



NLTS2 Update

Summer 2004



The National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS2) is an exciting study being conducted for the U.S. Department of Education. It includes more than 11,000 youth nationwide who were ages 13 through 16, receiving special education, and in at least the seventh grade when the study began in the 2000-2001 school year. We are following the progress and life experiences of these youth by collecting information from parents, youth, and schools at various points over 9 years. The result of this important study will be a national picture of the experiences and achievements of young people with disabilities that will guide future educational policy and programs, and ultimately will help youth achieve success in adult life. Thank you to the thousands of parents, teachers, school staff, and youth who have taken the time to be part of this study by filling out a survey or answering questions during interviews. We greatly appreciate your efforts.

Data Collection Update

We are now completing our second round of data collection for NLTS2. This round of data collection included the following activities:

Parent and youth interviews began in the spring of 2003 and ended in the fall. Parents were asked to update us on the recent experiences of their youth and on their family life. We also contacted youth who were able to complete a telephone interview or a mail questionnaire about their experiences.

Student assessments began in winter 2004 and will end this summer. These face-to-face assessments/interviews of youth 16 to 18 years old provide information about students' academic performance, self-advocacy skills, and attitudes toward school and learning. Professionals were hired and trained to arrange and conduct these assessments. Many experienced field assessors returned for this round of assessments.

School data collection was conducted in the 2003-2004 school year. To avoid overburdening teachers and principals with study activities, we recruited study coordinators. At each school attended by a study participant, district and school staff were asked to select someone to be a point of contact for the study. These school site study coordinators updated NLTS2 on student participant enrollment, distributed surveys to teachers, and provided transcripts. Coordinators or their schools receive stipends as a "thank-you" for their effort and time.

Teachers completed surveys about students in the study. The **Teacher Survey** provides information about students' instructional goals, classroom experiences, assessments, accommodations, social adjustment, and educational progress in general education academic classrooms. The **School Program Survey**, completed by the school staff member who knows each student's school program best, provides information about the student's placement, program, and progress.



NLTS2 is conducted by SRI International, 333 Ravenswood Ave., Menlo Park, CA 94025

Recent Findings from NLTS2

Below are a few of the interesting findings regarding the school experiences of students from the first round of school surveys and some comparison findings from the original NLTS, conducted from 1987 to 1993. Full reports can be found at www.nlts2.org.

In what types of instructional settings do students take their classes?

Looking at students' overall school programs in 2001-2002, it is clear that most students take classes in both general and special education settings. Although more than one-fourth of students (27%) take classes only in general education settings and 9% take classes only in special education settings, nearly two-thirds of students take courses in both settings.

When do most students begin their transition planning?

Transition planning includes the students' course of study and identification of postschool services to assist students in achieving their goals for adult life after leaving high school. NLTS2 found that there has been planning for transition to adult life for almost 90% of all students. Among the students with such transition planning, the percentage for whom planning has taken place increases steadily as they age and approach the time to leave school:

75% of students began transition planning by age 14; by 17 to 18 years old, 96% have done so. The most common post-high-school goals for students with transition plans are attending a 2- or 4-year college, postsecondary vocational training,

competitive employment, and living independently. School personnel report that 58% of students provide some input into their transition plans and an additional 12% take a leadership role in the planning.

How has students' course taking changed over the past 15 years?

Students are much more likely to be taking academic classes than in the past (see table). Mathematics, science, social studies, and foreign language courses have increased the most. For example, in the original NLTS, 62% of students were taking science, whereas in NLTS2, 83% of students are taking a science course.

| Changes in Academic Course Taking by Students | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------|
| | NLTS (1985-87) | NLTS2 (2001-02) | Percentage- Point Change |
| Percentage taking: | | | |
| Any academic course | 97.4 | 98.1 | +1 |
| Language arts | 95.2 | 95.2 | 0 |
| Mathematics | 81.9 | 92.5 | +11 |
| Science | 62.3 | 83.1 | +21 |
| Social studies | 74.6 | 88.0 | +13 |
| Foreign language | 5.8 | 21.1 | +15 |
| <small>Sources: NLTS school record abstract and NLTS2 Wave 1 student's school program survey.</small> | | | |

Again - Thank you for your participation in this significant study!

NLTS2 welcomes feedback!
 Call our toll-free number: 1-866-269-7274 E-mail: nlts2@sri.com
 Visit NLTS2 on the Web: <http://www.nlts2.org>