

University of Central Florida

STARS

Electronic Theses and Dissertations, 2020-

2021

An Exploration of the Intersection of Critical Disability Theory, Multiple Dimensions of Identity, and Institutional Policy on Students' Persistence Towards Degree Attainment

Michael Gilmer

University of Central Florida



Part of the [Educational Leadership Commons](#)

Find similar works at: <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/etd2020>

University of Central Florida Libraries <http://library.ucf.edu>

This Doctoral Dissertation (Open Access) is brought to you for free and open access by STARS. It has been accepted for inclusion in Electronic Theses and Dissertations, 2020- by an authorized administrator of STARS. For more information, please contact STARS@ucf.edu.

STARS Citation

Gilmer, Michael, "An Exploration of the Intersection of Critical Disability Theory, Multiple Dimensions of Identity, and Institutional Policy on Students' Persistence Towards Degree Attainment" (2021). *Electronic Theses and Dissertations, 2020-*. 870.

<https://stars.library.ucf.edu/etd2020/870>

AN EXPLORATION OF THE INTERSECTION OF CRITICAL DISABILITY THEORY,
MULTIPLE DIMENSIONS OF IDENTITY, AND INSTITUTIONAL POLICY ON
STUDENTS' PERSISTENCE TOWARDS DEGREE ATTAINMENT

by

MICHAEL S. GILMER
B.S. Valdosta State University, 2002
M.Ed. University of South Florida, 2005

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Education
in the Department of Education Leadership and Higher Education
in the College of Community Innovation and Education
at the University of Central Florida
Orlando, Florida

Fall Term
2021

Major Professor: Thomas Cox

© 2021 Michael S. Gilmer

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to gain insight into the personal experiences of undergraduate students with learning disabilities and what they identify as impediments to their degree attainment. This study was guided by a conceptual framework connecting the Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity, Critical Disability Theory, institutional policy/practices, and barriers to the persistence of students towards degree attainment. This qualitative study utilized ten in-depth interviews with undergraduate students who identify as having learning disabilities. The interviews were transcribed and analyzed using Moustakas's (1994) model of analysis. Through this analysis, an understanding was gained of how the participants make meaning of their individual identities while navigating the institutional processes to become registered to receive accommodations. In addition to answering the research questions, this study uncovers the emergent themes of Otherness, Rejection-Sensitivity Dysphoria, the impact of social media, and social connections. The findings of this study are not generalizable, but they do provide insight for educators and policy makers who create policies and practices to support students with disabilities in their progression towards degree attainment.

Keywords: identity, learning disability, accommodation, otherness rejection-sensitivity dysphoria, social media, social connection, ADHD, dyslexia

This dissertation is dedicated to Amanda, Nathan, and Nora. You all are my lighthouse giving me direction and keeping me from running aground.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES	viii
LIST OF TABLES	ix
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
Introduction to the Problem.....	1
Problem Statement	2
Research Questions	3
Conceptual Framework	3
Student Experience.....	4
Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity.....	4
Critical Disability Theory.....	4
Institutional Policy.....	5
Persistence	5
Purpose Statement	7
Significance of the Study	7
Limitations	8
Delimitations	9
Assumptions	9
Definitions of Terms	10
Organization of the Study	11
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	13
Introduction	13
Student Experience.....	14
Student Identity	17
Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity	20
Critical Disability Theory.....	21
Social Science.....	23
Student Application.....	23
Institutional Policy	25
Faculty Issues Working with Students with Accommodation Needs	25
Persistence	27
Physical Barriers.....	28
Universal Design	28
Summary	29
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODS	31
Overview	31
Research Design.....	31
Setting.....	32
Population.....	32
Participants	33
Data Collection.....	33
Data Analysis	39
Trustworthiness	40

Researcher Positionality	41
Summary	43
CHAPTER 4: PARTICIPANT PROFILES	44
Introduction	44
Context	44
Participant Profiles	45
Ciara	45
Diane.....	48
Gina	50
Jackie	53
Jeni.....	57
Krystal	59
Linda.....	62
Mary	64
Sara	67
Shannon.....	70
Summary	73
CHAPTER 5 FINDINGS.....	75
Introduction	75
Research Question One	75
Research Question Two	76
Emergent Themes.....	79
Otherness	79
Rejection-Sensitive Dysphoria	83
Age of Diagnosis, Diagnosis, Accommodation, Sex, and Race.....	84
Impact of Social Media and Social Connection	86
Social Media	87
Social Connection	90
Summary	91
CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS	93
Introduction	93
Summary of Study.....	93
Discussion of Findings.....	95
Research Question 1: <i>How do undergraduate students with learning disabilities indicate their disability as their primary identity and do they connect their primary identities to demonstrate intersectionality between their identities?</i>	95
Research Question 2: <i>How do undergraduate students with learning disabilities identify policies/practices as restrictive to their persistence towards degree attainment in higher education?</i>	97
Integration of Conceptual Framework.....	99
Implications and Recommendations	101
Recommendations: School Teachers and Administrators	101
Recommendations: Higher Education Administrators	102
Limitations and Delimitations	104
Recommendations for Future Research	106

Concluding Remarks	107
APPENDIX A: IRB APPROVAL LETTER	108
APPENDIX B: EMAIL INVITATION	110
APPENDIX C: ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE.....	112
APPENDIX D: IRB EXPLANATION OF RESEARCH.....	114
APPENDIX E: EMAIL TO SELECTED PARTICIPANTS	116
APPENDIX F: VISUAL REPRESENTATION OF CODEBOOK FOLLOWING INTERVIEWS	118
REFERENCES	120

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework	6
--------------------------------------	---

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Interview Protocol.....	36
Table 2. Alignment Table of Research Questions and Interview Questions	38
Table 3. Results Research Question 1.....	76
Table 4. Results Research Question 2.....	78
Table 5 Age of Diagnosis, Diagnosis, Accommodation, Sex, and Race	86

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Introduction to the Problem

Following the passing of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (HEA, 1965), higher education provided direct lending to students in financial need, which in turn opened access to students who would not have otherwise had access to higher education. Following the passing of HEA 1965, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 was passed and designed to protect persons with disabilities from discrimination from institutions that receive federal funding. Through the connection of the HEA 1965, all Federal Acts that followed mandated compliance to prevent the loss of Federal Aid as designated in the HEA 1965. Following the passing of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, expectations of non-discrimination based on ability became an interest of the Federal Government and added another layer of compliance within higher education via the HEA 1965 (Adams et al., 2013).

Following World War II and the passing of the GI Bill, higher education experienced an influx of returning veterans entering higher education (Cole, 2009). Many veterans entered higher education with expressed disabilities, and with the passing of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, higher education had a duty to provide accommodation to persons in need (Evens, Broido, Brown, & Wilke, 2017). With Section 504, equal access to higher education was established; however, there was little clarification on what constitutes a disability. Defining a disability was left up to the courts (Evens, Broido, Brown, & Wilke, 2017). The transition was difficult for many students leaving secondary education for post-secondary because of the lack of clarity around what should be considered a disability (Kaplin & Lee, 2013). To clarify the expectations for both secondary and post-secondary education, the

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) were passed in 1990.

Unfortunately, the clarification of expectations within secondary and post-secondary schools only became more confusing for both parents and students as with IDEA, the students were the bystanders for the accommodation while with the ADA, students are expected to self-advocate for their accommodation needs (Evens, Broido, Brown, & Wilke, 2017). Following the passing of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Liasidou (2016) indicates that little progress has been made to curb student-based discrimination practices, as zero-tolerance policies of anti-discrimination continue mostly unchanged from the 1960s. Liasidou (2016) further argues that there is very little evidence that policies that utilize the student discipline process to punish students who engage in discriminatory action against other students are effective in deterring discrimination practices perpetrated against students with accommodation needs.

Problem Statement

With largely unmeasured effectiveness of policy enforcement for acts of discrimination and the increase of persons in higher education with learning disabilities, there is a need for additional research on how students make meaning from their experiences to shape their identities and move forward to become registered to receive accommodations (Liasidou, 2016; Cooper, Cuyet, Howard-Hamilton & Linder, 2016). Students with learning disabilities have to overcome obstacles to become registered to receive accommodations. These barriers may include the maintenance of medical records, access to medical professionals to write recommendations, and an understanding of the required documentation needed to secure accommodations in higher education as seen in Denhart's (2008) research. Once the needed documentation is gathered, students will need to find the appropriate to submit the documentation. The names of the appropriate office can may range from Disability Services, Student Accessibility Services, or

Accessibility Resource Offices. Regardless of the name of the office on at the specific institution, registration is critical for an institution to have an accurate number of students who qualify for accommodation. As the choice to become registered for accommodations is completely dependent on the overt actions of the students in need of support, there is a lack of a complete data on students in higher education who would otherwise qualify for accommodations. Denhart (2008) finds that students who need accommodations but fail to become registered and thus fail to receive them have a higher rate of attrition than students without accommodation needs.

Research Questions

The following questions guided the study.

1. How do undergraduate students with learning disabilities indicate their disability as their primary identity and do they connect their primary identities to demonstrate intersectionality between their identities?
2. How do undergraduate students with learning disabilities identify policies/practices as restrictive to their persistence towards degree attainment in higher education?

Conceptual Framework

The design for this study combines research within five areas to develop a conceptual framework to provide first-hand students accounts of the impact of the students' experiences, the application of the Multiple Dimensions of Identity, Critical Disability Theory, Institutional policy, and barriers to persistence towards degree attainment.

Student Experience

The total population of enrolled students in post-secondary education who would qualify for accommodations through the institution is largely unknown, as students must take action to become registered with the institution before accommodations are applied. As Madaus, Grigal, and Hughes (2014) report, the typical student receiving accommodations has more than one identity (such as race, class, socioeconomic factor) that would impact their college experience. Madaus, Grigal, and Hughes (2014) argue that any one of the identities could create a barrier that would impact the students' overall experience in higher education.

Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity

The original identity model by Jones and McEwen (2000) was reconceptualization by Abes, Jones, and McEwen (2007). This newer framework incorporates the findings of Jones and McEwen (2000) with the addition of a "meaning-making filter" to conceptualize the cognitive complexity that screens external influences on students' identities (Abes, Jones, & McEwen's 2007, p.7). An example of this framework would be how the individual identities of sex, race, class, and gender expression interact with one another to create intersectionality in students. How students understand their social advantages/disadvantages could impact their interaction with others. This framework provides the means to begin to identify and decouple participants' self-reported identities, and how they make meaning of the intersection between their identities.

Critical Disability Theory

In Procknow, Rocco, and Munn's work on Critical Disability Theory (2017), the role systems play in creating processes of oppression is further examined. Through Procknow, Rocco, and Munn's research, which is based upon the original work from Hosking (2008), the concept

of disability is a social construct not defined by biology, but an ability of a person to interact with the environment. Through the application of this theory within the framework, the participants will be able to identify what they perceive as points of resistance or support that impact their ability to progress to degree attainment. The participants may not understand the term critical disability theory; however, they will understand environmental factors such as campus layout with curb cuts, accessible study spaces designed for all students, and accessible course delivery options that support all learners regardless of ability. Furthermore, the participants will be able to identify the difference between limitations they identify as internal (within their own control) versus external, or within the environment.

Institutional Policy

Compliance efforts by institutions to fulfill the expectations of the state, Department of Education, and Federal Government lead the creation of institutional policies to manage, track and report back congruency with federal mandates. Though the regulations seek to force access to underrepresented groups, it is unclear if simply complying with the laws is enough to support student success, or if bureaucratic oversight creates a system confusing for the students the policies were designed to serve (Cooper, Cuyet, Howard-Hamilton & Linder, 2016; Hong, 2015; Liasidou, 2016; Madaus, 2011). As institutional policy impacts all students regardless of ability, all students must pass through institutional policy successfully to demonstrate persistence.

Persistence

Students who receive accommodations have a higher attrition rate than students without accommodation needs (Adams et al, 2013). Research indicates that there is a need to move beyond compliance of local, state, and federal laws of inclusion to providing services to students

with accommodation needs to support their persistence from their first year to second year, as well as support their degree attainment goals (Abreu, Hillier, Frye, & Goldstein, 2016; Mamiseihuli & Koch 2011; Stack-Cutler, 2015).

Connecting these five concepts creates a framework that will indicate how students navigate their experiences (Student Experience) to progress towards degree attainment. As the students connect their understanding of self (Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity) with the external influence of perceived limitations (Critical Disability Theory), all while complying with the Institutional Policy thereby receiving equitable accommodations based on disability. These individual accommodations assist in supporting the academic Persistence of the students (Figure 1).

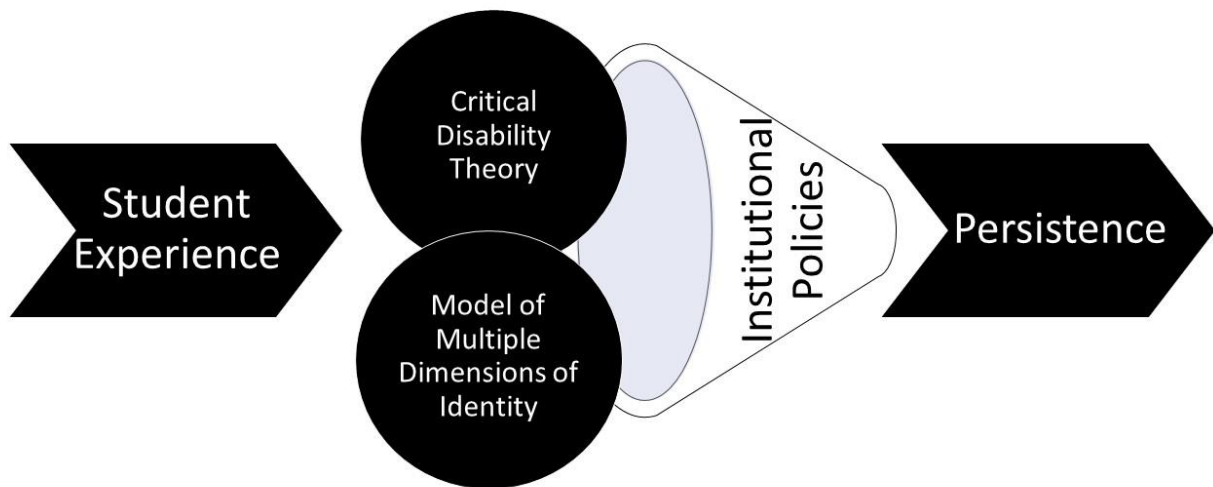


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study is to report the personal accounts of undergraduate students with learning disabilities as they navigate university policies and practices to advance towards degree attainment by demonstrating persistence to overcome obstacles that other students without learning disabilities would not typically experience. Through semi-structured interviews guided by the research questions, the researcher was able to collect the individual experiences of students with learning disabilities and connect common barriers related to institutional policies and practices that impact their persistence towards degree attainment.

Significance of the Study

The study adds to the body of research that Liasidou (2012) highlights as lacking to explain the intersectionality of a person's disability and other identities interplaying to create their dominant identity. Liasidou (2016) argues the need to create inclusive policies that are designed to support student success for both students with and students without disabilities so that institutions can move from an antidiscrimination approach to an environment that embraces connectedness between students and their identities. Abes and Wallace (2018) identify a need to focus on the gap in the current research, which focuses on the intersectionality of identities of students with physical disabilities and learning disabilities. Though Liasidou and Abes and Wallace's research differ, both underscore the same finding: there is little research on the barriers that impact student success for students with accommodation needs. With little research focused on intersectionality for undergraduate students with disabilities, including students with learning disabilities, there is a need to advance research on how undergraduate students with learning disabilities develop meaning within their identities. This additional insight will assist

administrators, as well as policy makers, in the creation of more inclusive policies and practices to better support student persistence towards degree attainment.

This study will contribute personal accounts of students with learning disabilities and their motivations to register for accommodations with Student Accessibility Services. As argued by Adams and colleagues (2013), students who require accommodations are less likely to persist in higher education. Though students with learning disabilities and students without learning disabilities are equally admitted into higher education, students with learning disabilities have a greater likelihood of failing to complete their degree (Denhart, 2008). As demonstrated in both the Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity and Critical Disability Theory, students' disability/ability is a social construct informed by the environment, and the findings will add accounts of how participants understand the institutional policy and environmental factors impacting their persistence.

Limitations

Creswell (1994) describes limitations as restrictions to a study that are not in control of the researcher, but that limit both the results and the generalizability of the findings. A limitation to this study was that the study was designed to be a qualitative research study, which impacts the generalizability. Though there might be inferences that can be drawn between similar institutions, caution is needed when reviewing the results to draw cause and effect between populations and locations. As the participants share their individual experiences, the similarities between their interviews are limited; however, the focus of this study is to capture the individuals' experiences and not to draw inferences to a larger group. Another limitation of this study was the transition from face-to-face to remote interviews because of the COVID-19 virus.

Delimitations

Creswell (1994) describes delimitations as restrictions to a study that are choices made by the researcher and limit both the results and the generalizability. A delimitation of this study is that only undergraduate students with learning disabilities registered with Student Accessibility Services were contacted to participate in this study. This was an intentional decision by the researcher to ensure participation by students. Though students who would otherwise qualify for accommodations sometimes fail to become registered, the researcher was concerned that this unknown population would impact the ability to gather accurate data for this study. Therefore, the researcher's focus was only placed on students currently registered with Student Accessibility Services and not all students who would otherwise qualify for accommodations for a learning disability.

Assumptions

The assumption was made that all the selected participants will have varying degrees of understanding of their identities and how the identities intersect with one another. Although the participants may not think of themselves as students with disabilities, they have received accommodations to assist with academic success. It was further assumed that all participants would understand both their perceived identity connected to their learning disability and the identities assigned by others as it relates to their learning disabilities. Furthermore, all participants are assumed to understand institutional barriers in place that impact their ability to move towards degree attainment. These identified barriers will be linked to the participants' accommodation needs and will be perceived as non-barriers for able-bodied students by the participants.

Definitions of Terms

Accommodation. Actions taken/suggested that are designed to support students who qualify for a modification of the academic setting (physical/structural/practice). To qualify for accommodation, students' needs must be considered a disability as recognized by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Accommodation need. Overt communication from the person seeking accommodation as a requester to another person or the institution.

Attention deficit with hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Defined as a “neurodevelopmental disorder with impaired levels of inattention, disorganization, and/or hyperactivity-impulsivity” (American Psychiatric Association, 2013, p. 32).

Dyslexia. Defined as “a pattern of learning difficulties characterized by problems with accurate or fluent word recognition, poor decoding, and poor spelling abilities” (American Psychiatric Association, 2013, p. 68).

Disability. A student who has an impairment (physical or mental) that would limit academic involvement and can provide documentation of such impairment (United States Department of Labor, 2019).

Identity. Points of reference that persons use to make meaning of self. These points can be made from social constructs (race, class, gender, and disability) as well as physical characteristics (sex, height, and age).

Intersectionality. The process of different discriminatory identities coming together to create a unique experience between multiple unique identities (Crenshaw, 1989).

Learning Disability/Disorder. Defined as specific deficits in an individual’s ability to perceive or process information efficiently and accurately” (American Psychiatric Association, 2013, p. 32).

