

## BOOK REVIEWS

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**Ernest L. Pancsofar, PhD**

*Pancsofar, Steere & Wood  
Columbia, Connecticut*

*The two publications reviewed here by Dan Steere complement each other well. In the first, Paul Wehman continues to show the direction for educators to follow by identifying the key elements of a successful transition from school to adult activities. Underlying this transition process is the need to support each individual's vision of the future with a support plan that adequately details the responsibilities of professionals, family members, the student, and members of the community. Then, Dale DiLeo provides a resource to assist us in one of the critical planning phases of this transition: Reach For A Dream represents the type of guide needed to operationally implement the recommendations in Wehman's book. More practitioner-based resources need to be developed that directly relate to the essential elements he describes in Life Beyond The Classroom.*

### **LIFE BEYOND THE CLASSROOM: TRANSITION STRATEGIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**

**Paul Wehman, Ed.**

*Baltimore, Maryland, Paul Brookes, 1992.*

Paul Wehman continues to be a pioneer in the area of transition from school to adult life for people with disabilities. In *Life Beyond the Classroom*, he updates the status of and advances in effective practices in transition services that have occurred since the publication of his 1988 book on transition, also published by Paul Brookes. Notably, much has happened in the intervening five years in conceptualizing and implementing effective transition services. For this reason, the text is indispensable to those involved in assisting individuals with disabilities to make the transition to inclusive community environments.

#### **General highlights**

- This book documents changes that have occurred in thinking about issues of transition during the past five years.

- The introductory sections deal with past and current models of transition planning. This provides a historical basis for appreciating the recent changes in career development.
- Specific chapters are included that address the transition for people with severe cognitive disabilities, students with physical disabilities, and other specific disabilities. Although the overall focus of the book is generic to all students, these chapters focus on the unique issues that may arise with students who experience these additional challenges.
- The introductory sections deal with past and current models of transition planning. This provides a historical basis for appreciating the recent changes in career development.
- Specific chapters are included that address the transition for people with severe cognitive disabilities, students with physical disabilities, and other specific disabilities. Although the overall focus of the book is generic to all students, these chapters focus on the unique issues that may arise with students who experience these additional challenges.
- Changes in legislation, particularly the passage of IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) PL 101-476, are detailed and discussed in terms of changes in transition programming.
- Critical issues for the 21st century are included to highlight the evolving nature of effective transition services.

#### **Specific areas of excellence**

- A recurrent theme is the focus on local community change as the locus for transition services. This orientation emphasizes the point that schools cannot rely on adult service funding agencies to assume the full responsibility for supporting students with disabilities. Instead, coalitions of local community leadership need to work together on behalf of their local graduates to enhance success for all students.
- Wehman has done an excellent job combining practical, usable information with a strong philosophical base. In particular, the primary emphasis in this text is on facilitating community inclusion for all students, not just for those

who present fewer challenges. The intent of effective transition is clearly for all citizens, including those with disabilities.

- Transition services for people with disabilities are related to the broader context of transition to adulthood for any student. This orientation emphasizes the similarities among people with and without disabilities as well as the commonality of challenges they may encounter.
- “The student or family (i.e., the customer) is usually right. Listen to the student. Listen to the family. What are they telling you?” (pp. 18–19). A message often repeated in the text is to find a humbler role for professionals in which they can facilitate effective transitions if they listen to the dreams and aspirations of the people they support. In addition, the changing role of professionals is addressed to highlight that they are no longer providers of support but connectors to other sources of local community support.

#### **Areas in which this publication could be enhanced**

- One concern about this book is its accessibility for families and other community leaders. It would be wonderful if the contents of this book could be reformatted to look and read less like a college text and more like a publication that could be read by parents who advocate on behalf of their son or daughter.

#### **Common threads**

- Transition is a collaborative responsibility of all parts of local communities, not just one segment of those communities.
- Transition services should be driven by a vision of full inclusion in community life for all graduates.

#### **Recommended rehabilitation professionals**

- This resource is invaluable to rehabilitation professionals in clarifying not only the “how to’s” of effective transition services, but also the scope of and vision for the highest quality services.

*Daniel E. Steere, PhD  
Transition Specialist*

*EASTCONN Regional Education Service Center*

## **REACH FOR A DREAM! DEVELOPING INDIVIDUAL SERVICE PLANS FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

**Dale DiLeo**

*Nashua, New Hampshire,  
Training Resource Network, 1991.*

Dale DiLeo’s manual is one of the best and most accessible documents currently available to describe strategies for effective planning. While relatively brief and easy to read, *Reach for a Dream* addresses the important and challenging issues of developing service plans that truly reflect a vision of lifestyle success for focus people. This booklet will be extremely valuable to many readers, including parents, consumers, and community members, as well as rehabilitation professionals.

#### **General highlights**

- This booklet focuses strongly on the values that should direct service plans. In particular, the value of community inclusion is an underlying theme.
- An excellent overview of lifestyle planning strategies is offered to help readers consider these processes as the most useful components in conducting an assessment of focus individuals.
- A comprehensive personal profile that emphasizes the capabilities and strengths of an individual is essential to effective planning. Numerous examples of profile excerpts are provided to highlight the author’s suggestions and recommendations.
- Personal futures statements are provided as essential elements in setting the direction for service planning.
- The specifics of writing measurable objectives and/or developing action plans are presented to alert readers to the connections among the components of a current profile, a vision of future success, and short-term teaching objectives.

**Specific areas of excellence:**

- Clarifying the relationship between futures or lifestyle planning approaches and mandated individual service plans is an ongoing challenge. This resource provides one of the best clarifications of this relationship and includes practical suggestions for making it work.
- The clear statement of values on which service planning should be based is excellent. The thorough explanation of this philosophic base alone makes this booklet important for people involved in service planning.
- The format of this booklet is appealing, and it is easy to read and relatively brief. Quotes and excerpts are provided throughout to emphasize key points.
- DiLeo cautions professionals not to reject each individual's dreams as unrealistic, but to listen and assist people in approaching the realization of their visions of success.
- A process is presented for selecting content for instruction based on overall visions of future success. This section is clear and practical. Most important, this section describes a process for developing objectives that are relevant to the future success of that individual.
- The section on developing goals and objectives related to challenging behaviors is excellent. DiLeo clearly summarizes the need to focus on lifestyle enhancement, not just behavior reduction.

**Areas in which this publication could be enhanced**

- Readers should be cautious about potential efforts to "institutionalize" lifestyle planning approaches, which are so dependent on an atmosphere of collaboration for future success. This caution must be strongly stated so that the same pressures that have resulted in so many poor support plans do not have a similar impact on the lifestyle planning component. DiLeo does provide brief summaries of "Characteristics of Effective Service Plans" and "Features to Avoid in Service Plans." Readers should pay particular attention to these recommendations.

**Common threads**

- Service plans should directly relate to the vision of future success of individuals and be based on clear guiding principles, notably the inclusion of all citizens in their local communities.
- More traditional approaches to assessment and service planning have too often failed to help people achieve an improved lifestyle.

**Recommended usefulness for rehabilitation professionals**

- This resource should be on the required reading list for all rehabilitation professionals.

*Daniel E. Steere, PhD  
Transition Specialist*

*EASTCONN Regional Educational Service Center*