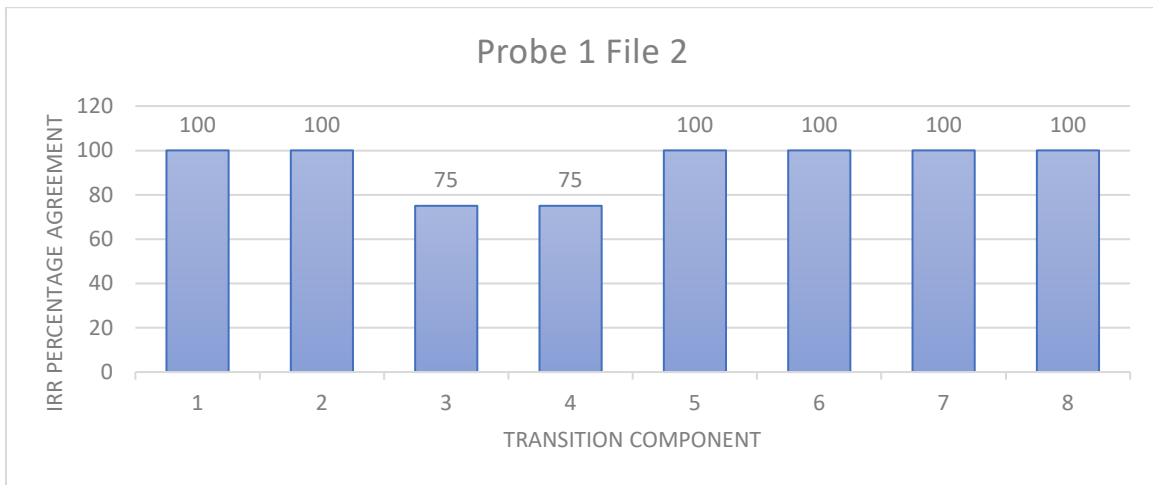
Probe 2, File 1. Both files from Probe 2 came from the same medium-sized charter school. As such, the group reviewed the files as a sample, looking for trends. This way, groups could check these files similarly to how they review within the field.

File 1 of Probe 2 was for a 10th-grade male student. The student was eligible under the category of an Other Health Impairment (OHI). He had access to his general education peers 80% or more of the time, considered a Level A placement in Arizona, and took the standard state assessment. The student's MPGs focused on becoming a Pokémon card streamer[2].

The IRR results in Figure 14 indicate the four groups' IRR with the GS. All results were at 100% except for MPGs (Component 1) and transition activities (Component 4). One group suggested counting the MPGs *out* as they were unaware that a *Pokémon card*

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[2] Transition area changed to protect student specific information.

streamer was an actual job. Transition activities were written in a vague format as the student would be learning production for the streamer position.

Figure 14

IRR small group, probe 2, file 1
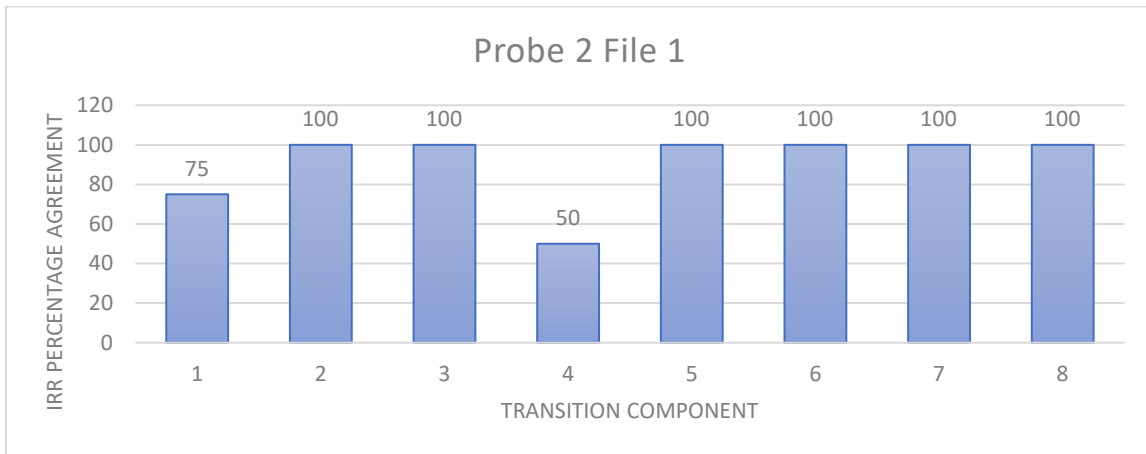
Probe 2, File 2. File 2 of Probe 2 was for a 9th-grade male student attending the same medium-sized charter school. The student was eligible under the category of a Specific Learning Disability (SLD). He had access to his general education peers 80% or more of the time, considered a Level A placement in Arizona, and took the standard state assessment. The student's MPGs focused on becoming a carpenter.

The IRR results in Figure 15 indicate the four groups' IRR with the GS. All results were 100% except for consent to invite an outside agency (Component 8). The 75% IRR can best be explained by one group using *in* when the call would be *unreported* as an outside agency was omitted. Notably, this file was fully compliant in all eight transition components and evidenced the strongest IRR of all files.

Figure 15

IRR small group, probe 2, file 2
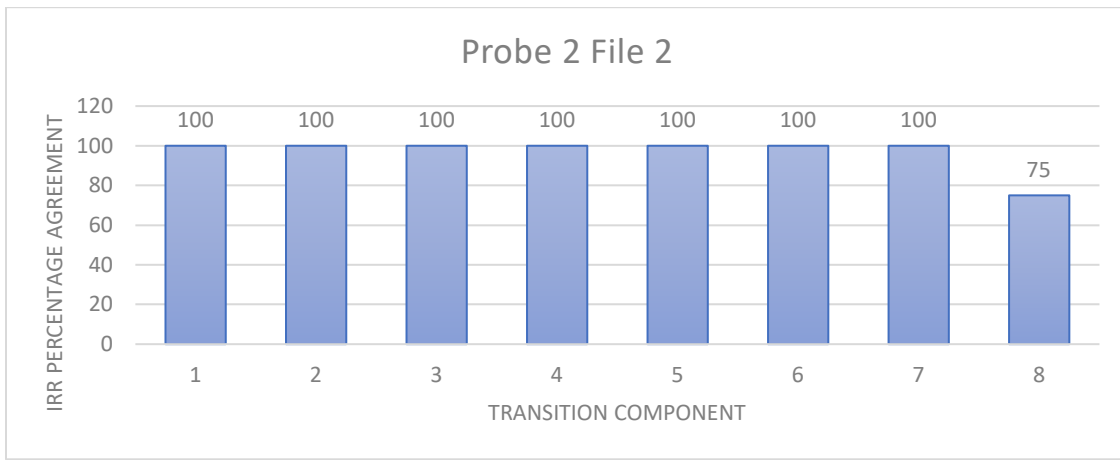
Summary of Quantitative Data

These results further strengthen the assertion that participants demonstrate higher IRR when allowed to work in a small group setting that includes open discussion in a way that mimics their practice. Probe 1 data also indicates that participants are unsure of how to recognize when a file has documentation in age-appropriate assessments (Component 3), especially with regard to strengths and preferences, and have lower IRR when courses (Component 5) are only vaguely aligned to the MPGs. Probe 1 results indicate some confusion about when to call consent to invite an outside agency (Component 8) as *in* or *unreported*.

As seen in Probe 2, File 2, participants demonstrated higher IRR when components in the transition plan were compliant. This file was fully compliant in all eight components, and groups were nearly 100% in agreement with the GS in all components. The idea that compliant files are more likely to have higher IRR matches with anecdotally noted perceptions within PSM. Probe 2 indicates that there may be

confusion in compliance calls for more obscure MPGs like those found in Probe 2, File 1.

In this case, the unusual job choice seems to have made aligning transition activities with

MPGs a bit more challenging (evidenced by low IRR in Component 4). It should be

noted that the files used in both probes contained less unusual documentation overall.

Nevertheless, results align with areas of low IRR seen in the earlier five file sample in

multiple areas, including MPGs (Component 1), age-appropriate assessments

(Component 3), transition activities (Component 4), and course of study (Component 5).

Qualitative Data Analysis

Participants completed open-ended surveys with eight (pre) and ten (post)

innovation questions. I analyzed the responses using grounded theory, first by coding all

participant's answers for each question and then by coding the answers for individual

participants across both surveys. Coding is described as a process where "codes and

categories" become "more refined," as illustrated in Saldaña's (2021) streamlined codes-

to-theory model described in Chapter 3.

Reliability

Participants completed the pre-innovation survey as soon as they had created a

unique identifier. After completing all activities and individual file reviews, they

completed the post-innovation survey to ensure that they could clearly describe their

perceptions with a complete picture of the innovation.

Pre- and Post-innovation Surveys

The volume of initial codes was large (195) due to the types of codes needed to

address the diverse questions within each survey, a wide variety of answers, and a desire

to ensure the participant's voice. After initial coding responses by question, I wrote

memos to summarize and examine the initial coding. For secondary coding, I combined codes into subgroups that aligned with the over-arching idea when necessary. Then, data were re-coded to fine-tune results into categories. In these categories, I was able to eliminate any codes that strayed from the purpose of each question or for extraneous information that did not address the question asked. Following secondary coding, I wrote another memo to outline the themes that emerged during coding, and then I compared themes to the research questions. From these themes, I was able to eliminate any information irrelevant to the research questions within the themes. Table 11 lists the secondary codes from the pre-survey, organized by question. Table 12 lists these codes from the post-survey.

When coding surveys by participant, I coded each participant's responses by following the same process, using the same codes. The purpose of coding by individuals was to gather information on participant perspectives that could then be possibly tied to their quantitative results and ascertain the overall perspectives of each participant. I developed a glossary of terms to document specific uses of a particular code. For example, the word *lead* was specific to the mentors who are assigned to support the PSM specialists. The *leadership team* referred to the leads along with the director of PSM.

Table 11

Pre-innovation Survey Secondary Codes by Question

SURVEY 1	QUESTION TEXT	SECONDARY CODES
QUESTION 1	Please describe your current confidence in making transition compliance calls and discussing transition compliance with members of the field or other constituents.	*Fairly confident* *Confident* *Very confident* *Variable confidence* *Discussion more challenging* *Inconsistent guidance* *Nuanced calls* *Best practice vs. compliance*
QUESTION 2	Please describe your current confidence in the PSM team making and discussing transition compliance calls as a whole. Do you think that the team agrees on how to make transition compliance calls and explain them to the field and other constituents currently? Please explain your thoughts.	*Discrepant calls* *Agree on calls* *Experience affects accuracy* *Inconsistent guidance* *Best practice vs. compliance*
QUESTION 3	Are there any specific components in transition compliance about which you currently have concerns? Please include your concerns in both making compliance calls and discussing transition compliance with the field or other constituents.	*Age-appropriate assessments (AAAs)* *Low incidence disabilities* *Measurable post-secondary goals (MPGs)* *MPGs updated annually* *Annual IEP goals* *Transition activities* *Course of study* *No concerns*

QUESTION 4	Are there any specific components in transition compliance about which you currently feel especially confident? Please include your strengths in both making compliance calls and discussing transition compliance with the field or other constituents.	*Student invited to the meeting.* *MPGs* *AAAs* *Transition activities* *MPGs updated annually* *Course of study*
QUESTION 5	Please describe your current and past experience related to secondary transition for students with disabilities. Please include your thoughts on what additional information you may need to support the field and other constituents in transition.	*Early childhood* *On-the-job training* *Elementary* *Low incidence disabilities* *Best practice training*
QUESTION 6	Please describe any supports that you have found helpful in your time in PSM for improving your ability to make compliance calls overall (all areas of compliance) and discussing them with the field and other constituents.	*Leadership discussions* *Guide Steps* *Training* *Practice* *OSEP resources* *Observing peers* *A safe place to share*
QUESTION 7	Please describe any barriers that you have experienced or noticed in making accurate compliance calls overall (all areas of compliance) and discussing them with the field and other constituents.	*Guidance not communicated* *Inconsistent guidance* *Nuanced calls* *Confusion or frustration*
QUESTION 8	How confident are you in connecting schools with transition specialists or other resources and answering general questions about the transition in our state?	*Very confident* *Fairly confident* *Confident* *Transition team* *Less collaboration with the transition team* *Resources available*

| QUESTION 9 | Is there anything else that you would like us to know (optional)? | *None* *Interested in results* *Leads irritated if ask too many questions* |