Policy. Formal or informal practices designed to communicate expectations and to encourage/discourage behaviors.

Otherness. A term used to describe the classification of a person into a submissive social group setting separate from the majority (Staszak, 2020).

Rejection Sensitive Dysphoria (RSD). Persons with RSD experience emotional distress when there is a perceived failure to meet the expectations of others or themselves (Bedrossian, 2021).

Student Accessibility Services. Physical location on a college/university campus where students go to receive accommodations and/or documentation of accommodation needs.

Student success. A subjective term used to describe the completion of students’ goals. For this research, the term will be defined as degree attainment.

Organization of the Study

This research study is organized into six chapters, appendixes, and references. Chapter 1 includes the introduction to the problem, problem statement, research questions, conceptual framework, purpose statement, the significance of the study, limitations, delimitations, assumptions, and definitions of terms. Chapter 2 connects literature to the conceptual framework regarding student identity development, critical disability theory, institutional policy, and persistence. Chapter 3 reviews the research design, setting, population, participants, data collection, data analysis, trustworthiness, and the researcher positionality. Chapter 4 provides the

profiles of the research participants. Chapter 5 presents data to answer the research questions and emergent themes from the study. Chapter 6 provides the discussion of findings, implications and recommendations, limitations and delimitations, recommendations for further research, and concluding remarks.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This literature review includes a review and critique of the research and scholarship on the impact of higher education policies on the enrollment of students with disabilities. Earlier reviews on this topic have examined the history of regulations to mandate change in higher education, which in turn impact the regulations/expectations for how students with disabilities are supported within Title IV funded institutions. Further research on this topic examines the similarities between students with disabilities and other underrepresented social groups to understand the intersectionality of the students' marginalized identities better; however, the combined research does not provide a continuous story from the policy development to the students' experiences expressed through the lens of both faculty and students. Moreover, there is little research on this topic within higher education publications, with most of the published work providing insight and direction for higher education coming from specialized disability-focused journals (Leake & Stodden, 2014).

As such, this literature review provides additional insight into the connection between the student experience, student identity theory, critical theory, institutional policy, and the systematic barriers in place to impede progress towards degree attainment. Further review of this topic is important, as there is a growing number of students entering higher education with expressed accommodation needs (Raue, Lewis, & National Center for Educational Statistics, 2011). With the growing number of students entering higher education with expressed disabilities comes an increased expectation of compliance with current regulations and institutional policies by

students, parents, and political forces (Freedman & Ferri, 2017). Simple compliance with the law without a developed plan for student support leads to student attrition (Leake & Sodden, 2014).

Student Experience

To understand the college experience for students with disabilities, it is first important to understand the laws in place to support their success before entering higher education. Since the passing of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in 1990, all entering students in higher education between the ages of 18 and 22 have only known of compliance regulated accommodations. Leake and Sodden (2014) argue that through simply complying with the letter of the ADA law and providing students only what is required within students' physical setting, the spirit of Section 504 and ADA is typically lost in most institutions of higher education. Though the concept of physical features such as curb-cuts, bathrooms, doorways, door handles, and elevators for wheelchair dependent students are typical in almost all Title IV funded institutions, physical changes are not enough to provide the needed support for student success for non-able normative students (Leake & Sodden, 2014).

Social connection is critical for first-time college students (Yvonne, 2007). As students integrate into higher education, Tinto (2012) argues that there is a need for students to connect for academic goals, vocational aspirations, and connections within both the intellectual and social life of the institution to decrease their likelihood of attaining a degree.

For students with disabilities, obstacles preventing connection to the institution are greater than able-normative students, which increases the likelihood that students with disabilities will fail to be retained in higher education (Leake & Sodden, 2014; Mamiseishvili & Koch, 2011). Research by Schlossberg (1989) highlights this concept with the theory of Marginality and Mattering. With this theory, should students develop an awareness that they are

not fitting into the campus community (academic or social life) the student become self-conscious, which can turn into depression (Schlossberg, 1989). For students who identify as members of a minority group, this depression can become permanent. Schlossberg continues with the theory to explain that this feeling of marginality is typically present when students have changes in their responsibilities, such as entering higher education, changing majors, or starting a new job (Schlossberg, 1989). To counterbalance the feelings of marginality, Schlossberg (1989) identifies five examples of mattering, which include Attention, Importance, Ego Extension, Dependence, and Appreciation. Schlossberg (1989) describes several indicators to detect if students are experiencing marginality, including conflict between the student and the institution, request for additional support, and self-criticism.

Schlossberg's (1989) theory was developed before the passing of ADA and the work of another theorist that understood students with disabilities as both a marginalized population and a component of campus diversity (Leake & Sodden, 2014). Faculty are typically seen as the bridge that can connect students with the institution and reduce feelings of marginality (Getzel, 2008); however, the challenge with faculty is that there is typically little training for faculty to understand issues of disability, which leads faculty to doubt the legitimacy of the accommodation need presented by students. When students see that their needs are not being met by faculty, the students attempt to work with the campus Student Accessibility Offices, only to find that the primary focus of the office is to ensure compliance with Section 504 and ADA (Leake & Sodden, 2014). As shown in Tinto (2012), students need to connect with the institution for their academic goals, vocational aspirations, and connections to both the intellectual and social life to be successful in higher education. For students in need of accommodations, simple compliance with the law fail students in their connection with the institution their social

life (Leake & Sodden, 2014). Though there are requirements that institutionally-funded student organizations are accessible to all students, there is typically little recourse from Student Accessibility Offices outside of sending notice of compliance to the administrator responsible administrator organization, which in turn creates an adversarial relationship between the student with the disability and the academic/social group (Getzel, 2008). Short of creating animosity between the student seeking accommodation to participate in the academic/social group, the student seeking accommodation will often remain silent and fail to participate, which makes them less likely to become connected to the campus and have a greater likelihood of attrition (Getzel, 2008; Leake & Sodden, 2014; Schlossberg, 1989; Tinto, 2012, 2017).

Though identified obstacles are present for students with accessibility needs, there is increased focus on research for this population, as institutional funding is directly connected to student progression (Leake & Sodden, 2014). This increased focus on research is welcome, as most of the body of research focused on measurements of student success, persistence towards degree attainment, and the overall student experience is considered able normative, with little or no focus on students with disabilities (Belch, 2004; Leake & Sodden, 2014; Newman et al., 2011). To better connect students with their institutions of higher education and to combat attrition within this population, Leake and Sodden (2014) propose that institutions realign student support services for persons with disabilities to have increased focus on social integration, create better training across institutions so that faculty and staff are knowledgeable on how to support students with accessibility needs, intentionally integrate the concept of ability with institutional diversity programming, utilize universal design in academic instruction, encourage co-curricular involvement, and support student engagement.

As research increases insights into the experience of students with disabilities in higher education, students must be considered as both individuals and members of a marginalized population, otherwise the unique differences between physical disabilities and hidden disabilities will be ignored and overlooked (Leake & Soddien, 2014). To develop this deeper understanding, it is important to take a critical look at the research to understand the context that was used in the development of student identity theory and how it is used to leverage insight into the student experience.

Student Identity

Early psychological developmental theories of college students trace their origins to the work of Erik Erikson (1959), who pioneered the concept that people progress through stages of psychological development that are connected to both biological and social maturation. Erikson posited that each stage of development begins with a moment of crisis that inspires the individual to grow in cognitive complexity, thus moving the person forward from one developmental stage to another (Erikson, 1959, 1968). Erikson argued that if a person fails to have resolution with the crisis, they will fail to progress to the next stage along the continuum. From Erikson's work, the concept of crisis and conflict are identified as opportunities for self-reflection for individuals to motivate change (Evans, Broido, Brown, & Wilke, 1998). Erikson (1959, 1968) identified a target population within the age range of late adolescence to young adults, as this population has the cognitive complexity to understand changes within their environment and the ability to negotiate the conflict that these changes bring (Erikson, 1959, 1968).

Following the foundational work of Erikson, Arthur Chickering (1969) incorporated Erikson's original concept of developmental progression into seven distinguishable stages, or vectors, of college student identity development. Much like Erikson, Chickering argued that

during moments of crisis, students will be presented with opportunities for psychological progression; however, Chickering included the students' environment as a factor that can influence developmental progression in addition to biological and social maturation (Evans, Broido, Brown, & Wilke, 1998). Though it is easy to view the seven vectors as a checklist for students' psychosocial maturation, Chickering's design is intended to guide faculty in curriculum development to support student psychological development (Evans, Broido, Brown, & Wilke, 1998). As higher education administrators outside of academia discovered, Chickering's vectors can cross from academic curriculum design to broader application to guide students' psychological development outside the classroom (Evans, Broido, Brown, & Wilke, 1998).

Building from the work of Erikson and Chickering, Robert Kegan (1982, 1994) developed the concept of "self-authorship." Like in previous works, self-authorship is a progressive model that outlines levels of cognitive complexity that develop through a person's experiences (Kegan, 1982, 1994). Though both Erikson's and Chickering's models were focused on college student-aged individual development, Kegan (1982, 1994) identified that the progression to self-authorship can be a lifelong journey that begins when people are college age. Within Kegan's work, college-age students are developing an understanding of self, relationships with other people, and the surrounding world (1982, 1994). As individuals grow in their cognitive complexity and understanding of self, relationships with other people, and the surrounding world, the individuals begin to shift their dependence on external causes to making meaning of internal influences that direct the individuals to self-author their understanding of self, relationships with others, and the surrounding world. Though in Erikson, Chickering, and Kegan, there are clear progression points for maturation, both Erikson and Chickering focus on the individual being subject to development from the environment, while Kegan builds on this

understanding to argue that individuals develop cognitive complexity to also create an understanding of the environment (Chickering 1969; Erikson, 1959, 1968; Kegan, 1982, 1994).

