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This year I was lucky to have a whole class period dedicated to transitions. The first month and a half of the semester we really focused on the students' strengths, preferences, and interests as well as what they needed to work on. I had the students set a goal for what area they would like to improve upon and they set up a plan or how to reach that goal. Once we had moved onto the finance unit, I still had students reflect on their goal they set in the beginning of the semester, and had them evaluate whether they were on track. If they were not, I helped them to revise their action steps. We are now finishing up the semester and doing final reflections. Most of them were still on track to meeting their goals they set. This is something that can easily transfer to a general education class as well. I appreciated in this weeks' materials how they said that it is most effective to teach self-determination through the curriculum in place rather than just in isolation. Next year, I may not have the transitions hour, but that does not mean the students can still continue to grow in self-determination. I also really am proud of the fact that in second semester, I was able to have the majority of the students lead a portion (if not the whole) of their IEP meeting. Students chose their format: script or powerpoint and delivered during the meeting. Parents were very impressed and the meetings definitely had a different tone than in previous years. Also, my building administrators were very pleased with the "new way" and saw the students in a totally new light in terms of what they go through every day.

Culture has an integral role in the students' self-determination. The reading says that in most CLD students, it is the family's goals that are valued higher than the student's. I definitely have seen this ring true with my CLD students. Their main goal is to always help their family or to be a role model for their younger siblings. I have also seen it work in a sense where the parents inhibit the students' levels of self-determination. To clarify, I have had some students who their parents will bail them out or make excuses for their disruptive behaviors or not doing work and as a result the students become dependent on their parent and do not change the behavior. Consequently, these students tend to lack the self-determination skills that some of my other students have developed by being given some freedom. One of the readings mentioned how it is very hard for parents to give students independence; however, it is essential for them to take risks and even fail so they develop problem-solving skills. When working with parents with a different set of values, I always first ask them about their values and why they have them. This helps me to see the reasoning they have and gives me a starting place to open up conversations. Whenever possible, I have the student talk about their own values and how they still reflect the family's, but are different, because their goals are different. My contribution to the discussion focuses on employability skills and how the student needs to learn those in order to reach their personal post-secondary goal. I think discussions are the best way to manage differences, so that everyone can see the why behind the perspective.