Table 12

Post-innovation Survey Secondary Codes by Question

SURVEY 2	QUESTION TEXT	SECONDARY CODES
QUESTION 1	Following the training and guidance provided within the Targeted Transition Compliance Training (TTCT), please describe your current confidence in making transition compliance calls and discussing transition compliance with members of the field or other constituents.	*Very confident* *Fairly confident* *Confident* *Better understanding* *More confident* *IRR is better in groups* *Resources for rural areas*
QUESTION 2	Following the training and guidance provided within the Targeted Transition Compliance Training (TTCT), please describe your current confidence in the PSM team making and discussing transition compliance calls as a whole. Do you think that the team agrees on how to make transition compliance calls and explain them to the field and other constituents currently? Please explain your thoughts.	*IRR is better in groups* *Discussion helps* *Mostly agree* *Confident* *More confident* *Better understanding* *Too easy on compliance* *Rely on requirements*

QUESTION 3	Following the training and guidance provided within the Targeted Transition Compliance Training (TTCT), do you have any remaining concerns, questions, or something for which you need additional support in making compliance calls and/or discussing transition compliance with the field or other constituents?	*No* *MPG* *AAAs* *Availability of resources*
QUESTION 4	Please describe your learning in the Targeted Transition Compliance Training (TTCT) around the topics within the self-paced Moodle modules and how this content supports you in your role. Please be as specific as possible.	*More able to share resources with the field* *Able to discuss resources with the field* *Resources I was not aware of* *DDD* *VR* *Sub-minimum wage* *Confident sharing*
QUESTION 5	Please describe your experience with completing the self-paced modules in Moodle, including your thoughts on the content, the format, the colleague interaction, etc. Please share what worked in this format and provide any suggestions for ways to improve this experience.	*Bias training* *Liked the format* *Did not like asynchronous discussion* *Content was applicable* *Liked discussion* *Timing was difficult* *The unclear connection between IRR and resources* *Parent perspective* *Not overwhelming* *Liked self-paced* *Want to learn about the availability of resources for rural areas*

QUESTION 6	What training or guidance provided within the Targeted Transition Compliance Training (TTCT) helped support your work as a Program Support and Monitoring Specialist, if any? Please be specific about which part of the TTCT was helpful and why.	*Bias training* *Small group/safe space to share* *Group discussion of calls* *Can share resources with field* *Practice* *Sub-minimum wage* *Infographics* *Feedback on calls* *All helpful* *Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA)*
QUESTION 7	How could the training or guidance provided within the Targeted Transition Compliance Training (TTCT) be improved to support your work as a Program Support and Monitoring Specialist? Please be specific about which part of the TTCT could be improved and why.	*AAAs* *Group discussion of calls* *Send link* *Grid of calls* *Feedback* *No* *Summer training* *Small group/safe space to share* *Practice* *Availability of resources* *Too much reading* *Training for the field*
QUESTION 8	Following the training or guidance provided within the Targeted Transition Compliance Training (TTCT), how confident are you in connecting schools with transition specialists or other resources and answering general questions about the transition in our state? Please be as specific as possible.	*Very confident* *Easy to refer to transition* *Confident* *More confident* *Some new/ reminders* *Pretty confident* *Availability of resources*
QUESTION 9	Do you have any suggestions for ways to improve overall inter-rater reliability among Program Support and Monitoring Specialists? (optional)	*Practice* *Group discussion of calls* *Nuance and purpose* *Small group/safe space to share* *Give to new specialists* *Communicate changes after monitoring*

		Monthly in-depth meetings with leads
QUESTION 10	Is there anything else that you would like us to know (optional)?	*Happy to participate* *Great learning* *Great work*

Themes. Following initial and secondary coding, I analyzed data into themes related to the research questions. The major themes from the data analysis were improved confidence in IRR and discussion of compliance, concerns with low-incidence disabilities, on-the-job training, training to enhance IRR, barriers to confidence, and continued confidence in sharing transition resources.

Table 13

Themes, Components, and Assertions

Themes	Theme Related Components	Assertions
Confidence in IRR	Participants reported overall improved confidence in IRR individually and as a group. Specialists reported fewer overall concerns with IRR components.	Participants were more confident in making compliance calls and discussing transition compliance within the field post-innovation.
Low incidence disabilities	Participants were concerned about how to make compliance calls and discuss them with the field, specifically for the population of students with low-incidence disabilities.	Specialists consider files of students with more significant disabilities more challenging to determine compliance and discuss with the field.

90

On-the-job training	Most specialists report coming to ADE with little to no background in transition. Those with field experience in transition were exposed to best practices rather than minimal compliance.	Specialists receive most of their training in transition compliance while on the job at ADE.
Types of Training	Specialists prefer group discussion, citing small groups as a safe place to share. Specialists benefit from discussions with colleagues and leadership, practice, available resources, feedback, and monthly training meetings.	Participants prefer small group discussions where they feel safe making mistakes when discussing and practicing making compliance calls. Participants benefit from various methods of compliance training but consistently note discussion and practice as effective.
Barriers to Confidence	Specialists feel less confident when guidance is unclear, needs to be communicated to all, and is more nuanced for various purposes.	Specialists experience barriers with consistent communication and guidance from leadership, especially with more nuanced compliance calls.

Confidence in Sharing Transition Resources	Specialists are confident in connecting with transition resources and best practice specialists. Specialists learned of additional resources to provide them with a broader context when discussing transition in the field.	Specialists are very comfortable sharing transition resources in the field and can connect PEAs with the transition best practice unit.

Improved Confidence in IRR/Discussion. Based on the coding results, a theme of improved confidence in making and discussing transition compliance calls emerged. Question 1 in both surveys was helpful in ascertaining participants' perceptions of confidence in reviewing and discussing transition compliance. In the pre-innovation survey, most participants were "fairly confident" or "confident" when making and discussing transition compliance calls. Only one participant considered themselves "very confident," and one labeled their confidence "variable." Two participants expressed more confidence in making transition compliance calls but pointed to less confidence in discussing calls in the field. One participant stated, "I feel my calls are accurate, but sometimes describing the calls to the field are more challenging because I don't have the depth of knowledge for specifics." (Survey 1 Question 1, Pos. 9). Four participants discussed concerns about changing guidance in compliance, the challenge of making calls in more nuanced situations, and difficulty delineating between best practice and minimal compliance. One participant also pointed out differences in understanding between looking for explicit information as opposed to making connections within the documentation, stating,

My lack of confidence stems from my perception that I learned to look for certain narrative or other indicators in order to call these components in, such as explicit language explaining how they are aligned, but then in the course of reviewing files for ASVs and CAP updates, I have learned from others that minimal compliance can be found if we can draw the connection. This inconsistency, in turn, impacts my confidence in discussing transition compliance with PEAs. (Survey 1 Question 1, Pos. 12)

This quote addresses the participant's confidence and explains specific reasons for any lack of confidence because of inconsistency.

Following the innovation, participants rated their confidence more positively overall, with four sharing that they were "more confident, two said they were "very confident, four rated themselves "confident," and two as "fairly confident." Along with confidence ratings, three stated they had a "better understanding" of making compliance calls. These results indicate improved confidence but may evidence continued concerns in this area for some participants.

Question 2 of both surveys asked participants about the PSM team's perceived confidence in making and discussing compliance calls in the field. In the pre-innovation survey, participants shared a variety of assessments for group confidence. Three mentioned discrepant calls among specialists, and four noted that the experience of specialists affects this, with one elaborating, "The PSM team does a good job with transition compliance calls. I think the team generally agrees on making calls and explaining them. There may be those new to PSM that may have difficulty with making calls." (Survey 1 Question 2, Pos. 11) Four indicated that specialists agree on compliance

calls. In this question, four participants also discussed concerns about changing guidance in compliance, the challenge of making calls in more nuanced situations, and some difficulty delineating between best practice and minimal compliance.

In the post-survey, participant results indicated improvement in the IRR for the PSM team post-innovation with higher percentages of confidence or agreement that specialists agree on transition compliance calls. The benefits of discussion with colleagues continued to be an overarching theme throughout participant responses.

In the pre-innovation survey in Questions 3 and 4, participants stated which specific transition components about which they felt most confident or had remaining concerns. Six expressed concerns in reviewing age-appropriate assessments, with many explicitly expressing concern about strengths, preferences, and interests. Three also mentioned the course of study as an area of concern. Three participants said files of students with low-incidence disabilities were still a concern, resulting in an additional overall theme in responses. Two had no concerns, and there were a few mentions of MPGs, MPGs updated annually, and transition services. Participants felt most confident in MPGs and reviewing the evidence that a student was invited to their meeting. Confidence in age-appropriate assessments, transition services, course of study, and MPGs updated annually was also mentioned.

In the post-innovation survey, when asked about which components they had questions or concerns, five participants stated "none." However, five other participants mentioned questions and concerns with MPGs. This aligns with the results within the quantitative review, which will be further explored in Chapter 5. One participant also cited concerns with the availability of transition resources, and one mentioned age-

appropriate assessments. Overall, participants reported fewer components of concern but did have further questions regarding MPGs.

Low Incidence Disabilities. After reviewing files and having compliance discussions in the field, specialists repeatedly expressed concerns specific to files for students with low-incidence disabilities. When asked about specific components or areas where they had concerns in the pre-innovation survey, three participants said they were concerned with making compliance calls. Three respondents also shared concerns about reviewing files for students with low-incidence disabilities when asked what additional support they may need to make compliance calls and support the field in transition compliance. This theme gleaned from qualitative data seems to match some of the quantitative data for files of students with low-incidence disabilities.

On the Job Training. Within the pre-innovation survey, when asked about their "current and past experience related to secondary transition for students with disabilities," most participants reported only receiving on-the-job training as a PSM specialist. Two participants had an early childhood background, and four mentioned experiences in the elementary setting. Of the two that referenced transition experience in the field, both pointed to training specific to best practice rather than a compliance-focused background. One participant shared the following about their background in transition by stating, "Prior to PSM, I had zero secondary transition experience. I took it upon myself to make it my area of focus to learn as much as I could through ADE trainings, monitor experiences, etc., to make this area of weakness to now a strength." (Survey 1 Question 5, Pos. 11) Another shared, "I feel that I have grown tremendously in my understanding of the requirements since working in PSM, and I am no longer shying away from reviewing

95

these files." (Survey 1 Question 5, Pos. 14). Another stated, "All of my experience in transition had been in this capacity as a specialist. It took me quite a bit of training to get to this comfort level." (Survey 1 Question 5, Pos. 3)." These results indicate that specialists in the sample are not coming to the position with a background in transition, specifically with a compliance-based focus. As such, on-the-job training is an important theme found throughout the analysis.

Types of Training. The qualitative data analysis also illuminated the types of training exercises that specialists reported to be beneficial or suggested. The benefits of discussion were an overarching theme throughout the pre- and post-innovation surveys. When asked to describe "supports that you have found helpful" in making calls and discussing them with the field, seven responses mentioned discussion, including with colleagues and leadership, with one stating, "Accessibility and approachability of leads, including our director, have been extremely helpful both in making calls and discussing them with the field." (Survey 1 Question 6, Pos. 12). Participants mentioned discussion prominently within the post-innovation survey when asked what was helpful within the TTCT training, with eight out of twelve participants mentioning the file review discussions. When asked for suggestions to improve IRR, three participants suggested additional discussion in reviewing files. Of note, when sharing perspectives on discussions in file reviews, many participants preferred small group discussions with colleagues or assigned leads, and others mentioned sharing in a space where they felt safe to make mistakes and practice. One participant shared that "open, nonjudgmental discussion builds confidence and capacity." (Survey 1 Question 6, Pos. 2); another

96

commented on appreciating an "environment where it is safe to make suggestions and mistakes." (Survey 2 Question 7, Pos. 2)

Following discussion, opportunities to practice were the most common training exercises mentioned in seven responses. One participant said, "Practice! As many opportunities and trainings as possible" (Survey 1 Question 6, Pos. 10) when asked what is most beneficial in improving IRR and discussions with the field. Based on the wording of survey questions, the term "practice" used in open-ended responses is assumed to mean practice in making and discussing compliance calls. Four participants also mentioned review and exposure to compliance requirements, along with practice and discussion.

