



Postsecondary Transition in Rural Communities: A Review of the Literature

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Introduction

- Approximately 7.1 million students live in rural areas and 13.4% of these students have IEPs (Showalter et al., 2017)
- Transition to adulthood is a key element of special education and transition interventions increase the likelihood of positive outcomes (Mazzoti et al., 2020)
- Rural areas have unique transition considerations and not all rural locations are the same. Transition programs should be informed by appropriate research
- To better understand how to meet the needs of students with disabilities living in rural areas we need to understand the current evidence-base for transition as it relates to this population
- No other reviews have examined the literature pertaining to transition interventions conducted in rural communities

Research Questions

- What are the characteristics of students involved in transition interventions in rural settings?
- What types of transition interventions have been conducted in rural settings?
- How do authors define a rural community?
- To what extent do researchers consider the specific needs of rural communities in their intervention designs and study reports?
- What are the effects of transition interventions conducted in rural settings?

Method

- Inclusion criteria for the review were based on Rowe et al. (2020). Studies must (1) involve school-age participants (11-22) receiving special education services, (2) target a transition-related functional skill, (3) utilize an experimental design, and (4) report at least one participant living in a rural setting
- Conducted a keyword search for the word "rural" across studies included in Rowe et al. (2020)
- Searched additional literature published between Jan 2019 and Dec 2021 including grey literature. Refined the results and conducted second keyword search.
- Created codebook and collected data on the included 20 studies
- Conducted a keyword search for rural across included articles and coded the context of discussion of rurality

Results

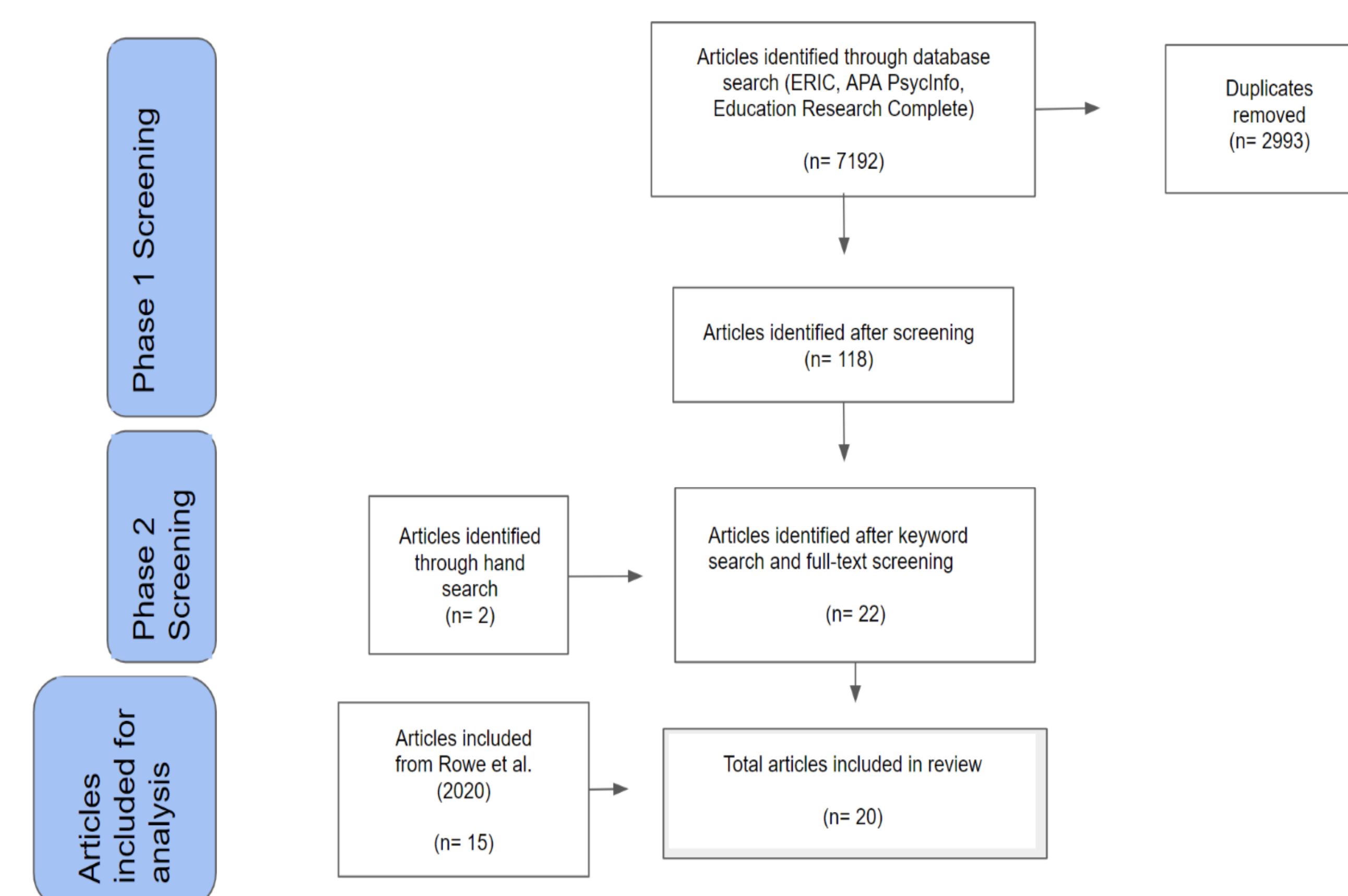
- Interventions fell into three broad categories: General transition packages, Self-determination/IEP participation, and Skill instruction
- 10 articles only referenced rurality related to the setting, 3 discussed rurality in the implications section, 3 included rurality as a covariate with little further discussion, 4 included substantive discussion of rurality with varying degrees of depth
- Only one study provided a meaningful definition of rurality (population size)

Scan here for more results



Conclusions

- Few studies have been conducted in rural settings and almost none of them have an explicitly rural focus
- Few studies relate to employment or independent living skills relevant for rural settings
- Many of the interventions contain elements that are well suited for rural locations, but may require adjustments to more clearly address needs of these communities
- Authors should use consistent definitions for future consolidation of research



Acknowledgements

The Blue Ridge Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities (Blue Ridge LEND) and this project is supported by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of an award totaling \$2,242,875. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by HRSA, HHS, or the U.S. Government. For more information, please visit HRSA.gov.