In the work of Erikson, Chickering, and Kegan, the assumption of interaction between persons' identities was not a focal point of research. Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989) is credited as the developer of the concept of intersectionality between persons' identities (race, sex, gender, and class). Crenshaw argues that whiteness is assumed in all circumstances when discussing other attributes such as sex, gender, and class, as whiteness is assumed unless noted by the researcher. Crenshaw notes that the experiences of Black women can differ significantly from those of White women when the only difference between the two groups is race. Crenshaw further argues that the assumption that all women in America have similar experiences based on sex may have some validity; however, when considering the differences in discrimination of Black women compared to White women, there are notable differences (Crenshaw, 1989). The connection point between race and sex, Crenshaw identifies as intersectionality.

Though Erikson and Chickering's theories are foundational to the history of student identity theory, the concept of intersectionality of identities is not considered within their research (Erikson, 1959, 1968; Chickering 1969). Furthermore, a critique of Chickering's 1969 publication was the homogeneity of the participants used in the original research to create the Chickering vector theory (Evans, Broido, Brown, & Wilke, 1998). Though the impact of Chickering's work guided practitioners to create institutional programs and opportunities for student development for decades following its publication, Crenshaw's discovery is impactful to the later research guided by Critical Race Theory. Crenshaw (1989) argues that the omission of the intersectional impact of a person denies that person the complexity of their identity.

Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity

Following Crenshaw's work, and building from the concept of self-authorship by Kegan, Jones, and McEwen (2000), applied the concept of intersectionality to explain the intersection between college students' social identities and personal identities. Kegan, Jones, and McEwen (2000), was further updated by Abes, Jones, and McEwen (2007) to explain how college students make meaning between their different identities. Abes, Jones, and McEwen (2007) created the concept of a "meaning-making filter" that is used by persons to gain understanding between the interaction of different components of their identity. Abes, Jones, and McEwen (2007) argue that contextual influences such as family, geopolitical policies, and peers pass through the person's filter to influence the person's understanding of their self-perception. As people have more life experiences, the more complex and less permeable the meaning-making filter becomes for the person; thus, as a person matures, external influences have a diminishing impact on their self-perception (Abes, Jones, & McEwen, 2007).

Another concept that first appeared in Jones and McEwen's (2000) original work and was further explained in Abes, Jones, and McEwen (2007), is the concept that persons' identities are always in flux and never stationary. An institutional understanding of the fluidity of persons' identities is critical when working to create policies that support student progression and student support within higher education. As observed by Crenshaw (1989), to fail to consider the intersectionality of persons' identity is a failure to consider the whole person.

Abes and Wallace (2018) explore the connection between the concept of ableism and students with physical disabilities. The concept of ableism refers to an implicit bias to consider all persons as able-bodied individuals (Garland-Thomson, 1996). Through Abes and Wallace's research, they seek to gain insight into how perceptions of able-normative college experiences

intersect with students with physical disabilities' perception of their disability. Abes and Wallace discovered that, though the participants identified as having a disability, not all participants considered their disability part of their identity (2018). The research also shows that regardless of whether the participants identified their disability as a part of their identity, the able normative bias within higher education assigned the identity of disability to the participants (Abes & Wallace, 2018). Furthermore, Abes and Wallace discovered that the participants' expressed concern was not of the lack of accommodations within the academic setting, but being "objectified as sources of inspiration, being seen as additive identities, being devalued, being perceived as less capable with lower expectations, and having their bodies and stories controlled by others" (2018, p. 557).

Abes and Wallace (2018) argue that institutions with myopic focus physically accessible campuses are insufficient to support inclusion of all their students as campuses must incorporate the "students in their full humanity" (p. 557). As seen in prior research, persons' full humanity is comprehensive of their complete identities, including the intersectionality of identities (Jones, & McEwen, 2000; Abes, Jones, & McEwen, 2007; Crenshaw, 1989). Students will develop a better understanding of self within their full humanity when they are supported by institutions of higher education to encourage students' maturation in managing times of crisis to assist in the refinement of developmental progressing of student identity (Chickering 1969; Erikson, 1959, 1968; Kegan, 1982, 1994).

Critical Disability Theory

The modern concept of critical theory derives from the work of Max Horkheimer (1982), who developed a framework of inquiry that accounted for social factors of interest that influence research and the application of policy through the exercise of power (Hosking, 2008). Before the

Horkheimer framework, there was a lack of clarity in what drove academic inquiry, research, the formation of knowledge, and policy development. Horkheimer argues that to understand a system that is supported through theory, research, and/or policy connection, social forces and interests must be understood and explored (Hosking, 2008). From Horkheimer's framework came the development of critical theories to explore social systems such as law and education, and social constructs such as race, class, gender, and disability. Hosking (2008) argues that the application of critical theory is to explain a concept while working to normalize its application in society.

Before Critical Disability Theory (CDT), the concept of disability was understood through a medical model which assumed that a disability needed to be treated (Leake & Sodden, 2014). Critical Disability Theory challenges the researcher to understand that disability is something contrived through the environment and not a defect of an individual (Hosking, 2008). To further this concept, a wheelchair user may not wish to be identified as having a mobility disability because they can interact and move freely within the environment and live a fulfilling life. However, should that individual be expected to go up a flight of stairs, the difference between walking/climbing and using a wheelchair would be evident. Through this concept, one can understand that the disability is an environmental factor and not a defect of the individual using a wheelchair. Hosking (2008) argues that the concept of disability is a social construct that is not grounded in impairment; disability is considered a subjective equation between impairment, how the individual responds to the impairment, and the social environment in which that impairment is expressed.

Horkheimer (1982), recognizes that scientists are motivated to classify people and maintain systems of privilege. Unfortunately, many justifications to classify people are

developed using pseudoscience under the guise of social science (Feedman & Ferri, 2017). By taking a systematic approach in deconstructing the history of oppression towards persons with disabilities, society can reconstruct a community of support for all members of the community (Procknow, Rocco, & Munn, 2017).

Social Science

Through the historical research of Feedman and Ferri (2017), science has been used as a tool to distinguish groups. Pseudoscience has been used to justify slavery, eugenics, and explanations of poverty. Over time, these distinctions were changed from finding differences to trying to discover the cause of the differences. Feedman and Ferri (2017) categorize two distinct core points for previous scientific discoveries as they relate to the connection between culture and science: the biological markers for race and discovering the biological and neurological roots of learning disabilities. These scientific results are widely accepted without much examination of the methodology. As a result of this approach, Black males have a higher likelihood of being diagnosed with a LD than their White counterparts (Feedman & Ferri, 2017). There is a need to re-norm the assessment tools used to diagnose persons with LDs to gain a true understanding of the population size of students with learning disabilities. As from what Feedman and Ferri (2017) argue, there is a likelihood that the population of K-12 students diagnosed with learning disabilities may not be an accurate picture of persons in need of accommodation in higher education.

Student Application

To further examine how CDT has impacted students diagnosed with learning disabilities, the research of Cirino et al (2002) connected the IQ scores of students identified with disabilities

to the students' family's Socio-Economic Status, then interpreted through the lens of race. Though the results of the study show that both White and Black participants only have a slight variance between their IQ scores, the study had a higher population of Black participants, which could have impacted the results. Lee, Oakland, Jackson, and Glutting (2008) found that White children had lower rates of learning disability symptoms compared to Black children. This research does not change the findings of Cirino et al, but underscores the necessity of reviewing results through a CDT lens to prevent bias of politically motivated science.

Should higher education fail to see how politically motivated science created the myth of the ideal student, the population that will be left out from future enrollment will be the students who are marginalized by social constructs such as race, class, gender, and ability (Liasidou, 2012). Liasidou (2012) goes on to argue that there is a need for further policy development to protect the value of persons with disabilities within higher education. Without the intentional inclusion of the "non-ideal students," higher education will only perpetuate the myth of the ideal student (p. 174).

In 2016, Liasidou argued the importance of reexamining current policies that are in place to manage behaviors within higher education, as they are designed only to support one type of student while punishing marginalized students. Liasidou continues to state that discipline policies are overly critical of populations that are not within the norm, and thereby keep the non-normative population away from power (2016). Liasidou refers to heavy-handed policies like zero-tolerance policies, as they are not designed to make room for the students who are the outliers.

Institutional Policy

After the passing of the Higher Education Act of 1965, institutions of higher education worked to develop policies designed to support student success as mandated by the Federal Government (Liasidou, 2016). A challenge has been that the policies created were ever-shifting to provide additional guidance to higher education based upon what was determined to be a best practice or what was currently accepted as a disability by the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders. Unfortunately, the study of behaviors and disorder diagnoses has not been a historically accurate science, and the policies created were often created based upon the findings of pseudoscience that was racially and politically motivated (Feedman & Ferri, 2017).

Faculty Issues Working with Students with Accommodation Needs

Burgstahler and Doe (2006) argue that faculty have been challenged with how to support students in need of accommodations. Burgstahler and Doe (2006) held focus groups with faculty and students to gain insight as to the barriers in place that negatively impact students getting connected with accommodations. Burgstahler and Doe (2006) point out that at the time of the study, most instructors had little to no training in teaching strategies. Burgstahler and Doe (2006) argue that additional training in effective teaching strategies would assist the instructors in recognizing alternative teaching styles that could impact the delivery of the material between disciplines. Burgstahler and Doe (2006) found that the faculty members had the easiest times creating accommodations for students with obvious disabilities such as mobility or sensory impairments. The same faculty stated to Burgstahler and Doe (2006) that they had the biggest challenges with students with learning or invisible disabilities. Not unlike the results from Getzel (2008), the faculty in Burgstahler's and Doe's (2006) research were frustrated when students requested accommodations, but were unable to describe appropriate accommodations for the

course material. This frustration led to the faculty believing that some students would misuse their diagnoses by requesting accommodations and failing to use the accommodations provided (Burgstahler & Doe, 2006). Conversely to the findings of the faculty, the students who participated in the research stated they had positive experiences working with faculty requesting accommodations (Burgstahler & Doe, 2006). The students directed most of the frustration towards support services such as teaching assistants and disability services staff (Burgstahler & Doe, 2006). The only common complaint from students about faculty was the lack of understanding of the accommodation request, as well as concerns about confidentiality with the disclosure when seeking accommodation.