Barriers to Confidence. When asked in the pre-innovation survey about barriers to IRR and discussion of transition compliance in the field, there were some prevalent trends mentioned in the pre-innovation survey. Six participants cited inconsistent guidance from leadership as a barrier. Several comments illuminated this concern in more detail. One participant shared:

> The only barrier is that guidance from leadership is a moving target. We are often told one thing, and then the next time we do a file review, we are told something different. That seems to happen a lot, and it leaves much confusion among specialists. (Survey 1 Question 7, Pos. 3)

Another stated, "A barrier that I faced was having leads make different calls on something because they were both using the same data to justify their decision. It was difficult to understand how a different call could be made based on what was provided." (Survey 1 Question 7, Pos. 8)

Additionally, participants expressed concern about the communication of changes to guidance. Five participants cited concerns with communication of guidance changes, with one sharing, "Information learned at some monitoring's is not always shared out to the entire team. The assumption that we all know something can be a downfall." (Survey 1 Question 7, Pos. 12) This quote points specifically to a view that discussions at monitoring or other site visits are not always shared out with the larger group. Another participant's response further strengthened this idea: "During monitoring season, as many PEAs are monitored in one form or another and the PSM team discovers statewide trends, the Director and Leads may slightly tweak what documentation should look like. Sometimes, I may not get the memo." (Survey 1 Question 7, Pos. 1) Five out of twelve participants expressed feelings of confusion and frustration as a result of these barriers, with two pointing specifically to concerns of credibility in the field in not being able to explain differences in calls by different specialists, with one saying:

> Some PEA members compare notes with each other, and it would be helpful for PSM to be stronger in being able to explain nuanced situations so that we do not appear to lose credibility in the field if we are inconsistent. (Survey 1 Question 7, Pos. 15).

The last area noted by multiple participants as a potential barrier was the nuance of calls for different situations, different files, and different PEAs, as well as how to address differences in compliance in best practice. Whereas this concern is a natural part of the role, as specialists must adapt to unique situations or may provide subtle differences in guidance based on the sample of files reviewed, many wanted additional

support. The idea of *it depends*, an often-used phrase within PSM, was also a complex concept for specialists to reconcile. One stated that more training was needed and:

> ongoing frequent file review activities in which we discuss calls as a group would help increase overall inter-rater reliability, as well as a clear explanation of when *it depends* may apply (e.g., when it's an ASV vs. a 60-Day Item and the PEA is facing a funding hold vs. a systemic pattern for certain disabilities during a monitoring year). (Survey 2 Question 9, Pos. 14)

Confidence in Sharing Transition Resources. When asked about confidence in sharing transition resources with the field, specialists indicated strong confidence in the pre-innovation survey, with seven participants suggesting that they were "very confident" in this area. At the same time, one was "confident," and two indicated they were "fairly confident." A few participants expressed noticing less collaboration with the transition team over time and ensuring that the field understands the difference between what PSM specialists share as required and that what transition specialists share is best practice. Six were aware of transition resources, where to locate them, and were comfortable sharing with the field.

In the post-innovation survey, five indicated they were "very confident," with two sharing that they were "more confident" following the training. Six shared that it is easy to refer best practice questions to available resources and/or transition specialists. When asked about the information learned in the TTCT regarding transition resources, seven participants said they were more able to discuss transition information with the field, and three indicated a better understanding of transition. Four shared that they learned of

resources they were unaware of, and a few specifically pointed to DDD, VR, the

subminimum wage, and the Employment First initiative as new information. One shared:

> Learning about the resources available to schools and families was helpful
>
> because it allows PEAs to make transition plans much more meaningful for
>
> students. There are resources available for training and planning that can take
>
> some of the burden off of individual IEP writers and help students reach their
>
> goals based on their true interests. As a PSM specialist, it is helpful to know what
>
> services are available. It really shines a light on how minimal basic compliance
>
> can be and how robust transition plans could be if PEAs had access to all the
>
> resources and understood the requirements of IDEA. (Survey 2 Question 4, Pos.
>
> 11)

This quote illustrates the depth of knowledge gained from the TTCT in this area and how

PEAs being aware of available resources for students and their families could strengthen

transition plans beyond minimal compliance within the state. Another participant shared,

> Having never taught students beyond 8th grade, I was new to all of the
>
> information provided in the modules. There is a ton of information available but
>
> it's not readily accessible to those that need it most. The content supports me in
>
> my role because it gives me additional tools to share with PEAs and other
>
> stakeholders regarding postsecondary supports. Often, PEAs and other
>
> stakeholders have limited access to information because the person providing the
>
> information has limited information as well. Now having access to this new trove
>
> of knowledge, I am able to provide more meaningful support. (Survey 2 Question
>
> 4, Pos. 7)

100

This participant's response adds credence to the idea that the TTCT was helpful in supporting PSM specialists with information that can be referenced within their role.

Summary of Qualitative Data

In summary, qualitative data analysis further clarified specific perspectives of participants in regard to making and discussing transition compliance calls and sharing transition resources in the field. Based on qualitative results, participants indicate improved confidence in both making compliance calls and discussing them in the field, with the exception of a few components where they have further questions, such as MPGs. Participants consistently indicated the need for additional training in reviewing files for students with low-incidence disabilities. This area was not only discussed in making calls, but the difficulty in providing guidance to the field in this area was also indicated multiple times. Results indicate that most PSM specialists come to their role without any compliance-specific training in transition components. Even though a few had some transition experience in the field focused on best practices, most came to the role with a background in early childhood or elementary education. That being said, participants indicated a need and appreciation for training in transition. Within the topic of training, participants indicated a preference for a safe space to share, including in small groups where they would have the opportunity for in-depth discussion while reviewing a file. The topic of "practice" was mentioned repeatedly to ensure that participants had many opportunities to improve their confidence in transition components. Many participants mentioned barriers in confidence and high IRR, specifically in communication as guidance changes or more nuanced calls are discussed, such as in monitoring. As a reminder, nuanced calls are best defined as files containing

101

documentation that is not representative of what PSM specialists typically encounter in transition files or when a file sample is nuanced because of a call made in the context of a specific systemic trend. Considering participants frequently mentioned guidance in compliance calls being a "moving target," it is important to note that not all compliance calls can be generalized across settings as monitoring and technical assistance are targeted on systems within a PEA rather than the focus being on any one individual student file. Monitoring and technical assistance activities are systems-based supports using a pattern of strengths and opportunities throughout a sample. Implications in this area will be further discussed in Chapter 5. Lastly, qualitative results indicate continued confidence in sharing transition-specific resources with the field, including those of the best practice unit within ADE. Participants indicated new learning in the self-paced modules and indicated overall increased confidence in discussing transition with the field.

Summary

Research Question 1 hypothesized that the TTCT would improve inter-rater reliability among PSM specialists. Results did not support the hypothesis for individual review as results were mixed with IRR getting worse in multiple areas. Research Question 2 hypothesized that the TTCT would improve compliance specialists' confidence in reliably making compliance calls and providing technical assistance. Results support the hypothesis of improved confidence for PSM specialists following the TTCT innovation. Results support the hypothesis that the TTCT would improve compliance specialists' confidence in providing technical assistance but do indicate a continued need in this area. Research Question 3 hypothesized that the TTCT would improve specialists' perceived confidence in aligning transition best practice resources to

compliance discussions in the field. Results support the hypothesis of improved

confidence in connecting members of the field with transition resources.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Outcomes

The results of this study demonstrate a few key findings related to the research questions examined. In this chapter, I discuss and connect the results of the three research questions and propose practical implications for evaluating transition compliance based on the findings. I then discuss the study's limitations, the importance of the findings, and unresolved issues that may warrant further investigation.

Compliance Training's Effect on Inter-rater Reliability

Results of the individual IRR as compared to the GS were inconclusive. Overall, the results were mixed with the following key findings discussed as possible effects of the innovation and areas for further training in transition compliance within the PSM context.

Higher IRR. Participants demonstrated higher IRR when files were reviewed in a group setting that allowed for group discussion. Group review and discussion are highly encouraged within the role of the PSM specialist, and this study further validates the value of group discussion in file review. Further, participants demonstrated higher IRR for less complex or more compliant files. These results could be partially due to participants being in the advanced beginner stage of the acquisition of expertise, characterized by learners knowing the rules well and demonstrating an increase in confidence in making calls for files with characteristics they have encountered before. When most calls were considered *in*, participants experienced higher IRR overall. Post-innovation file review data also evidenced significant improvement in annual IEP goals

104

aligned with MPGs, which seemed to be an area of confusion for some prior to the innovation that has since been rectified.

Lower IRR. Results of the study also demonstrated that IRR was lower in files with more non-compliance overall, nuanced files, and files of students with low-incidence disabilities.

Non-compliant files. Participants experienced lower IRR when MPGs were not compliant. They continued to have difficulties making subsequent calls, such as age-appropriate assessments, transition services, and course of study, when a file did not contain compliant MPGs, as these calls require alignment with MPGs. Although this was discussed within the TTCT in-person training, results align with this being an area of confusion for participants following the innovation.

Although language anomalies found in commercial software programs used by districts are not common in most files, a similar file was included within the TTCT in-person training. Even though language anomalies are not likely representative, participants continued to struggle when confronted with this issue.

Nuanced files. Participants demonstrated lower IRR in files that could be considered more nuanced (containing documentation that is not representative of what PSM specialists typically encounter). Lower IRR in more nuanced files can best be attributed to continued confusion in making compliance calls when situations are considered tricky, unusual, or contain conflicting documentation. The files available to be reviewed within the sample of five contained a higher proportion of files that could be called nuanced than what would be typically experienced in the field. In reviewing less nuanced files, such as those used within the probe samples, participants had higher IRR.

They indicated less confusion when files were discussed with each group following the probe review. Qualitative results of participant surveys also indicated a need for more training and discussion of nuanced files, further strengthening the idea that this is an area of continued need. Higher IRR on more compliant and/or less nuanced files was a key assumption before the study that is further validated by the results.

   Low incidence files. IRR was lower overall for files of students with low-incidence disabilities. Despite the TTCT training's inclusion of these files within the in-person sessions, this continues to be an area of confusion. Files from both probes had higher IRR and were overall more consistent with typical files reviewed by PSM specialists, which included a smaller sample of files for students with low-incidence disabilities. This is more representative of what participants would typically encounter in their work.

Effect on Confidence in Making and Discussing Calls in the Field

   Participants indicated more confidence in making and discussing transition compliance calls post-innovation. Fewer overall compliance concerns were discussed in the post-innovation survey; however, participants still had questions on MPGs and how to make the calls on age-appropriate assessments, transition services, and course of study when MPGs were not measurable. Further, they reported a lack of confidence when their individual calls and those of the group were tied to perceptions of changing guidance from leadership, lack of consistent communication of compliance call trend information made at monitoring, calls on files of students with low incidence disabilities, calls in more nuanced situations, and understanding differences between best practice and compliance.

Additionally, because these participants came to the position with little to no transition compliance training, results indicate they would benefit from on-the-job training to become confident in making and discussing transition compliance calls. They consistently expressed a desire for additional training, including repeated practice making calls on sample files and having discussions of calls, especially in small groups where they felt safe in making mistakes. Qualitative results indicated a preference for discussing nuanced files and those of students with low-incidence disabilities in future training.

