Despite recent federal legislation outlined in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) reauthorization of 2004 that mandates effective postsecondary transition planning for all students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), students with intellectual disability (ID) continue to experience inequitable postsecondary outcomes, particularly in the areas of postsecondary education (PSE), employment, and independent living (Lipscomb, et al., 2017). It has been well established that one of the most effective methods for improving those outcomes is to develop students’ self-determination abilities, and there is near unanimous agreement within the education community that doing so should be a primary objective during the transition process (Izzo & Lamb, 2002). Students with ID are educated in a variety of settings, from inclusive general education to self-contained classrooms, and as such, self-determination interventions should be provided everywhere that students with ID are found (Izzo & Lamb, 2002). However, educators report a lack of confidence in their ability to provide these interventions because it is rarely emphasized in their professional development (Hagiwara, Shogren, & Leko, 2017).

This study will examine the importance of self-determination intervention, options for evidence-based self-determination interventions in each classroom setting, and potential methods school-psychologist-initiated solutions. The findings outlined will help administrators, school psychologists, and interventionists to engage in the systematic implementation of self-determination interventions that can be expected to improve academic outcomes (Lee, et al., 2008; Shogren, Palmer, Wehmeyer, Williams-Diehm, & Little, 2012), school climate (Thapa, Cohen, Guffey, & Higgins-D'Alessandro, 2013), and postsecondary outcomes for all students. Ultimately, this study will assist school psychologists to fulfill the ethical responsibility outlined by the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) to ensure equal opportunities for each student in their school (NASP, 2010a).

## Research Questions

Specifically, this study will explore the following questions:

1. What understanding of self-determination do school psychologists have?
   1. Do school psychologists have knowledge of self-determination as a construct (i.e., skills of choice-making, decision-making, problem-solving, goal-setting, and self-regulation)?
   2. Do school psychologists have knowledge of evidence-based practices in self-determination intervention across classroom settings?
   3. Do school psychologists use self-determination intervention in practice? If yes, what interventions are being implemented?
2. Does targeted professional development improve implementation of self-determination curricula?
   1. Have school psychologists received training in the implementation of self-determination interventions across classroom settings?
   2. Does professional development in the area of self-determination correlate with the utilization of self-determination intervention?
   3. Does professional development in the implementation of self-determination intervention correlate with school psychologists’ self-reported confidence in their ability to consult regarding the implementation of such interventions?

# Methodology

This is a survey design study aimed at practicing school psychologists regarding their knowledge of the importance of self-determination for postsecondary goal attainment, their familiarity with evidence-based self-determination interventions across classroom settings, the training that they have received regarding self-determination interventions across classroom settings, and their schools’ current use of self-determination interventions across classroom settings. Data analysis will be comprised of a mixture of descriptive statistics and regression analysis. Results of this study hope to inform the root causes of inequitable postsecondary outcomes for students with ID, while demonstrating an area for growth in the field of school psychology.

## Participants and Procedures

The target population for this study is all practicing school psychologists in the United States. For the purposes of this study, “practicing school psychologists” refers to school psychologists who actively worked in middle schools or high schools for at least two-days-per-week at the time of the distribution of the survey. The sampling frame used to access practicing school psychologists will be the email listservs of state-based school psychologist associations. The specific inclusionary criteria for participants are as follows: (a) they must be a currently practicing school psychologist and; (b) they must be actively working, at least two-days-per-week, in a middle school or high school. Exclusionary criteria include the following: (a) the participant did not receive graduate training in school psychology; (b) the participant is no longer practicing school psychology; (c) the participant does not work in either a middle school or high school and ; (d) the participant works less than two-days-per-week.

This nonprobability convenience method (Fowler Jr., 2014) of sampling was selected due to the potential that distributing the survey through state school psychologist association email listservs will be the best way to reach the greatest amount of practicing school psychologists. To complete this sampling procedure, the NASP delegates of each state association will be contacted and provided with a solicitation email message to be distributed to the members of their state associations. A recent investigation into survey response rates for a survey distributed via email to a national sample of school psychologists yielded a 38% response rate (Castillo, Curtis, Brundage, March, & Stockslager, 2014). Due to this relatively low anticipated response rate, the researcher will take two recommended steps for improvement. First, the researcher will emphasize in the solicitation email that the survey has significant value for helping school psychologists to improve the postsecondary outcomes for students with ID, explain how the results of the survey will be applied to practice, and emphasize the researcher’s affiliation with the University of Denver (DU; Fox, Crask, & Kim, 1988; Rogelberg, Fisher, Maynard, Hakel, & Horvath, 2001). In addition, the researcher will use the strategy of incentive provision, by making a $1 donation to AAIDD for each of the first 120 respondents.

Before completing the survey, individuals will be required to complete a consent form acknowledging the purpose of the study, voluntary nature of their participation in the study, the potential risks involved, expected completion time, confidentiality, and contact information of the researcher and dissertation chair. This study will aim for a total of at least 111 individuals to complete the survey; this is based on G\*power analysis for a linear multiple regression that aimed to achieve a moderate-to-large effect size (0.5) and significance of *p<*.05. The effect size and significance tested in the G\*power analysis were selected because they are common parameters in the social sciences (Cohen, 1988; Zint, 2018).