To further the research of Burgstahler and Doe (2006), Behling and Linder (2017) examined personal accounts to bridge the gap between faculty and the office of disability services. Upon review of the results of surveys sent to Centers for Teaching and Learning at participating institutions, Behling and Linder noted three key findings as negative forces that impede a connection with the office of disability services. The first finding was that the faculty do not see the office of disability services relevant to their needs; second, there is no funding incentive for faculty to provide more than what is required to support students; lastly, faculty do not believe that developing accommodations is their job and would prefer to task Student Accessibility Services with this function (Behling & Linder, 2017). These findings seem to be in contradiction to the finding of Burgstahler and Doe (2006). As the research of Behling and Linder involved reaching out to Centers for Teaching and Learning members through surveys, the breadth of responses may have been more in-depth than the focus group of Burgstahler and Doe (2006).

As the institutional policies change, and so do perceptions of working with students with accommodations, so might students and their need for accommodations change. In general, students' accommodation needs are a function of their environment and not of their identity; however, identity will inform their outlook and understanding of self (Burgstahler, & Doe, 2006).

Persistence

As highlighted in the 2011 findings of the NCES, higher education is experiencing an increase in students attending higher education requesting accommodations. This increase began with the passing of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, followed by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and then by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (Leake & Stodden, 2014). Following this legislation, both K-12 and higher education were expected to support student learning and persistence. In the K-12 educational system, students were identified by the school as needing accommodation; however, once the students graduated from high school and entered higher education, the student was responsible for disclosing and seeking accommodations (Ancil & Ishikawa, 2008). This point is further underscored through the research of Ancil and Ishikawa, who drew the connection that students who were successful in high school in advocating for themselves had an easier time transitioning to higher education, where they had to advocate for themselves to receive accommodations (2008).

The change from K-12 to higher education is further highlighted in Getzel's (2008) research, where it is noted that students practice self-efficacy and advocate for themselves for accommodations. Getzel finds that the trait of self-efficacy is critical for persistence; however, not all students who need accommodation ask for assistance. This finding is supported by the research of Denhart (2008) who pointed out several factors, including the students' desire to try

to progress without accommodations, fear of judgment from both peers and faculty, and a misunderstanding of the appropriate accommodations needed for academic success.

Physical Barriers

Fleming, Oertle, and Plotner (2017) found within their research that, not unlike the results of Behling and Linder, students failed to understand the full scope of support that the office for disability services offers. The students who participated in the research described the design of campus programs and curriculum as being intentional for non-disabled students, with little consideration for students with disabilities (Fleming, Oertle, & Plotner, 2017). Fleming, Oertle, and Plotner (2017) further argued for a critical look at the physical ecology of the campus and how older buildings/campuses are designed or not designed for students with disabilities. Though there is not much that can be done to force a change in old buildings, for new construction, as well as buildings with significant redesign, the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 requires older buildings to be designed to welcome all students regardless of ability.

Universal Design

To ease the frustration reported in Behling and Linder's (2017) research, Getzel (2008) argues for infusing the concepts of universal design within the curriculum. The idea is to provide an intentional design for students of all abilities to be included without the need for further accommodations (Getzel, 2008). Following the passing of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004, higher education has become increasingly interested in different mediums of instruction. In 2002, only 10% of higher education classes had an online medium for instruction, while in 2012, 95% of higher education institutions had an online delivery system for instruction (Behling & Linder, 2017). Though Behling and Linder (2008) argue that online

education is not one-size-fits-all for all types of learners, it does offer support to students who may have a need to study at a different speed than traditional instruction and can provide a closer model to universal design. Some institutions utilize a lecture capture design to support students who are not physically present in the classroom, but would benefit from that style of instruction delivery. Getzel (2008) finds that faculty are looking for more effective ways to instruct students, and the concept of universal design has been seen as a successful professional development opportunity for faculty that helps all students regardless of ability.

The practice of supporting all students within higher education with simple environmental modifications can normalize accommodations for students with disabilities and remove many barriers that prevent students in need of accommodations from having to make the difficult choice to disclose to faculty their accommodation needs (Belch, 2004).

Summary

Through the review of connections between the student experience, student identity theory, critical theory, institutional policy, and the systematic barriers in place to hinder progress towards degree attainment, higher education professionals, students, and counselors can come to a better understanding of the barriers in place that impact students' persistence towards degree attainment. As shown through this review, all five components of the conceptual framework are directly tied together to create an experience for students with learning disabilities. Just as all students in higher education enter with their own experiences that help or hinder their overall success, students with learning disabilities have a few additional layers of intersectionality that can impact their overall success.

The call to action from this literature review is to recognize the progress made from the passage of the Higher Education Act of 1965 to today with regards to inclusion within higher

education, and to motivate institutions to strive to support all students in achieving their full potential.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODS

Overview

This chapter describes the design and purpose of this study as it explores how undergraduate students with learning disabilities receiving accommodations identify the policies and practices that impact their persistence towards degree fulfillment. Furthermore, this chapter will explain and justify the research design, research methods, research setting, population, data collection methodology, interview protocol, data analysis, timeline, and researcher positionality.

Research Design

The hermeneutical phenomenological research design was selected for this study because, according to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), this design is most appropriate for studying emotional experiences as described through multiple viewpoints of a shared phenomenon by participants. Hermeneutical phenomenological research is intended to better understand the participants' shared experiences. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) identify Imaginative Variation as a technique in viewing similar data from multiple perspectives, thus all the prospective together create a more complete description of the phenomenon. With the participants likely having different experiences as they developed their meaning-making filters (Abes, Jones, & McEwen, 2007), this approach helps the researcher have a more complete overall understanding of the barriers the participants have in common that impact their ability to progress towards degree attainment in higher education.

By using Merriam and Tisdell's (2016) framework and understanding of phenomenological research, the approach allows the participants the freedom to describe their understanding of their learning disability and their perceived institutional barriers that they

believe impact their academic persistence. Though the participants had differences in their learning disabilities (dyslexia and ADHD) and differences in their awarded accommodations, the overarching themes of impediment emerged and created a more complete understanding of the participants' shared phenomenon.

Setting

This research took place at a large public university located in the Southeast of the United States of America. The university holds membership in the Hispanic Association of College and Universities, as at least 25 percent of the undergraduate students enrolled identify as Hispanic. Interviews with the selected participants were held between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday online via Zoom to promote social distancing as, during the time of this study, the location for the research moved to remote instruction and discouraged face-to-face interactions. The online medium provided the participants with a natural location to participate in the interview based upon their selection. The researcher conducted the interviews in a secure office to ensure privacy of the participants.

Population

Adams and colleagues (2013) found that an estimated 10% of the population lives with a learning disability. The total population within the targeted radius site of the study includes an estimated 6,600 potential student participants. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics (2016), of 6,600 possible participants, there is an estimated 19% of students registered with Student Accessibilities Services, so the researcher estimated a total of 1,254 potential participants for this research study.

Participants

The researcher utilized purposive sampling of participants registered within Student Accessibility Services. The researcher selected this sampling technique, as the desired participants will be inclusive of all persons registered with learning disabilities. Though there are an estimated 650 million individuals with disabilities living in the world, researchers find it challenging to target a population that is at times hidden (Adams et al., 2013). To focus the study, the researcher targeted participants already registered with Student Accessibility Services, but not necessarily receiving accommodations, to answer the research questions. Furthermore, the researcher also recognized that through the purposive sampling of undergraduate students already registered with Student Accessibility Services, the office would likely already have the needed contact information for outreach to solicit participation for the research study.

Data Collection

The researcher met with the director of Student Accessibility Services to share the research design, research questions, and IRB approval (Appendix A). After meeting with the director, the researcher provided the director with the “Invitation Email” (Appendix B) with an embedded link to an “Online Questionnaire” (Appendix C) to be completed by consenting participants. Based upon the scope of the study, the researcher requested that the director forward the Invitation Email to 1,250 ($N = 1,250$) undergraduate students with learning disabilities currently registered with Student Accessibility Services. The Online Questionnaire was designed to gather additional demographic information to assist the researcher in building participant profiles. After the first email sent by the director to the population, the researcher was able to schedule eight interviews. As the researcher planned to interview ten participants, the director was asked to send another email to the population three weeks after the first email. After the

second email was sent to the population, the researcher was able to identify, schedule, and interview ten participants who qualified for the study.

The researcher was seeking a response rate of 30% (n = 180) fully completed questionnaires. According to Creswell (2008), a response rate of 30% is ideal when researching, through the researcher only received a response rate of 3% (n = 36). As this study is a phenomenological design, a response rate of 3% still achieved saturation. From the completed questionnaires, the researcher gathered general demographic data of the sampled population, as well as identified ten participants to participate in the interview portion of the research study. On the first page of the online questionnaire seen by the participants, the researcher was able to include the IRB-approved explanation of the research (Appendix D).