Participants made some distinction between making calls and discussing them in the field. Several participants mentioned having less confidence in discussing compliance requirements than in making the compliance calls themselves. Some pointed to a need for deeper knowledge of the guidance in the components rather than relying solely on the Guide Steps information available. This support was provided in the in-person session 1 of the TTCT as well as in the three self-paced modules, but additional depth of knowledge could be needed to add confidence in discussing calls in the field.

Based on the open-ended survey responses, the discussion of calls in the field was an area with which some participants had more concerns, as explanations required more than a basic understanding of the guidance around a particular component. Participants were specific about their training needs and what training types they felt would be beneficial in improving IRR in compliance calls. Some discussion of why calls may be made differently in particular situations or contexts is an area of continued focus.

Based on the retroactive confidence survey, confidence improved or stayed as *very confident* post-innovation in all component areas. These results validate the possible effect of improving participant confidence in making compliance calls after the TTCT

innovation. However, some participants reported being only *somewhat confident* about MPGs, age-appropriate assessments, transition services, and course of study post-innovation. This aligns with quantitative results indicating a continued concern in these areas.

It is possible that findings that learners are beginning to feel more confident but continuing to struggle with more complex situations that they may not have experienced before could be related to their stage of expertise as based on the acquisition of expertise created by Dreyfus and Dreyfus (2005) discussed in Chapter 2. Of note, learners in the advanced beginner stage of the acquisition of expertise are only beginning to understand complex situations that require seeing the big picture and differentiating between important and non-important information in a given decision. Additionally, those participants who may be in the competence stage are working to manage emotions about decisions and are starting to see how decisions are related to long-term goals. Participants being in the advanced beginner and competence stages may help explain the increase in confidence for participants while observed IRR is actually lower in many cases.

Effect on Confidence in Sharing Best Practice Information with the Field

Even though perceived confidence was high in sharing best practice information with the field pre-innovation, participants reported higher confidence in this area post-innovation. Participants found the content of the self-paced modules helpful. They indicated new knowledge in transition-specific supplemental information such as Employment First, WIOA, sub-minimum wage, outside transition agencies, and the ECAP requirements in Arizona. They made the connection between access to best practice information and improvement in compliance. They also acknowledged the

limitations of some resources in supporting transition compliance. Participants were comfortable referring members of the field to the transition best practice unit at ADE and the resources on the transition website. They had questions about how they might share best practice information while still being careful to provide specific guidance on transition compliance per their limited role. This may be an area of continued training for PSM specialists.

Complementarity of Quantitative and Qualitative Data

Qualitative and quantitative data, when combined, demonstrated a sharp contrast between perceived confidence and actual higher IRR in most areas. Although participants consistently rated themselves higher in confidence post-innovation, IRR for individual file reviews did not consistently evidence improved IRR in most areas. However, it is likely that participants rated themselves in a more comprehensive way, including their general experience with file review, rather than restricting their confidence ratings to the five files within the sample. These results could also be explained by the stage of acquisition of expertise, as explained within the qualitative section.

Additionally, qualitative and quantitative data both indicated participant concerns and lower IRR when reviewing files for students with low-incidence disabilities. As these results align, this could be an area of continued need. This was also true when comparing qualitative and quantitative results when MPGs were *out* of compliance. This area is a consistent concern in both open-ended survey responses and quantitative data, where participants had lower IRR and post-innovation survey results.

Limitations

This study had a variety of limitations that should be considered. These include limitations with the research design, the difficulty with measuring IRR within the context in which compliance calls are made, and time constraints due to staff shortages during the study period.

Limitations of Research Design

Limitations of this study include a limited sample of files to review that could have been more representative of what PSM specialists see in their work. This lack of a representative sample could have skewed results, especially regarding individual IRR calls, without the benefit of hearing their colleagues' perspectives through discussion. Additionally, as group results were only collected during and after the innovation, they are not directly comparable to the individual results as they were collected prior to and after the innovation. However, a sample of group participants was utilized post-innovation, allowing for a small group review of the five files throughout or before the innovation might have yielded different or more positive results. A pre-and post-confidence survey completed before and after the innovation could have also provided more accurate confidence data in real time than the retrospective survey utilized.

Contextuality of Calls

As the SEA, ADE has specific requirements outlined within the general supervision requirements of the IDEA. As discussed in Chapter 1, general supervision is a requirement within the IDEA that, in part, requires SEAs to conduct monitoring activities to ensure PEAs are meeting the requirements of the IDEA. The ADE Program Support and Monitoring (PSM) Manual for the 2022-2023 school year states the

following, "ADE/ESS uses methods and procedures to implement the programmatic monitoring system that is consistent, but flexible, in order to adapt to the varying needs of children, educational settings, and administrative realities" (ADE, 2022, p. 2). As such, Program Support and Monitoring specialists look for trends while reviewing files. Therefore, some calls may differ within a unique context. Compliance calls are related to student-level individual corrections and systemic-level compliance for a PEA. This can make achieving high IRR difficult. Accounting for calls made within the context of a system, it was challenging to implement FOR training with fidelity. A key aspect of FOR training requires aligning ratings with schemata to help anchor calls for individual raters. Even though the Guide Steps outline each requirement, more specific schemata for participant training were difficult to define when considering the context. Based on both quantitative and qualitative data, calls made in the field within a system appear to be an area of continued confusion for specialists requiring further clarification. In looking at compliance through a systems lens, data points for *in* and *out* calls may require further interpretation and understanding to create effective change. Also, as calls are made in the context of systems, this should likely be considered when interpreting and making decisions based on statewide SPP/APR data as an agency.

Time Constraints

Collaborating with transition specialists who are employed within the department as a part of the study might have helped clarify how PSM specialists can address best practices within their settings. Plans to include transition specialists in trainings did not come to fruition due to a lack of time to meet during the study period. Also, due to staff shortages and lack of capacity, leadership and participants had limited time to engage in

the innovation as planned. Some timelines were pushed back, or the innovation requirements were reduced to account for unexpected time constraints. As participants were very busy, building additional discussion time on specific files other than small group meetings following the probes and in-person training was impractical. Still, it could have helped address specific participant questions.

Meeting as a leadership team to discuss and plan for the TTCT training was challenging. Due to these constraints, I prepared most of the training with limited feedback from the larger leadership team and met for planning sessions with the PSM director during one-to-one meetings. However, additional viewpoints of the leadership team and transition unit would have likely been beneficial in addressing the IRR concerns within PSM more comprehensively.

Implications for the SEA

Based upon the findings of this study, the SEA may wish to consider the possible implications around training areas and methods to support higher IRR and improved confidence, ways to further the impact of intra-agency collaboration and ways in which discussions of how compliance calls are made with the understanding that *it depends.*

Further Training

Implications specific to the Program Support and Monitoring Unit at the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) include particular areas of transition on which to focus where participants experienced continued confusion, such as MPGs, age-appropriate assessments, transition activities, and course of study. Continued practice and discussion of files for students with low-incidence disabilities and files within the specific context might also be beneficial.

Training could include more time for small group discussion in a safe place, including promoting a culture where making mistakes is an expected part of practice. As participants shared concerns about how they feel, sometimes taking it personally, when a call is changed or does not match that of leadership, continued practice and discussion in a safe place could help improve overall confidence in this area.

As participants expressed a lack of communication and changing guidance frequently, an allotted time to discuss calls following each monitoring as a larger group may also help ensure guidance is communicated to all specialists. Monthly PSM meetings and small group meetings with leads could also support furthering this communication. Communication with all stakeholders seems imperative when any changes are made to guidance to alleviate further confusion and reduced confidence among PSM specialists.

As participants seemed to enjoy the self-paced modules, additional content could be presented this way. Even though participants preferred discussion in training, they did not prefer to participate in asynchronous discussions. Those asynchronous components could be replaced with synchronous small-group discussions. And because participants rated the review of common biases and errors as beneficial, circling back to this content in future training might also improve IRR.

Considering the instructional strategies outlined by Persky and Robinson (2017) around supporting learners within the stages of the acquisition of expertise, training centered around moving learners progressively through the stages of expertise should be considered. As participants appear to embody the characteristics of advanced beginners or competent learners, where they continue to struggle with emotions around decisions,

113

have limited exposure to more complex situations, and are likely only starting to see how the big picture connects to decisions, instructional strategies such as supportive coaching, helping to manage emotions and anxiety around decisions, reviewing subtleties found within files, and providing more authentic and complex learning experiences may further their support their needs in transition compliance.

Intra-agency Collaboration

Units within the agency should consider continuing to review the Indicator 13 data (as well as other SPP/APR Indicator data) to decide what technical assistance is needed for the field. Some intra-agency collaboration is already happening at ADE in ESS. Still, more robust collaboration between transition specialists and PSM specialists specifically might be helpful in further aligning best practices and compliance for transition planning. Effective transition planning based on compliance and evidenced-based strategies would likely improve post-secondary outcomes in the state for students with disabilities exiting high school.

It Depends!

Although it is understood that calls are often situational, additional discussions around calls made and why *it depends* would likely benefit participants. Participants indicated a continual struggle with assessing why and how calls are made contextually, where compliance could be interpreted through the lens of specific PEA systems. PSM specialists often express a desire for calls to be more black-and-white and struggle with different explanations on the same call. As participants expressed that different leads provide different guidance or that guidance often fluctuates, more opportunities for

leadership to discuss and ensure alignment on calls within the leadership team could also be helpful.

Considering the phenomenon of *it depends* through the lens of the stages of acquisition of expertise, it may make sense that leaders likely fall into the proficient and expert stages where they are able to quickly or automatically identify what information is relevant to a given situation, can easily see when deviations from set rules may be appropriate, have a depth of understanding based on prior experiences, and are able to think intuitively with the big picture in mind. With that in mind, training could include a progression of exposure to more complex examples, providing targeted feedback during learning, allowing for learning with peer models, helping to manage emotions, fostering acceptance for decisions, and balancing supervision with autonomy. Additional practice, role-playing, and continued discussions through monitoring would likely help in this area as well.

Implications for Other SEAs

Implications for other state agencies in improving IRR in general supervision compliance monitoring could include allowing for group review in compliance calls and similar training to those desired by study participants, including repeated practice and small group discussion. Additionally, fostering connections between best practice and compliance supports within an agency may be beneficial in improving transition outcomes for students with disabilities state-wide. Analysis of Indicator 30 data at the state level could be used to guide further specific training provided to staff and the field. A larger multi-state sample or state-to-state comparison would be helpful in further determining the effects of compliance training.

Implications for Research

Monitoring Systems

Little in the research base addresses compliance monitoring carried out by SEAs as a part of the general supervision requirements. Additional research focused on monitoring systems could broaden our understanding and establish best practices for general supervision at the state level. Results of future studies could also be used by federally funded technical assistance centers in supporting SEAs with their monitoring activities. They might also support OSEP in their review of SEAs, including SPP/APR data.

Group Review of Files

As the results of this study indicated a preference for group review with higher IRR when participants reviewed within groups, a subsequent action research cycle in this area could include a study targeting small-group compliance review or comparing group to individual file review to assess the benefits of group review further. As some participants reviewed files digitally while others printed out the full files for review, a study comparing the results of digital and paper file reviews might also be beneficial in determining if IRR is affected.

Contextual Review of Files

Collecting and analyzing data within the context of specific monitoring could paint a more accurate picture of the IRR of compliance specialists in a more real-world way. Focusing on a specific monitoring of an LEA would ensure that all files were reviewed as part of an overall system, thus reducing lower IRR likely caused by confusion around different contexts. FOR training might also be modified to include

schemata from a specific context that would allow for a better understanding of the system in which the compliance calls are made.

Andragogy

Future action research cycles could utilize the principles of andragogy for different areas of training, including those at the SEA and PEA levels. The concepts of andragogy used in the in-person trainings and self-paced modules could also be helpful with other studies of adult learners in compliance roles. Researchers and practitioners working with pre-service teachers might also consider planning for and assessing innovations through action research following the principles of andragogy.

Intra-agency Collaboration

Studies exploring intra-agency collaboration or silos within similarly sized SEAs could provide additional data on the possible importance of cross-collaboration to improve student outcomes. A study that addresses the collaboration among compliance specialists and best practice professionals within a state agency, including utilizing transition data results in planning targeted professional development for the field, might also be a beneficial area of exploration.

Conclusion

The results of this study bring up several concerns about the possible effects of low IRR within the SEA. Overall, the work of transition compliance is messy and rarely black and white, making high IRR a challenging goal. As compliance calls are made within the context of PEA systems, the SEA faces a unique challenge in ensuring that PSM specialists give consistent guidance to the field and that the data collected is representative of transition compliance within the state while supporting PEAs within

117

their setting. This is compounded by often severe personnel shortages within the SEA and PEAs. There is also a need for continued training specific to transition compliance that is not usually a precursor to employment within PSM.

Additionally, if participants in this study expressed confusion around transition compliance calls and indicated that compliance is a "moving target," what technical assistance does the field need to understand compliance within their systems? Do they also feel confusion and frustration about how best to ensure compliance? Are they also confused between the differences in compliance and best practice? These will be important questions to consider moving forward.

Although IRR is an admirable goal, I think most would agree that compliance with the transition requirements within the IDEA should be the minimum expectation for a student's transition plan. Additional training, collaboration, and communication are likely needed to help move the needle in Arizona to transition plans that are not only compliant but are also based on evidence-based practices designed to prepare students to lead to an included adult life where they experience positive education, employment, and independent living outcomes.

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APPENDIX A

IDEA DATA CENTER PART B FFY 2020-2025 SPP/APR

Part B FFY 2020–2025 SPP/APR

1. **Graduation.** % of youth with IEPs graduating with regular diploma.
2. **Dropout.** % of youth with IEPs dropping out.
3. **Assessment.** (A) Participation rate for children with IEPs, (B) Proficiency rate for children with IEPs against grade-level academic achievement standards, (C) Proficiency rate for children with IEPs against alternate academic achievement standards, (D) Gap in proficiency rates for children with IEPs and all students against grade-level academic achievement standards.
4. **Suspension and Expulsion.** (A) % of LEAs with significant discrepancy, (B) % of LEAs with significant discrepancy by race/ethnicity.
5. **Educational Environments.** % of children with IEPs, age 5 and enrolled in kindergarten and ages 6–21, served (A) Inside regular class 80% or more of day; (B) Inside regular
class less than 40% of day; (C) In separate schools, residential facilities, or homebound/ hospital placements.
6. **Preschool Environments.** % of children with IEPs, ages 3, 4, and 5 who are enrolled in a preschool program, (A) Receiving majority of special education and related services in regular early childhood program; (B) Attending separate special education class, separate school, or residential facility; (C) Receiving special education and related services in the home.
7. **Preschool Outcomes.** % of preschool children ages 3–5 with IEPs with improved (A) Positive social-emotional skills, (B) Acquisition and use of knowledge and skills, (C) Use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs.
8. **Parent Involvement.** % of parents who report that the school facilitated parent involvement.
9. **Disproportionate Representation.** % of districts with disproportionate representation of racial/ethnic groups due to inappropriate identification.
10. **Disproportionate Representation in Specific Disability Categories.** % of districts with disproportionate representation of racial /ethnic groups in specific disability categories due to inappropriate identification.
11. **Child Find.** % of children evaluated within 60 days of parental consent for initial evaluation or state time frame.
12. **Early Childhood Transition.** % of children found Part B eligible with IEP implemented by 3rd birthday.
13. **Secondary Transition.** % of youth ages 16+ with measurable, annually updated IEP goals and appropriate transition assessment, services, and courses.
14. **Post-School Outcomes.** % of youth with IEPs, no longer in school, (A) Enrolled in higher education: (B) Enrolled in higher education or competitively employed; (C) Enrolled in higher education, other postsecondary education, or training program or competitively employed or in some other employment, within one year of leaving high school.
15. **Resolution Sessions.** % of hearing requests that went to resolution sessions that were resolved through resolution session settlement agreements.
16. **Mediation.** % of mediations held resulting in mediation agreements.

17. **State Systemic Improvement Plan.** SPP/APR includes comprehensive, ambitious, yet achievable multi-year SSIP, with stakeholder engagement in all phases, for improving results for children with disabilities.

2/22

APPENDIX B
ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

Superintendent of Public Instruction
Tom Horne

State Board
of Education

Deputy Superintendent
Margaret Garcia Dugan

Accountability, Research & Evaluation
Joseph Guzman

AZ Educator Leadership
Sid Bailey

Strategic Planning
Edward Cota

Operations, Finance & Communication
Art Harding

School Improvement
Michelle Udall

Academic Achievement
Catherine Barrett

Exceptional Student Services / Child & Adult Programs
Colette Chapman

Accountability & Research
Sean Smith

School Safety Program
Mike Kurtenbach

Arizona Charter School Program
Mark Francis

School Improvement
Adam Schwartz

Office of Indian Education
Lynnann Yazzie

Title I
James Scott

Exceptional Student Services
Alissa Trollinger

Assessment & NAEP
Audra Ahumada

Health & Prevention Programs
Jean Ajamie

Title II-Effective Teachers & Leaders
Kelly McQuaid

Elementary & Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER)
Jessica Deery

Project Momentum
Jeannie Paparella

Homeless, Refugee, & Foster Care Education
Brittani Roy

Adult Education
Beverly Wilson

Academic Standards
Linda Burrows

Educator Preparation & Teacher Certification
Bruce DuPlanty

Title IV – Student Support & Academic Enrichment
Mark Hodge

Office of English Language Acquisition Services (OELAS)/ Migrant Education
Adela Santa Cruz

Health and Nutrition Services
Melissa Conner
Cara Alexander

Educational Technology
Karina Jones

Educator Recruitment & Retention
Jamie Wilber

Character Education
Mila Makal

Career and Technical Education
Kevin Imes

Teacher Certification
Michelle Brady

21st Century Community Learning Centers
Raymond Gee

Superintendent of Public Instruction
Tom Horne

Deputy Superintendent
Margaret Garcia Dugan

Operations Finance & Communication
Art Harding

Constituent Services
Sandra Christensen

Federal/State Liaison & Community Outreach
Jim Waring

Communications Director
Doug Nick

Agency Operations
Debbie Jackson

Empowerment Scholarship Account (ESA)
John Ward

Finance
Ross Begnoche

Legislative Affairs
Melissa Taylor

Legal Services
Maria Syms

Community Relations Manager
Rick Medina

Information Technology & Data Governance
Beth Neeley

Human Resources
Billie Belanger

Building Operations
Mark Luzier

School Finance
Tim McCain

Accounting, Payroll & Budget
Selene Ramirez

Legislative Assistant
Bobby Bravo

Project Manager
Chris Kelly

Development & Production Services
Joe Carrillo

IT Program Management
Qur'an Nero

Facilities
Billy Miller

Audit
Melissa Moreno

Procurement
Steven Paulson

Event Administrator
Jaclyn Leivian

Communications/ Strategy
Karina Jones

Data Governance
Amanda Riske

Print Shop
Mark Flores

Grants Management
Deirdre Mai

Central Distribution

APPENDIX C
PROGRAM SUPPORT AND MONITORING RISK ANALYSIS TOOL

Risk Component Name	School Year	Data Source	Formula
Indicator 1— Graduation Rate	2019–2020	PEA submission of exit codes from Student Management System (SMS)	# students with disabilities with graduation exit codes / # students with disabilities with the following exit codes: graduated with regular diploma, received a certificate, reached maximum age, and dropped out (ages 14-21)
Indicator 2— Dropout Rate	2019–2020	PEA submission of exit codes from SMS	# students with disabilities coded as dropout ages 14–21 / # students with disabilities enrolled ages 14–21
Indicator 3—Performance on Statewide Assessments ELA Proficiency	2020–2021	Assessment	# students with disabilities in grades 3–8 and 11 (EOC) assessment scores with a score of "proficient" or higher / # students tested in grades 3–8 and 11
Indicator 3—Performance on Statewide Assessments Math Proficiency	2020–2021	Assessment	# students with disabilities in grades 3–8 and 11 (EOC) assessment scores with a score of "proficient" or higher / # students tested in grades 3–8 and 11
Indicator 4a— Suspension / Expulsion	2019–2020	Safe schools data submission	Calculated risk ratio based on AZSafe data; N size (total enrollment) of 30; cell size (number of students with disabilities) of 10
Indicator 4b— Suspension / Expulsion	2019–2020	Safe schools data submission	Calculated risk ratio >3 >3 based on AZSafe data; N size (total enrollment of students with disabilities) of 30; cell size (number of students with disabilities in a particular race/ethnicity) of 10.
Indicator 5—Least Restrictive Environment (LRE–A)	2020–2021	PEA submission of sped need code in SMS	# students with disabilities coded as LRE A in Student Management System (SMS) on Oct. 1 count / # total students with disabilities on Oct. 1 count
Indicator 5—Least Restrictive	2020–2021	PEA submission of sped need code in SMS	# students with disabilities coded as LRE C in Student Management System (SMS) on Oct. 1 count / #

Environment (LRE– C)			total students with disabilities on Oct. 1 count
Indicator 5—Least Restrictive Environment (LRE–D, E, or H)	2020–2021	PEA submission of sped need code in SMS	# students with disabilities coded as LRE in separate placements in Student Management System (SMS) on Oct. 1 count / # total students with disabilities on Oct. 1 count
Indicator 6—Preschool Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)	2020–2021	PEA data submission	# students with IEPs ages 3–5 attending a regular early childhood program and receiving the majority of sped services in the regular early childhood program / total # students ages 3–5 with IEPs
Indicator 6—Preschool Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)	2020–2021	PEA data submission	# students with IEPs ages 3–5 attending a separate special education class, residential facilities, or separate school / total # students with IEPs ages 3– 5
Indicators 9— Disproportionali ty	2020–2021	PEA data submission	Calculated risk ratio >3 based on Oct. 1 counts (ethnicity and sped eligibility); N size of 30; cell size of 10
Indicators 10— Disproportionali ty	2020–2021	PEA data submission	Calculated >3 risk ratio based on Oct. 1 counts (eligibility categories and ethnicity); N size of 30; cell size of 10
Indicator 11—Initial Evaluation Timeline	2020–2021	Annual site visit (ASV)	# compliant files reviewed / # total files reviewed
Indicator 13—Postsecondary Transition	2020–2021	Annual site visit (ASV)	# compliant files reviewed / # total files reviewed
PEA Determination	2020–2021	PEA submitted data, fiscal data for Maintenance of Effort (MOE)	See PEA Determination requirements

Additional Considerations

Indicator 7—Preschool Children with Improved Outcomes	2020–2021	PEA data submission	All 3 Teaching Strategies Gold checkpoints were met throughout the school year
Indicator 8—Parent Involvement	2020–2021	Parent Survey application (via ADEConnect)	# of parent responses saying they are involved / # of parents completing survey
Indicator 14—Post School Outcomes	2020–2021	PEA submission of data from PSO application	Participated in the survey by documenting contact / attempts of contact for eligible student(s)
Indicator 14—Post School Outcomes	2020–2021	PEA submission of data from PSO application	# eligible surveys completed / # possible eligible surveys
Indicator 14—Post School Outcomes	2020–2021	PEA submission of data from PSO application	# students surveyed engaged in postsecondary education/training or employment / # students with disabilities completed survey
Indicator 5—Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)	2020–2021	PEA submission of sped need code in SMS	# students with disabilities coded as LRE B in Student Management System (SMS) on Oct. 1 count / # total students with disabilities on Oct. 1 count
SPED Population	2020–2021	PEA submission of sped need codes in Student Management System (SMS)	# students with disabilities enrolled on Oct. 1 count / # total students enrolled on Oct. 1 count
Number of findings of noncompliance from state complaints in the 2016–17 SY	2020–2021	Dispute Resolution	# of allegations found to be noncompliant as a result of Administrative State Complaint investigation
SSIP action plan implementation	2021-2022	ESS Monitoring Application	PEA has met all required deadlines for SSIP

APPENDIX D
PROGRAM SUPPORT AND MONITORING GUIDE STEPS (INDICATOR 13)