The participants were selected following the completion of the Online Questionnaire, which prompted them to review the purpose of the study, collect additional data about their experiences, and ensure that all participants would qualify for the study by confirming that they receive accommodations with Student Accessibility Services because of a learning disability. All selected participants who completed the Online Questionnaire who identified as having a learning disability were sent an email requesting them to select a date and time for the interview (Appendix E). Reminder emails were sent to selected participants who failed to select a date and time for the interview until the researcher was able to complete the anticipated ten interviews. The contacted participants were free to select a variety of open time slots throughout two weeks to ensure that the participants were able to find a time that worked best for their schedules. Once a time slot was selected by a participant, a Zoom weblink was sent to the participant with a calendar invitation. Of the 36 individuals who completed the Online Questionnaire, only ten individuals agreed to participate in the interview with the researcher.

During the interview phase of the study, the researcher asked the questions identified in the interview protocol (Table 1). The researcher conducted semi-structured, audio-recorded interviews with the selected participants to gain additional insight into the participants' experiences, understanding of their identity, and understanding of institutional barriers impacting their success in higher education. Though the interviews were semi-structured, the researcher worked to frame the interviews as natural conversations designed to answer the research questions. The researcher created an alignment table to connect the interview questions with the different components of the conceptual framework to assist in future analysis (Table 2). Following the interviews, the audio recordings were transcribed. The transcriptions were analyzed by both the researcher and a co-coder to organize the responses into themes by a predefined code set (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Table 1.

Interview Protocol

Phase	Prompt
<p>Introduction</p> <p>(5 minutes)</p>	<p>Thank you for agreeing to meet with me and participate in this interview. My name is Michael Gilmer, and I am a student working to complete a research study to gain additional insight on students' experiences while in attendance at this University. Please be aware that during our meeting today I will be taking limited notes as our conversation is being audio recorded to be transcribed at a later date.</p> <p>As I shared with you, I am looking to gain additional insight into students' experiences while in attendance at this University. My focus for this interview is learning more about you and what has led you to this point in your academic career. I would also like to learn more about barriers that you believe impact your progression towards your degree or overall success.</p> <p>Please note that I will treat your answers as confidential. I will not include your name or any other personally identifiable information that could be used to identify you as a person who participated in today's interview.</p> <p>Do you have any questions for me before we begin?</p>
<p>Ice Breaker Questions</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tell me about yourself. 2. Why did you choose this institution 3. What type of things are you involved with on campus? <p>*spend time talking with the participants about their experiences</p>
<p>RQ1</p>	<p>The next questions are designed for me to get to know more about you as it relates to this study and may be connected to what you have already shared with me. Feel free to expand further into a question to provide me with more information about you.</p> <p>How do undergraduate students with learning disabilities indicate their disability as their primary identity and do they connect as their primary identities to demonstrate intersectionality between their identities?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How would you describe yourself?

Phase	Prompt
	<p>2. What connections do you believe there are between how you view yourself and being a person with a learning disability?</p> <p>3. What are some other characteristics about yourself that you would describe to help me know you better?</p> <p>4. Do you believe there is a connection between your other characteristics and being a person with a learning disability? Please explain.</p>
<i>Interviewer note</i>	<p><i>Connect for the participant the concepts of identities and characteristics</i></p> <p>5. Please give me an example of a time that you experienced your identities intersecting with one another?</p> <p>6. Do you believe that this intersection provided you with a more complex understanding of yourself? Please explain.</p>
RQ2	<p>How do undergraduate students with learning disabilities identify policies/practices as restrictive to their persistence towards degree attainment in higher education?</p> <p>7. List three policies/practices that you have faced during your higher education experience that you would describe as impactful towards your progression towards your degree.</p> <p>8. Please share with me three challenges you experienced in High School that you believe made your ability to graduate more challenging</p> <p>9. What are three challenges you are currently experiencing that you believe are making your degree completion more challenging?</p>
Final thoughts (5 minutes)	<p>Those are all the questions that I would like to ask you.</p> <p>10. Do you have any final thoughts that you would like to share that you believe would help me know you better and understand your experience here at this institution?</p>

Table 2.

Alignment Table of Research Questions and Interview Questions

Conceptual Framework	Research Questions	Questions
Reconceptualizing the Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity	RQ1 How do undergraduate students with learning disabilities indicate their disability as their primary identity and do they connect as their primary identities to demonstrate intersectionality between their identities?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How would you describe yourself? 2. What connections do you believe there are between how you view yourself and being a person with a learning disability? 3. What are some other characteristics about yourself that you would describe to help me know you better? 4. Do you believe there is a connection between your other characteristics and being a person with a learning disability? Please explain. 5. Please give me an example of a time that you experienced your identities intersecting with one another? 6. Do you believe that this intersection provided you with a more complex understanding of yourself? Please explain.
Policy Development	RQ2 How do undergraduate students with learning disabilities identify policies/practices as restrictive to their persistence towards degree attainment in higher education?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. List three policies/practices that you have faced during your higher education experience that you would describe as impactful towards your progression towards your degree.
Critical Disability Theory and Persistence	RQ2 How do undergraduate students with learning disabilities identify policies/practices as restrictive to their persistence towards degree attainment in higher education?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Please share with me three challenges you experienced in High School that you believe made your ability to graduate more challenging 9. What are three challenges you are currently experiencing that you believe are making your degree completion more challenging?

Data Analysis

Creswell and Poth (2018) indicate that phenomenological research can provide a rich account of a phenomenon that is shared between several individuals. To accurately capture these rich accounts, the selection of appropriate data analysis is critical (2018). In this study, participants sharing their experiences within the shared phenomenon was guided by Moustakas (1994) method. This data analysis was selected by the researcher due to the desire of Moustakas to capture the essence of the participants' experiences within the phenomenon. Creswell and Poth (2018) divide Moustakas model into six phases:

Phase 1: Disclosure of the researcher's personal experience with the phenomenon. During each interview, the researcher shared with the participants the researcher's personal interest in the phenomenon and experiences working with undergraduate students with learning disabilities. The researcher also shared with the participants a personal account of how the passing of the Americans with Disabilities Act impacted their family.

Phase 2: Create a list of significant statements shared during the interviews. During each interview, the researcher took limited notes, but recorded key phrases shared by the participants to assist with the follow-up questions and ensure that the researcher was using the words provided by the participants as they described the phenomenon. The statements provided by the participants were personal and subjective to their individual experiences with the phenomenon.

Phase 3: Connect the participants' significant statements to create themes or clusters. Following the interviews with the participants, the researcher and co-coder reviewed the transcripts and clustered the significant statements to create more uniformity between the interviews while ensuring accuracy in the reporting of the phenomenon as experienced by the participants.

Phase 4: Create rich descriptions of the participants' experiences within the phenomenon.

Following the conclusion of the interviews, the researcher worked to distill the interviews into rich accounts of the participants' experiences within the phenomenon. The distillation of the interviews is recorded in Chapter 4 of this study.

Phase 5: Create a narrative of how the participant came to experience the phenomenon. In the questions asked of the participants during the interviews, the researcher requested background information about the age of the participants when they were diagnosed with their learning disability, as well as their early experiences receiving accommodations. The accounts of the participants were added to the distillation of the interviews recorded in Chapter 4 of this study.

Phase 6: Create a unified description of the participants' experiences connecting both phases 4 and 5. The researcher provided a rich, distilled description of the participants' experience within the phenomenon, connecting significant themes between the participants. The results of phase 6 are recorded in Chapter 4 of this study as part of the descriptions of the participants.

Trustworthiness

To address concerns of trustworthiness within this phenomenological research design, during the interviews between the researcher and the participants, the researcher would member check the responses of the participants by reframing their responses to ensure that the researcher had an accurate understanding of the response to the prompts. There was time for further clarification by the participants, so if the researcher did not have the correct reframing, the participants were able to provide additional explanations to assist the researcher with the accuracy of the interpretation.

Furthermore, the researcher verified the accuracy of the transcribed interviews by sending a copy of the transcripts to the individual participants. Participants were given time to review the transcripts and supply corrections to the researcher before the analysis. According to Sanders (2003), this action is not designed to inform the participants of what was said, but to ensure that the researcher gathered accurate data from the interview. Though the participants were aware that the interviews were intended to be audio recorded for future audio transcription, the accuracy of the transcripts is not error-free. The ability for the participants to review the transcripts is to ensure that both the words spoken by the participants and the context in which the data was delivered is fully captured within the transcripts.

Following the review of the transcripts by the participants, the researcher reviewed the transcripts to identify and connect the responses from the participants to both the research questions and the conceptual framework. Emergent themes that were not anticipated by the researcher were also identified and distilled for later analysis. The researcher utilized a co-coder to review the transcriptions and to connect the responses from the participants to both the research questions and the conceptual framework. The co-coder also recorded emergent themes to be analyzed by the researcher. The co-coder was supplied with an identical blank codebook (Appendix F) as the researcher to document the responses provided by the participants. Following the analysis of both the researcher and the co-coder, the results were distilled and reported within this study.

Researcher Positionality

I am a 43-year-old, male, doctoral candidate in the Higher Education track in the Educational Leadership program at a large southeastern university. I was born in the south, and as a child, I moved to different states with my family due to career relocation and divorce.

Following the divorce of my mother and father, I lived with my mother, sister, and brother from the age of 5 to 15, at which point I relocated to live with my father, who resided in a different state. As a child, my mother developed retinoblastoma, which resulted in her total blindness. Following her divorce from my father, my mother became a software engineer while raising three children. My mother worked to provide all that was needed for our family before the passing of the Americans with Disabilities Act. I grew up in a household believing that my mother's disability was a part of her, but not the part that defined her. Her blindness was an aspect of how she interacted with the world, but did not limit her ability to be a mother who worked hard to provide for her family.

After moving to live with my father, I completed high school and attended a university to receive my B.S. in Psychology, where I later earned an M.Ed. in Higher Education Administration. Following the completion of my degrees, I began my work in higher education. Throughout my work in higher education, the lessons learned from my family remained: compassion from my father and the focus on "who is being left out" from my mother. Both my personal and professional lives are shaped by my family and the belief that the world is a better place when all people are included.