300.320(b)(1) SF, SASF, DRSF, SCSF **60-Day Correction**	Documentation of measurable postsecondary goals (**MPGs**) in the areas of education/training and employment, and when appropriate, independent living skills.
	Student File Review Method: Review the IEP to determine whether it includes measurable postsecondary goals in the following areas: education/training, employment, and, **when appropriate,** independent living skills. Goals must reflect the student's strengths, interests, and preferences, occur after high school, and be able to be measured. These areas may be combined into one goal or be contained in separate goals. The training/education and employment goals are required. The measurable postsecondary goal related to independent living is the only optional goal, and the IEP team determines if it is appropriate to include a goal in this area. If the postsecondary goals are stated in such a way that one **could** measure the achievement of the goal after leaving high school, mark this item **I**.
	If there is **no evidence of postsecondary goals, if the postsecondary goals are not measurable, if the required areas are not addressed, or if the goals are not postsecondary,** mark this item **O**.
	Note: Record the specific reason(s) for noncompliance on the Student Form.
	Training/Education Goals:
	• Student wants to enroll in an apprenticeship program. = **I**
	• Student will complete work adjustment skills training. = **I**
	• Student will attend a teacher prep program. = **I**
	• Student will audit a choir class at a local community college. = **I**
	• Student will graduate from high school. = **O**
	• Student is interested in landscaping. = **O**
	Employment Goals:
	• Student will work for a construction company. = **I**
	• Student will be employed as a grocery clerk. **= I**
	• Student likes fixing things and earning money. = **O**

	Education/Training and Employment Goals (combined):
	• Student will enroll at a community college to receive training in order to become an engineer. = **I**
	• Student will receive on-the-job training to develop skills as a framer. = **I**
	• After graduation, student wants to move to Ohio to work for an uncle. = **O**
	Independent Living Skills Goals:
	• James will use an organizational tool to manage medical appointments. = **I**
	• Frank will access public transportation. = **I**
	• Trevor will use a communication device to access the community. = **I**
	• Student will live with a roommate. = **I**
	• Student wants to move away from home. = **O**
300.320(b) SF, SASF, DRSF, SCSF	Documentation that measurable postsecondary goals are updated annually.
	Student File Review Method: Review the IEP to determine whether postsecondary goals were addressed/updated in conjunction with the development of the current IEP.
	• If postsecondary goal(s) for education/training, employment, and independent living (as needed) are documented in the student's current IEP, mark the item **I**.
	• If postsecondary goal(s) for education/training, employment, and independent living (as needed) are not documented in the student's current IEP, mark the item **O**.
300.320(b)(1) SF, SASF, DRSF, SCSF	Documentation that the measurable postsecondary goal(s) (**MPGs**) were based upon age-appropriate transition assessment(s).
	Student File Review Method: Look for documentation that at least one age appropriate transition assessment was used to provide information on the student's **strengths**, preferences, and interests regarding the postsecondary goal(s). The information may be located in multiple places within the IEP, including the PLAAFP

	or the transition services page. No specific number of assessments is required, and they may be formal or informal. Assessment data should clearly support student strengths, preferences, and interests as they relate to the MPGs. Formal or informal transition assessment(s) should be selected based on the **individual needs** of the student. **Strengths**: Documentation that student possesses the skills needed to perform the job/career **Preferences**: Requires action or effort from the student toward their goals, activities, or interests (which could include completion of aligned transition services or activities) **Interests**: Expression of the student's likes or wants (is not indicative of strengths or preferences) • If the IEP contains documentation of **how assessment information was used** in the development of the postsecondary goal(s) (whether measurable or not), mark this item **I**. • If there is simply a boilerplate statement, or if there is no documentation of any age-appropriate transition assessment(s), mark this item **O**. For additional information on secondary transition assessments view the secondary transition web page, specifically the transition assessment padlet.
300.320(b)(2) SF, SASF, DRSF, SCSF	Documentation of at least one transition service/activity that focuses on improvement of the academic and functional achievement of the student to facilitate movement from school to post-school, as identified in the measurable postsecondary goals. For each postsecondary goal, there must be documentation of a type of instruction, related service, community experience or development of employment, and other post-school adult living objectives, and, if appropriate, acquisition of daily living skill(s) and provision of a functional vocational evaluation listed in association with meeting the postsecondary goal(s). Strategies may address activities performed on the school campus and during school hours as well as off-site and during non-school hours. The IEP team does not need to include all components if they are not

appropriate for the student. Services/activities are only needed in areas that will reasonably enable the student in reaching the measurable postsecondary goals.
Student File Review Method: Review the IEP for evidence of at least one transition service/activity to assist the student in reaching their measurable postsecondary goals. One transition service/activity may support multiple measurable postsecondary goals. Examples:

Instruction:

• Receive instruction related to applying to school of choice and researching scholarship opportunities. = **I**

• Intensive reading instruction to prepare for postsecondary education. = **I**

• Receive instruction to use assistive technology device. = **I**

• Teach self-monitoring skills related to on-task behavior. = **I**

• Required courses for graduation. = **O**

Community Experiences:

• Investigate youth volunteer programs; open a bank account; visit the mall and food court with a provider to identify stores and meals of choice. = **I**

• Use Community Information and Referral to identify three strategies to resolve a transportation concern. = **I**

• Field trips. = **O**

Related Services:

• Visit potential post-school providers of physical therapy; explore city transportation options. = **I**

• Participate in speech/language services to improve expressive language skills. = **I**

• Identify adult services to support orientation and mobility needs after graduation. = **I**

• Related services will be provided as needed. = **O**

Employment:

• Participate in two job shadow experiences. = **I**

• Work in unpaid position on campus. = **I**

	• Obtain part-time or summer employment (in a position related to the measurable postsecondary goals). = **I** • Complete Vocational Rehabilitation referral and coordinate with DDD to ensure supports are in place to assist with future employment goals. = **I** • Consumer Math; Job Service Skills. = **O** **Post-School Adult Living:** • Learn about expectations for eating in a restaurant; apply for housing assistance; visit adult service providers in the community. = **I** • Meet with SSI representative to determine possible financial benefits. = **I** • Visit three group/supported living programs for postsecondary independent living needs. = **I** • Apartment. = **O** **Daily Living Skills (if appropriate):** • Learn to prepare meals, develop, and follow monthly budget, and (with parental support) select a primary care physician and/or dentist. = **I** • Demonstrate safety skills in the community. = **I** • Hygiene = **O** **Functional Vocational (if appropriate):** • Develop a vocational profile based upon functional information; participate in situational work assessments at employment sites related to student's interest. = **I** • Research job expectations for identified employment postsecondary goal. = **I** • Complete nonverbal modified assessment of adaptive behaviors, career interests, and career skills. = **I** • Retake the ASVAB to improve scores to be eligible to participate in the electronics program in the military. = **I** • Conduct a functional vocational evaluation. = **O**
300.320(b)(2) SF, SASF, DRSF, SCSF	Transition services include courses of study that focus on improving the academic and functional achievement of the student to facilitate the movement from school to post-school. **Student File Review Method:** Look for documentation that transition services include course(s) of study that

	align with the student's postsecondary goal(s). This should include course(s) that lead to a diploma but should not be a generic or general graduation plan. A single course can support more than one MPG. • If there is evidence of a course title that clearly aligns with the student's MPGs (student MPG is to be a chef and "Culinary Arts" is listed as a course), mark this item **I**. • If the course of study only includes courses required for graduation and there is no documentation clarifying how the course(s) support the MPGs, mark this item **O**. • If the courses of study do not align with the student's identified measurable postsecondary goals and/or there is no clarifying documentation as to how the course(s) support the student's MPGs, mark this item **O**.
20 U.S.C. 1416(a)(3)(B) SF, SASF, DRSF, SCSF	Documentation of annual IEP goals that will reasonably enable the student to meet the postsecondary goals. **Student File Review Method:** Review the IEP for documentation of annual goal(s) that is/are related to the student's transition service needs. At least one annual IEP goal that supports each measurable postsecondary goal is required. One annual IEP goal (whether measurable or not) can support multiple postsecondary goals. Examples: **Education/Training Goals** • **Measurable Postsecondary Goal:** John will complete on-the-job training for telemarketing. **Annual Goal:** John will orally read 100 wpm with no more than an average of three errors. He currently reads 75 wpm with an average of five errors. **= I** • **Measurable Postsecondary Goal:** Jane will participate in vocational training with medical and therapeutic supports. **Annual Goal**: Jane will increase tolerance of hand-over-hand assistance from thirty minutes to forty-five minutes during three out of five sessions per week with the occupational therapist. **= I** **Employment Goals** • **Measurable Postsecondary Goal:** Jill will work as a veterinary assistant.

	Annual Goal: Jill will correctly define 90% of veterinary terms found in veterinary technical manuals with the aid of an automatic thesaurus. Currently, Jill correctly defines veterinary terms with 30% accuracy. = **I** • **Measurable Postsecondary Goal:** James will work on a production line. **Annual Goal:** James will follow three-step directions. Currently James is able to follow two-step directions. = **I** **Independent Living Goals:** • **Measurable Postsecondary Goal:** Jaime will live independently in a semi supervised apartment. **Annual Goal:** Jaime will order a school lunch by pointing at items on a communication board with her elbow. = **I** • **Measurable Postsecondary Goal:** Jack will live independently in an apartment. **Annual Goal:** Jack will correctly solve 10/10 word problems related to money. Currently, Jack is able to correctly solve 1/10 word problems related to money. = **I**
300.321(b)(1) SF, SASF, DRSF, SCSF	Documentation that the student was invited to the IEP meeting when postsecondary transition services were being discussed. **Student File Review Method:** Look for documentation that the student was invited to the meeting. • If the student was in attendance or there is clear evidence that the student was invited, mark this item **I**. • If there is no documentation evident, mark this item **O**.
300.321(b)(3) SF, SASF, SCSF	Evidence that a representative of another agency that is likely to provide and/or pay for transition services has been invited to the meeting **after consent from the parent or the student who has reached the age of majority.** **Student File Review Method:** For the current year, is there evidence in the IEP that representatives of any of the following agencies (including, but not limited to, these listed) were invited to participate in the IEP development: postsecondary education, vocational education, integrated employment (including supported

	employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community? If so, was consent obtained from the parent (or student, for a student at the age of majority) prior to the meeting invitation?
	• There is written evidence of consent of parent or adult student **and** clear evidence that the agency was then invited after consent. = **I**
	• There is written evidence of consent but outside agency was not invited. = **O**
	• There is an agency invited but no evidence of written consent. = **O**
	• The IEP team determined that no outside agency was needed. = **U**

APPENDIX E
PROGRAM SUPPORT AND MONITORING STUDENT FORM

Student Form

SSID Number: _____ DOB: _____ Student: _____ Eligibility: _____

Ethnicity: _____ School: _____ Teacher: _____ Monitor: R: _____ V: _____ E: _____

Primary home language indicated by the parent: _____ Language in which the student is most proficient: _____

PEA ✓	Line Item	I-O-U	Evaluation/Reevaluation Description	PEA ✓	Line Item	I-O-U	Eligibility considerations Description
☐	II.A.1	_____	Current evaluation **60-Day**	☐	II.A.4	_____	Eligibility considerations
☐	II.A.2	_____	Review of existing data	☐		☐	Student assessed in all areas related to the suspected disability (including academic, behavior, current vision and hearing status) and for preschool, a CDA **(indicate areas that have not been assessed) 60-Day**
☐		☐	Parent request timeline				☐ Vision ☐ Social/behavioral
☐		☐	Current information provided by the parents				☐ Hearing ☐ Communications
☐		☐	Current classroom-based assessments				☐ Academics ☐ Assistive tech.
☐		☐	Teachers and related service providers observation(s), including pre-referral interventions				☐ Cognitive ☐ Motor skills
							☐ Adaptive ☐ Other _____
☐		☐	Formal assessments	☐		☐	Performance in educational setting and progress in general curriculum
☐	II.A.3	_____	Team determination of need for additional data				
☐		☐	Team determined that existing data were sufficient or determined that additional data were needed	☐		☐	Educational needs to access the general curriculum, including assistive technology
☐		☐	For reevaluation only, parents were informed of reason and right to request data	☐		☐	For reevaluations, if any additions or modifications to the special education services are needed for the student to progress in the general curriculum
☐		☐	Obtained informed parental consent or, for reevaluation only, documented efforts to obtain consent	☐		☐	The impact of any educational disadvantage
				☐		☐	The impact of English language learning on progress in the general curriculum
				☐		☐	Team determined the student has a specific category of disability **60-Day**

Comments: _____

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June 2022

Student Form

Individualized Education Program

PEA ✓	Line Item	I-O-U	Description
□	III.A.1	_____	Current IEP (date: _____) 60-Day
□	III.A.2	_____	IEP review/revision and participants
□		□	IEP reviewed/revised annually (previous date: _____)
□		□	IEP team meeting included required participants (if "no," indicate missing members) □ Parent □ PEA Representative □ Gen Ed Teacher □ Test Results □ Special Ed Teacher Interpreter
□	III.A.3	_____	General required components of IEP are included
□	Goals In / Out	□	IEP has PLAAFP (refer to Guide Steps)
□		□	Measurable annual goals related to PLAAFP
□		□	Documentation of eligibility for alternate assessment, if appropriate 60-Day
□		□	For students eligible for alternate assessments only, short-term instructional objectives or benchmarks
□		□	Current progress report includes progress toward goals (If "out," indicate the missing requirement) □ No description of timeline □ Goals not measurable □ Not done in accordance with timeline □ Not reflective of measurement criteria in goal

PEA ✓	Line Item	I-O-U	Description
□	III.A.4	_____	Individualized services to be provided
□		□	Special education services to be provided (If "out," indicate the missing requirement) □ Not specially designed instruction (SDI) □ No documentation of why SDI is provided by other personnel □ No documentation of certified special education personnel in planning, progress monitoring, or delivery of SDI □ Special education teacher not certified □ Other provider not certified (district only)
□		□	Consideration of related services
□		□	Consideration of supplementary aids, services, and program modifications
□		□	Consideration of supports for school personnel
□		□	Location, frequency, and duration of services and modifications (If "out," indicate the missing requirement) □ Location □ Frequency □ Duration
□		□	Consideration of the need for extended school year
□		□	Extent to which student will not participate with nondisabled peers
□		□	SPED72 matches LRE

C5

Comments: _____

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Student Form

PEA ✓	Line Item	I-O-U	Description
□		□	Team determined the student needs special education and related services 60-Day
□		□	Assessments and other evaluation materials are administered in a language and form most likely to yield accurate information 60-Day
□		□	SPED72 matches eligibility
□		□	A—documents a developmental disability that significantly affects verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction
□		□	DD—documents at least 1.5 SD and no more than 3.0 SD below the mean in two or more areas for a child who is at least 3 years of age but under 10 years of age
□		□	ED—verification by a qualified professional 60-Day
□		□	HI—verification by a qualified professional 60-Day
□		□	HI—documents the language proficiency of the student
□		□	MIID—documents performance on standard measures between 2 and 3 SD below the mean
□		□	MOID—documents performance on standard measures between 3 and 4 SD below the mean
□		□	MD—documents a learning and developmental problem resulting from multiple disabilities 60-Day
□		□	MDSSI—documents multiple disabilities that include at least one of the following: VI or HI 60-Day
□		□	OHI—verification by a qualified professional 60-Day
□		□	OI—verification by a qualified professional 60-Day

PEA ✓	Line Item	I-O-U	Description
□		□	PSD—documents more than 3.0 SD below the mean in one or more areas
□		□	SLI—documents a communication disorder
□		□	SLD—documents a significant discrepancy between achievement and ability in one of the identified areas or failure to respond to intervention (RTI)
□		□	SLD—certifies that each team member agrees or disagrees
□		□	SLD—documents determination of effects of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage
□		□	SID—documents performance at least 4 SD below the mean
□		□	TBI—verification by a qualified professional 60-Day
□		□	VI—verification by a qualified professional 60-Day
□		□	VI—documents the results of an individualized Braille assessment for a student who is considered blind
□	II.A.5	_____	For initial evaluation, the student was evaluated within 60 calendar days # of days over: _____ Reason: _____ 60-Day

Comments: _____

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PEA ✓	Line Item	I-O-U	Description	PEA ✓	Line Item	I-O-U	Description
☐	III.A.5	_____	Other considerations	☐		☐	The student's course of study supports the identified postsecondary goal(s)
☐		☐	Consideration of strategies/supports to address behavior that impedes student's learning or that of others	☐		☐	Documentation of annual IEP goal(s) that will reasonably enable the student to meet the postsecondary goal(s)
☐		☐	Consideration of individual accommodations in testing, if appropriate	☐		☐	Documentation that the student was invited to the meeting
☐		☐	Consideration of communication needs of the student	☐		☐	Evidence that a representative of another agency that is likely to provide and/or pay for transition services has been invited to the meeting when parent consent has been obtained
☐		☐	Consideration of assistive technology devices and service needs				
☐		☐	For students who are EL, consideration of language needs related to the IEP	☐	III.A.7	_____	Documentation of additional postsecondary transition components
☐		☐	For students with HI, consideration of the child's language and communication needs	☐		☐	Progress reporting for services/activities
				☐		☐	By age 17, a statement of rights to transfer at age 18
	Secondary Transition Line Items (III.A.6 & III.A.7)			☐	III.A.8	_____	IEP reflects student educational needs **60-Day** Reason for "O" call
☐	**III.A.6**	_____	**For students 16 years of age or older, documentation of required postsecondary components 60-Day**				
					Procedural Safeguards/Parental Participation		
☐		☐	Measurable postsecondary goals ☐ No evidence of goals ☐ Goal content not postsecondary ☐ Not measurable ☐ Required goal areas not addressed	☐	IV.A.1	_____	Notices provided at required times and in a language and form that is understandable to the parent
☐		☐	Measurable postsecondary goals updated annually	☐		☐	Procedural safeguards notice provided to parents within the last 12 months **60-Day**
☐		☐	Documentation that the postsecondary goals were derived from age-appropriate assessment(s)	☐		☐	All required notices provided in a language that is: 1. the native language of the parent 2. understandable to public **60-Day**
☐		☐	Documentation of one or more transition services/activities that support the postsecondary goal(s)				

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Comments:_____

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PEA ✓	Line Item	I-O-U	Description	Referral	Additional Data	Eligibility	Initial Placement	IEP/FAPE	Suspension/ Expulsion
☐	IV.A.2	_____	PWN provided at required times and contains required components	Implementation Date:	Implementation Date:	Implementation Date:	Implementation Date:	Implementation Date:	Implementation Date:
				PWN Provision Date:	PWN Provision Date:	PWN Provision Date:	PWN Provision Date:	PWN Provision Date:	PWN Provision Date:
☐		☐	PWN provided to parents at required times in the last 12 months						
☐		☐	For PWN, a description of the action proposed or refused by the PEA						
☐		☐	For PWN, explanation of why the agency proposed or refused to take the action						
☐		☐	For PWN, description of any options considered and why these options were rejected						
☐		☐	For PWN, description of evaluation procedures, tests, and records used as a basis for the decision						
☐		☐	For PWN, description of any other relevant factors						
☐		☐	For PWN, if the notice is not an initial referral for evaluation, a statement of how a copy of the procedural safeguards can be obtained						
☐		☐	For PWN, sources to obtain assistance in understanding the notice						

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Comments:_____

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June 2022

148

PEA ✓	Line Item	I-O-U	Description
☐	IV.A.3	_____	Discipline procedures and requirements followed
☐		☐	Notified parent on the same date the disciplinary decision was made
☐		☐	If a change in placement occurred, the IEP team conducted a review within 10 school days to determine the relationship between the student's disability and behavior
☐		☐	If the IEP team determined that behavior was a manifestation of the student's disability, an FBA was conducted and a BIP implemented or, if already in place, a BIP reviewed and modified, as necessary **60-Day**
☐		☐	If the IEP team determined that behavior was a manifestation of the student's disability, the student was returned to placement from which the student was removed, unless the parent and PEA agreed to a change of placement **60-Day**
☐		☐	For suspension or IAES placement, student continued to be provided FAPE, including services and adaptations described in the IEP **60-Day**

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Comments:_____

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June 2022

149

APPENDIX F
FRAME OF REFERENCE TRAINING OUTLINE (ORIGINAL)

1. Provide a process overview to give the observers the big picture.

- Purpose of observations.
- Frequency and length of observations.
- Use of pre- or post-conferences, collection of artifacts.
- How results will be used.
- Feedback to person being evaluated.
- Coaching/assistance for performance improvement.
- Goal setting.
- Administrative consequences for good and poor performance.

2. Explain the rating dimensions (standards of performance & rubrics).

- Review rubrics.
- Explain how rubrics are consistent with or represent organization's vision of good practice.
- Discuss questions about concepts or wording.

3. Help raters identify and put aside their own biases.

- All observers bring beliefs about what good teaching looks like, which can influence what they see and how they evaluate it.
- Explain that observers need to be able to separate these beliefs from the observation, especially when observing a different style, level, or subject of practice.
- Have observers discuss their beliefs and implicit theories of practice.
- Ask them how their beliefs and implicit theories might influence how they record and evaluate evidence.
- Warn observers to be aware of potential biases and to focus on and rate using the specific definitions and explanations of the rating scale.

4. Explain common rater errors to be aware of and avoid.

- Similarity—rating influenced by how similar the observed classroom or school is to yours, how similar the practice observed is to yours, or how similar the person being observed is to you.
- Leniency—rating higher than deserved to give the person the "benefit of doubt."
- Halo—rating on one dimension determined by rating on another.
- Central tendency—rating everyone in the middle; often due to "anchoring" on the middle level by assuming that everyone is average (or proficient) unless there is a lot of evidence, he/she is not.
- Consistency/confirmation—looking for evidence for pre-judgment or a judgment based on one's initial impression.
- Context effects—performance of peer group influences ratings.

5. Describe the process for decision-making.

- Emphasize separating the observation (or other evidence collection) from the judgment about the level of practice (which is based on comparing the evidence to the rubric or rating scale).
- When taking notes, record what was observed in behavioral terms.
- Do not rate while observing.
- Review notes after finishing observation; highlight evidence that is relevant to each dimension.
- Compare performance observed to the rubric or rating scale, not to other performers.
- Respect the rubric over your gut feeling. (Don't rely on "I know good teaching when I see it.")
- Evaluate based only on the evidence collected: if no evidence, make no inference.
- Where evidence is mixed on whether observed performance meets the requirements for rubric level, base decisions on the predominance of evidence. If a substantial majority of the evidence supports rating at a specific level, choose that level rather than the level below.
- Avoid anchoring— assuming the performance is satisfactory or proficient unless there is evidence to the contrary.
- Rate performance on each dimension or standard separately.
- Try not to compensate for a near miss on one dimension with a generous rating on another.

6. Have observers practice observing and recording evidence; discuss and provide feedback to observers.

7. Have observers practice connecting evidence recorded from the observation to performance dimensions.

- Discuss questions about what performance standards or dimensions cover.
- Review rubrics: what am I looking for?
- Review notes/artifacts and identify evidence related to rubric dimensions.

8. Have observers practice interpreting the rubrics. Identify the specific rubric language that differentiates between different performance levels.

- Discuss questions observers may have about the interpretation of rubric language.
- Review rating techniques and conventions (e.g., how a word like "consistently" is to be
- interpreted).
- Practice rating using videos, written scenarios, or live observations.
- Have observers share ratings, discuss reasons for ratings; trainer then provides feedback to observers on how well they are doing.

- Repeat for all rubric dimensions or standards.