I completed this study because I believe that due to a lack of awareness, students who gave their time, money, and effort are not adequately supported because of ableism bias within higher education. Though my mother's life was changed due to the passing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), I believe that the ADA should inspire all people to strive to achieve more as a society so that everyone is included, as opposed to basic compliance with a law that describes limited scope for compliance.

Summary

Chapter 3 contains the methodology used by the researcher, which includes the research design, setting, population, participants, data collection, data analysis, methods to maintain trustworthiness, as well as the researcher positionality within this study. The hermeneutical phenomenological design was selected for this study to collect the emotional experiences of the participants as they explain how their personal identities intersect with the institutional barriers that impact their progression toward degree attainment. The participants in this study were selected the larger population of undergraduate students who received accommodations from Student Accessibility Services for their learning disabilities. The researcher interviewed the participants in a semi-structured interview to allow conversations with the participants to naturally emerge, while staying focused on the research questions. Trustworthiness within the interview and the data analysis was achieved through member checking, as well as verification of the accuracy of the interview transcripts with the participants. Chapter 4 will provide individual profiles of each participant interviewed in this study.

CHAPTER 4: PARTICIPANT PROFILES

Introduction

This chapter contains the profiles of the ten undergraduate students who participated in this study. The profiles were created using the information provided by the participants on the Online Questionnaire (Appendix B) and information shared by the participants with the researcher during Zoom interviews. The profiles are organized to highlight the background of the participants and the diversity of their experiences while in attendance at the university. Specific questions were asked of the participants to develop a more complete understanding of their journey entering higher education, their experience once enrolled at the university, and challenges they face that impact their degree completion. To preserve the confidentiality of the participants, all participants were assigned aliases. Furthermore, shared personal information that could be used to identify participants was also removed. The participant profiles provide a rich and detailed description of the participants' experiences with the phenomenon. Another purpose of the detailed descriptions is to allow the reader to discover additional themes not focused on during this study, but which may be important for further research and analysis.

Context

During the data-gathering phase of this study, the site university was responding to the COVID-19 pandemic by transitioning all in-person to remote instruction to support the personal safety of students, faculty, and staff. As a result of this transition, all interviews were conducted through Zoom to allow both the researcher and the participants to maintain social distancing as supported by the host university and approved through the IRB. The impact of COVID-19 on the participants concerning the modality of instruction was reflected within their interviews. Though

COVID-19 was not a theme of focus during this study, the impact of the global pandemic is reflected differently by the participants.

Participant Profiles

A total of ten undergraduate students receiving accommodations through Student Accessibility Services for their Learning Disabilities participated in this study. All participants were contacted by Student Accessibility Services, selected, and interviewed within two months of IRB approval. The study was open to all undergraduate students who were registered with Student Accessibility Services and identified with a learning disability. Upon approval from IRB, the researcher requested the director of Student Accessibility services send the Invitation Email (Appendix) with a hyperlink to the Online Questionnaire to qualifying undergraduate students (N=1,250). The qualifying undergraduate students who fully completed the Online Questionnaire were invited to participate in the study. Several participants completed the Online Questionnaire, but failed to respond to the researcher's requests for interviews.

Ciara

Ciara is a transfer student to the university from one of the state colleges. Ciara was diagnosed with Dyslexia, ADHD, and Sensory Processing Disorder when she was five years old. The accommodations that Ciara receives are extended time for exams as well as text-to-speech devices. Ciara uses the accommodations provided by Student Accessibility Services in every class. Ciara mentions that though she received these accommodations at the university when she was younger, she did not have access to the same accommodations because she attended a private school. Ciara states that the private school she attended did not always honor her Individualized Education Program (IEP), but she was lucky to have a family member working at

the school who would advocate for her and make sure that she received the accommodations that were outlined in her IEP.

Ciara described her identities as a daughter, teacher, girlfriend, roommate, friend, and student. When asked further about the connection of her identities with her learning disability, Ciara stated that she “can easily say that every aspect of [her] life has been influenced by [her] learning disability.” Ciara stated that due to her disability, it has been hard for her to develop relationships because of her difficulty articulating herself. Ciara further described the interconnection between her learning disability and teaching by stating that she uses her phone as an assistive device. When teaching a child how to write something, she must first type in her phone before writing it down for the child. Ciara shared that she uses her phone to plan out what to say first in order to ensure that what she is planning to say will make sense. This process of typing out what she wants to teach, or the process of having to reread email multiple times is exhausting, but she must do it every day. As Ciara described her identities with her learning disability, she shares that the identities within her learning disability are integrated and difficult to separate into individual components.

After graduation from high school, Ciara utilized services through vocational rehab, which paid for Ciara to be reassessed. Following the results of her assessment, vocational rehab paid for her to receive her associates degree. Ciara believes that, with her family’s support, she was able to connect to resources to assist with utilizing vocational rehab and, in turn, fund her associates degree and school supplies. Once Ciara attended the state college, Ciara states that there was a requirement for documentation for needed accommodations before any accommodations would be provided. Ciara describes this process of requesting accommodations as difficult, as she was required to reapply every semester to receive the accommodations. In this

reapplication process, Ciara stated “there are so many steps if you don’t have someone telling you which direction to go. It’s really easy to get lost”. Ciara further described the challenges at the state college as every semester she would need to again reinform her teachers in person and/or through email that she is a student who needs accommodation, which was challenging for her due to all the steps required.

Once Ciara transferred to the university, she described the process of requesting accommodations as “a little easier” due to Student Accessibility Services utilizing an online system. With this system, Ciara can reregister for her accommodations and send an email to all her classes. Ciara shared that though the process each semester might be easier, the steps to resend and resign up can be confusing, and she uses a video tutorial video to remember the necessary steps. When Ciara was asked if she believes that the process of resigning-up for the accommodations was necessary compared to having the notices sent out to the faculty, Ciara stated that she believes that this is to allow the student the ability to opt-out of requesting accommodations, though this is something that she doesn’t understand why anyone would do. Ciara believes that the reason more people are not registered for accommodations is that the process is “complicated, and no one explains that [it to] you.”

Ciara described several events that occurred at the university where she believed she was discouraged from requesting/using her accommodations. In the first event, she disclosed to a faculty member that she needed accommodation and the faculty member responded to her, “well yes, you can get it, but I suggest getting used to not taking your extended time because when you go for a Master’s, you won’t necessarily have it.” The second incident Ciara described was when she was taking a test and was the last one in the room due to her extended test-taking time. When Ciara turned in her test, the instructor stated “oh, thank God” and grabbed her test.

Diane

Diane came to the university as a first-year student wanting to go to medical school following graduation. Diane shared that she is concerned that having a learning disability will prevent her from going to medical school, as she believes “only the smartest people can go, you have to work so hard.” Diane has a full-time job while taking a full academic course load. In addition to working full-time and her coursework, Diane is also an involved student leader in co-curricular activities. Before coming to the university, Diane had plans to join the military; however, was unable to join.

Before Diane attended the university, she shared that she was homeschooled from sixth grade through high school because she “was not thriving in an academic environment.” Diane further explained that she was diagnosed with Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) when she was eleven years old. When she thinks back to her childhood, she believes that it was “very obvious” she had a learning disability because she was “too social” and “didn’t want to learn anything.” When Diane moved to her current state of residence, her parents were concerned that she was not at the same academic level as the county, so she was homeschooled. Diane was reassessed in the spring of 2021, when she was diagnosed with ADHD, which Diane stated was obvious to her but believes that because she is a female, “doctors really only know the symptoms for males’ issues, especially with ADHD because when [males] have ADHD, it’s much more obvious.” Before Diane attended the university, Diane was dual-enrolled with homeschool and a state college.

Diane shared that her scores from both the SAT and ACT were “awful” and believed that she was not going to have the ability to achieve her aspiration of going to medical school; however, she is thankful her current university allowed her to continue her education. Diane shared that her low test score is not a reflection of her intelligence, but the challenges she

experiences in retaining and organizing information. Diane reports that after her first year in attendance at the university, her grade point average (GPA) is 3.9.

Diane describes her identities as motivated, hardworking, goal-oriented, disorganized, detailed oriented, short-tempered, procrastinator, and passionate. When asked further about the connection of her learning disability to her identities, Diane stated that she believes her learning disability provides both positive and negative aspects to each of her identities. Diane further explained that when she goes to class, she is excited to learn and absorb the information and understands that the learning will be a challenge to her because of her learning disability. When Diane was thinking ahead to the upcoming fall term, she shared that she was concerned with the institutional movement from online instruction to in-person lecture because with online instruction Diane was able to watch and rewatch lectures on her time; however, should she miss an in-person lecture, she will miss the information without a way of going back and reviewing it. Diane further explained that the option for online lectures allows her to have flexibility with her schedule so that she can work more shifts

Diane shared that getting connected with Student Accessibility Services was easy because she has a friend who came to the university before her, and he was able to guide her through the process. At Diane's state college, where she was enrolled before the university, Diane shared that services were lacking other than a note-taker. From this experience, Diane was unsure about the resources at the university. To become registered with Student Accessibility Services, Diane was directed by the student health clinic to an off-campus doctor who charged her \$150 to be reassessed. Once Diane received the documentation, she was able to upload the information to Student Accessibility Services. Diane shared that the process of becoming registered was not difficult and, once registered, letters would be sent to her instructors and it

was Diane’s responsibility to request the accommodation from her instructors. The accommodation that Diane receives from Student Accessibility Services is extended test time.

Diane stated that she has developed a social connection with other students receiving support from Student Accessibility Services and considers her fellow students a “tight-knit group because [they] are experiencing the same academic challenges,” which provides a sense of shared understanding and community.