9. Rater training may be followed by a "certification exercise" in which evaluators must match the ratings of videos, observations, or artifacts done by expert jury in order to be allowed to do assessment in the field. Usually some threshold is set, such as 75% absolute agreement with the experts. Trainees who fail are retrained. Even detailed rubrics, trained raters, and good evidence will not make performance assessment a completely objective process. Some professional judgment will always be called for in assessing performance in professional jobs. The goal of rater training is not to eliminate professional judgment but to guide and focus it. This includes developing a shared mental model of good performance first among the observers and then among the educators being observed.

APPENDIX G
MODIFIED FRAME OF REFERENCE TRAINING OUTLINE

1. Provide a process overview to give the observers the big picture.

- Purpose of training.
- How data is used.
- Feedback to PEAs.
- Coaching/assistance for performance improvement.
- Goal setting – mutually agreed upon.

2. Explain the rating dimensions (standards of performance & rubrics).

- Review Guide Steps for each component.
- Examine each component within legal sources (state, federal law, and federal guidance).
- Discuss questions about concepts in the regulations or wording within the Guide Steps.

3. Help raters identify and put aside their own biases.

- All observers bring beliefs about what compliant documentation looks like, which can influence what they see and how they review it.
- Explain that monitors need to be able to separate these beliefs from the documentation, especially when reviewing a different style or format.
- Have monitors discuss how beliefs affect file reviews with a group activity.
- Ask them how their beliefs might influence how they record and evaluate documentation.
- Warn observers to be aware of potential biases and to focus on and review the documentation using the regulations and Guide Steps.

4. Explain common rater errors/biases to be aware of and avoid.

- Similar to me —Similarity in age, gender, race, and experience all affect ratings. Even similar work habits, similar attitudes, or similar personalities lead to positive scoring.
- Leniency—The leniency bias is exactly what it sounds like – it means the rater is lenient and is going "too easy" on the person/document they are rating.
- Rater drift - With this, evaluators begin with a level of agreement on observations and ratings, but then gradually drift apart as they begin to apply their own spin to various criteria.
- Strictness – The strictness bias is the opposite of the leniency bias. As you'd expect, it means the rater is going "too hard" on the person they are rating, causing all scores to be very low. This creates an unfair negative representation of the person being rated.
- Pitchfork Bias - The horns effect is the tendency for a single negative attribute to cause raters to mark everything on the low end of the scale. One bad attribute seems to spoil the bunch.

- Contrast Effect - Comparisons can be helpful when making ratings. But the contrast effect is too much of this particular good thing – it causes raters to overuse comparisons when making their scores.
- Halo—The halo effect is the tendency for a single positive rating to cause raters to inflate all other ratings.
- Personal bias - A rater performance bias example might be when a manager evaluates skills they're not good at highly. Or they might rate employees lower for skills that they have mastered themselves.
- Attribution bias – This is one of the most common forms of bias. It is where you interpret the performance of others based on internal beliefs and opinions, rather than external logic and fact.
- Recall bias - Recall bias is a systematic error that occurs when participants do not remember previous events or experiences accurately or omit details: the accuracy and volume of memories may be influenced by subsequent events and experiences.
- Central tendency—rating everyone in the middle; often due to "anchoring" on the middle level by assuming that everyone is average (or proficient) unless there is a lot of evidence, he/she is not.
- Consistency/confirmation—looking for evidence for pre-judgment or a judgment based on one's initial impression.
- Context effects—performance of peer group influences ratings.
- Confirmation bias - The tendency to search for, interpret, favor, and recall information in a way that confirms or supports one's prior beliefs or values. People display this bias when they select information that supports their views, ignoring contrary information, or when they interpret ambiguous evidence as supporting their existing attitudes.
- Recency bias - Often, performance reviews are made with a particular time frame in mind. Perhaps a supervisor is asked to think about the last quarter or the past fiscal year when making their rankings.

5. Describe the process for decision-making.

- When making comments on the file form, use neutral and specific language.
- Avoid carrying on other conversations while reviewing if distracting.
- Review student file and comments to check for errors.
- Compare documentation to regulations not to other PEA's documentation.
- Respect the regulations over your gut feeling. (Don't rely on "I know good documentation when I see it.")
- Evaluate based only on the evidence in documentation: if no evidence, make no inference.
- Try not to compensate for a near miss on one component with a generous call on another.

6. Have observers practice reviewing and recording evidence; role play discussing and providing feedback on calls to a PEA.

7. Have observers practice connecting evidence recorded from the file to schema.

- Review common out and in examples from the field.

8. Have observers practice interpreting the rubrics. Identify the specific rubric language that differentiates between different performance levels.

- Discuss questions observers may have about the interpretation of regulations or resources.
- Practice rating using file samples.
- Have observers share calls and discuss reasons for calls; the trainer then provides feedback to observers on how well they are doing.
- Repeat for all components.

9. A post-file review for individual and group IRR will follow rater training.

APPENDIX H
PRE-INNOVATION OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

1. Please describe your current confidence in making transition compliance calls.
2. Please describe your current confidence in the PSM team making transition compliance calls as a whole. Do you think that the team agrees on how to make transition compliance calls currently?
3. Are there any specific components in transition compliance about which you currently have concerns?
4. Are there any specific components in transition compliance about which you currently feel especially confident in making compliance calls?
5. Please describe your current and past experience related to secondary transition for students with disabilities.
6. Please describe any supports that you have found successful in your time in PSM for improving your ability to make compliance calls overall.
7. Please describe any barriers that you see to making accurate compliance calls overall.
8. Is there anything else that you would like me to know?

APPENDIX I
GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

A – Autism
ADE – Arizona Department of Education
ASV – Annual Site Visit
AzEIP – Arizona Early Intervention Program
CAP – Corrective Action Plan
CC – Correct Call
CEC – Council for Exceptional Children
DCDT – CEC's Division on Career Development and Transition
DDD – Division for Developmental Disabilities
ECAP – Education and Career Action Plan
EHA – Education for All Handicapped Students Act
ESS – Exceptional Student Services
FAPE – Free Appropriate Public Education
FFY – Federal Fiscal Year
FOR – Frame of Reference
GS – Gold Standard
I, O, U – In, Out, Unreported
IDEA – Individuals Disabilities Education Act
IDEA, Part B – 3-21
IEP – Individualized Education Program
IRR – Inter-rater Reliability
LRE – Least Restrictive Environment
MDSSI – Multiple Disabilities Severe Sensory Impairment
MET – Multidisciplinary Evaluation Team
MIID – Mild Intellectual Disability
MPG – Measurable Post-secondary Goal
NSTTAC – National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center
OHI – Other Health Impairment
OI – Orthopedic Impairment
OSEP – Office for Special Education Programs
PEA – Public Education Agency
PSM – Program Support and Monitoring
PWN – Prior Written Notice
RA – Risk Analysis
RQ – Research Question
SEA – State Education Agency
SID – Severe Intellectual Disability
SLD – Specific Learning Disability
SLI – Speech-Language Impairment
SPP/APR – State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report
SPSS – Statistical Package for Social Sciences
TTCT – Targeted Transition Compliance Training
VI – Visual Impairment
VR – Vocational Rehabilitation
WIOA – Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act

APPENDIX J
POST-INNOVATION OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

1. Following the innovation, please describe your current confidence in making transition compliance calls.
2. Following the innovation, please describe your current confidence in the PSM team making transition compliance calls as a whole. Do you think that the team agrees on how to make transition compliance calls following the innovation?
3. Following the innovation, are there any specific components in transition compliance about which you currently have concerns?
4. Following the innovation, are there any specific components in transition compliance about which you currently feel especially confident in making compliance calls?
5. Please describe your current understanding of the secondary transition content provided within the innovation (including in-person and self-paced).
6. Please explain anything that you found especially helpful from the innovation (including in-person and self-paced), if anything, in improving your ability to make transition compliance calls.
7. Please explain anything that you did not find helpful from the innovation (including in-person and self-paced) if anything in improving your ability to make transition compliance calls.
8. Is there anything else that you would like me to know?

APPENDIX K

IRB APPROVAL

EXEMPTION GRANTED

Kathleen Puckett

MLFTC: Teacher Preparation, Division of

Kathleen.Puckett@asu.edu Dear

Kathleen Puckett:

On 12/8/2022 the ASU IRB reviewed the following protocol:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title:	CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT OF INTER-RATER RELIABILITY IN TRANSITION COMPLIANCE
Investigator:	Kathleen Puckett
IRB ID:	STUDY00017083
Funding:	None
Grant Title:	None
Grant ID:	None
Documents Reviewed:	• Heather Raithel IRB Innovation Description.pdf, Category: Other; • Heather Raithel IRB Protocol (3) (1).docx, Category: IRB Protocol; • Heather Raithel IRB Research Plan.pdf, Category: Other; • Heather Raithel IRB Student Form .pdf, Category: Other; • Heather Raithel IRB Surveys.pdf, Category: Other; • Heather Raithel IRB Transition Compliance Guide Steps.pdf, Category: Other; • Heather Raithel Recruitment Consent Letter IRB (2).pdf, Category: Consent Form; • Permission from ADE to conduct study, Category: Other;

The IRB determined that the protocol is considered exempt pursuant to Federal Regulations 45CFR46 (2)(i) Tests, surveys, interviews, or observation (non-identifiable), (2)(ii) Tests, surveys, interviews, or observation (low risk) on 12/8/2022.

In conducting this protocol you are required to follow the requirements listed in the INVESTIGATOR MANUAL (HRP-103).

If any changes are made to the study, the IRB must be notified at research.integrity@asu.edu to determine if additional reviews/approvals are required. Changes may include but not limited to revisions to data collection, survey and/or interview questions, and vulnerable populations, etc.

Sincerely,

IRB Administrator

    cc: Heather
           Raithel

  Heather Raithel

APPENDIX L
ACQUISITION OF EXPERTISE

Stage	Characteristics	Instructional Strategies
1 - Novice	Follows the rules and plans Acquired information as a prerequisite to learning Does not feel responsible except for following the rules Has no discretionary judgment Spends time remembering information Attempts to conform behavior to the rules Learning is context-dependent	Provide basic and straightforward cases with no extraneous information Provide appropriate feedback Balance freedom with step-by-step directions Emphasize basic knowledge that underpins situations Help learners organize their knowledge (tables, concept maps) Help learners prioritize information importance Put learning in context Help learners discriminate features of situations
2 – Advanced Beginner	Rules and recall of basic information become more automatic Begins to see the contextual features of learning Information remains in silos Does not always see the big picture Increasing comfort making decisions for situations they have seen before Difficulty differentiating between pertinent and non-pertinent information Can provide partial solutions to unfamiliar or complex situations Has anxiety about decision-making Still looks for short-term goals	Manage student anxiety Provide increasingly complex scenarios that require integration of extraneous information Review subtle points and trends Make connections between information Focus on determining "why" decisions are made Provide specific and targeted feedback Expose the learner to uncommon cases
3 - Competent	Starts to see how decisions and actions relate to long-term goals Develops conscious and deliberate planning Follows a consistent routine and procedure and develops guidelines Can make decisions with new problems Develops emotional reactions to outcomes of decisions	Provide supportive coaching Manage student emotions Provide authentic and complex learning experiences Encourage explanation of "why" decisions are made and follow through in gut reactions Encourage self-reflection with a focus on continuous quality improvement Balance supervision with autonomy Hold learners accountable for their decisions They should be "asked" not "told" what to do
4 - Proficient	Increased sense of responsibility and confidence Clearly and quickly sees what is relevant and irrelevant Perceives appropriate deviations from normal rules or patterns Anchors solving new problems in the context of prior experience Deep understanding of rules, theories, and alternative options Decision-making less labored, more automatic and starts to develop intuition	Provide complex and unique learning experiences Identify teachable moments Focus on continuous quality improvement through self-reflection Support learner to build confidence and begin to trust their intuition
5 - Expert	Thinks intuitively No longer relies on rules, guidelines, or principles Analytical approaches used in novel situations or when problems occur Has responsibility for self, others and the environment	Continual domain-specific development Focus on teaching others or discovery of new knowledge Improvement comes from sharing, seeking a deep understanding, and being challenged by others.

Persky and Robinson (2017) adapted from Dreyfus & Dreyfus (2005)