Gina

Gina is a transfer student from a private college and is studying to become an elementary school teacher. Gina is planning to graduate from the university in Fall 2021 and is currently student teaching at a local elementary school. When Gina first enrolled, she had the support of her family; however, her family has moved out of state, leaving Gina to complete her education on her own. While in attendance at the university, Gina married her now-husband, who is not a student at the university.

Gina describes herself as a shy person, but when people get to know her, she “can become the person that doesn’t stop talking.” Gina also describes herself as a determined person and a caring person. Gina described her identities as a daughter, sister, wife, daughter-in-law, and friend. When Gina was asked to provide an example of the intersection of her identities, Gina described the day of her wedding and being with her friends and her family. Another example Gina provided was talking with her mother as a daughter about being married. Gina also connected her role as a teacher and advisor as a point of intersection between her shared identities. When prompted further to share examples of intersectionality between her identities and being a person with a learning disability, Gina shared an experience that took place when she

was working and asked her coworker how to spell a word Gina believed she should know how to spell. Gina stated that she is “never shy about telling people that she has dyslexia because it is something she recognizes as part of her identity, and she will have for the rest of her life. Though Gina shared that she would have dyslexia for the rest of her life, she has good days where she does not have too much trouble, but other days where she is writing on the board (freewriting), and she is unable to spell check her work.

Gina was diagnosed with both Dyslexia and ADHD when she was in fifth grade, though she was originally tested in first grade. Gina stated that there was a delay in her diagnosis from first grade to fifth because the wrong scale was used to evaluate her assessment. Due to this error, Gina went from first grade to fifth grade without any accommodations. Gina attributes her determination to this point in her life because she had to progress academically for several years without accommodations. Before Gina received her IEP, she describes her teachers as “very accommodating.” Following her accurate assessment, Gina shared that when she was in middle school, her reading comprehension was not very good; however, once she received additional support from her school, she was able to excel. Gina shared that she still struggles with coping with her learning disability, as she believes she struggles to spell words that an adult “should be able to spell without asking [her partner], ‘hey, how do you spell this?’” Gina describes this struggle as her motivation to want to teach children. Gina stated that she wants to “lead them into learning, but [she wants] to lead them into what they want to achieve in life.”

Before moving to her state of residence and into higher education, Gina’s provided accommodations were extra time on tests, printed out versions of notes, and a separate testing location. Once Gina moved to her current state of residence, the accommodations Gina received were extra time on tests, printed notes, and test questions read to her if she asked. Gina shared

that because there was not an extra testing room, she had to sit in the front of the class. An accommodation that Gina shared that she created for herself was to become the “teacher’s pet” so that she could get extra help from her teacher without directly asking for it. This technique was helpful for Gina until a time where the class had to read aloud. Gina wanted to raise her hand, but was concerned about reading aloud, so would read ahead to ensure she knew all the words that she believed that her classmates could read.

Gina identified that an advantage of her experience at the private college was that she was able to again become the teacher’s pet, as the college’s class size was like that of her high school. When Gina came to the university, she found that large class sizes made this strategy impossible. From learning about the process of registering with Student Accessibility Services at the private college, Gina had a better understanding of what to look for at the university. Gina stated that all she had to do was “googling it” and Gina was able to understand all the steps in the process of what was needed to be registered with Student Accessibility Services at the University. Following the review of Gina’s documentation, the university was able to provide her with extra time on tests. Gina stated a difference between the private college and the university was that at the private college, Gina did not need to go to the Student Accessibility Services office to request the accommodations every semester, “it was [an] just automatic” process to receive her accommodations. At the university, Gina must first go to the office during the first few weeks of the year and request if she wants extra time for a specific test. “I couldn’t just go talk to the professor like I did at [private college], I had to request it.” Gina shared her frustration with the need for this extra step at the university as something that would discourage students in need of accommodation from completing unless they strongly identified with their

learning disability. Gina speculated that she believed this policy was created by persons without learning disabilities.

Another motivation Gina shared to register with Student Accessibility Services was to receive accommodation during the Florida Teacher Certification Examination (FTCE). Gina stated that when she submitted her documentation to the university, the most recent assessment was too old to qualify for accommodations. Gina was about to have her assessment covered under her parents' insurance, which comes with a \$50 out-of-pocket cost.

Jackie

Jackie is a junior biomedical science major who started her experience at the university as a first-year student. Jackie decided to attend the university due to the size and scope of the students' experiences. Jackie was able to find a club or organization that would fit her needs. Jackie also stated that the university offered her a "sizable" scholarship that was larger than the other state universities, which helped her make her choice. At first, Jackie was unsure about her attendance, as she was hoping for a smaller class size; however, after exploring the university, she believes that she made the correct choice. Jackie describes that her involvement at the university includes chorus, an academic society, and a religious organization. Jackie shared that when she first came to the university, she only knew one person; however, due to her involvement, she has made connections with many students.

Jackie was diagnosed with ADHD at age seven, but never received accommodations. Jackie described that an expression of her ADHD comes with math. Jackie is good at math, but becomes overwhelmed with a page full of problems. Jackie believes that if she had one problem at a time, this would be more helpful for her. Though Jackie shared that she did not receive

accommodation, she shared that when she was in fourth and fifth grades, her teachers would give her tests one page at a time to prevent Jackie from becoming overwhelmed. Jackie shared that she is proud of the fact that she didn't need accommodations until she came to the university. Jackie attributed this mindset to the American culture of personal accomplishments completed without assistance from others, or medication. Jackie believes that this mindset came from her youth and her surroundings, which took some time to get past. Jackie believes that it was her calculus course that caused her to decide to see a psychiatrist for medication. Jackie describes the medication as assisting with her time management on homework assignments. Jackie describes her family as being supportive of her taking medication.

Jackie shared her identities as a Christian, singer, and a student. Jackie further described characteristics of her personality that she interpreted as identities being "joyful, curious, excited, and excitable". When Jackie did not list ADHD within her list, she was asked to explain the omission. Jackie stated "ADHD is kind of in the middle, it's kind of, I think it's kind of hard for me to classify like I thought about it, but like, yes, it's a diagnosis. So, in a sense, it is an identity, but it also includes a lot of characteristics that I have." Jackie explained further that ADHD is a label to say a lot about a person without going into detail; however, Jackie believes what is not always taken into consideration is the complexity of identity. Jackie shared that ADHD means to her that she is excitable, joyful, curious, she has hobbies that she is passionate about, and she likes to learn. Jackie stated that when she first learned of ADHD, she thought that it was just an explanation of her being hyper, forgetful, or not good at paying attention. After Jackie came to the university and wrote a research paper about ADHD, she learned that the different characteristics of ADHD impact her entire personality. This realization at first scared Jackie, as she thought that all her characteristics were because of ADHD; however, she now sees the

diagnosis as a larger explanation of her characteristics such as “crying super easily..., talking a lot..., jumping from hobby to hobby, difficulty starting homework or a project..., taking a shower, and emailing people back.” After Jackie learned about ADHD, she stated that she felt relieved and less alone. The more she learned about ADHD, and the more online stories she read about others struggling with similar behaviors, the greater her feelings of validation grew.

Jackie described how she believes that the diagnose of ADHD is poorly named and that solutions for persons living with ADHD are typically authored by “neurotypicals” who do not understand the scope of executive dysfunction that can be found in persons with ADHD. Jackie gave an example of how her mother, whom she describes as neurotypical, will advise Jackie or assist with her daily activities; however, Jackie found more effective solutions from reading online from others who also have ADHD. One of the solutions that Jackie implemented in her life was having multiple trashcans in her room so that there is more than one option to disposing of trash.

During Jackie’s second semester at the university, she registered with Student Accessibility Services. Jackie shared that her roommate is the one who convinced her to register to receive extra time for her math class and courses with essay heavy exams. In addition to the extra time, Jackie also has accommodation for a distraction-free environment to take exams. Though Jackie understands the support of the distraction-free environment, Jackie uses earplugs in place of the separate testing location. Jackie recognizes that the reason she needs accommodation and/or medication is that once she got to the university, everything became a lot harder and less structured. Jackie shared that there would be less of a need for accommodations (in her case) if the professors would create homework and assignments in smaller chunks. For social connection, Jackie joined an ADHD group where she can connect with other people with

ADHD. During one of the group meetings, she learned that other persons with ADHD have had different experiences registering with Student Accessibility Services. Jackie believes she was very lucky after hearing about their experiences because her original assessment was used, and she did not have to be reassessed. One suggestion that Jackie has for Student Accessibility Services is to provide information for students who are new in their understanding of their disability to help them understand they are connected to other people.

When Jackie reflected on her experiences with faculty and their support of her accommodations, she felt that her faculty have been very supportive. Jackie shared an account of how she was able to develop a professional relationship with one of her instructors, who also provided her accommodations for her exam. The only time Jackie was able to identify a faculty member who was not supportive was when she had an “obvious” panic attack during an exam. Jackie contacted the professor to retake the last question; however, the professor was unable to accommodate the request, noting that it would be unfair for the other students who were unable to complete the last question. Though Jackie was disappointed, she understood and accepted the 89.9% in the course.

Jackie views herself as a self-reflective student with a deep understanding of herself who earns mostly As at the university, Jackie describes the impact of remote instruction as extremely detrimental to her academic progression. Jackie notes that all the personal modifications she made within her daily routines were no longer useful within a remote learning setting. While Jackie worked to readjust to remote instruction, Jackie’s grades began to decline. Jackie stated that she understood the decline to be due to her “object permanence” where if she was not physically in class, she did not “feel like there any actual real-world consequences to [her] not doing [her] homework.” With remote instruction, Jackie’s stated she earned her first B at the

university. Jackie is looking forward to the start of the Fall 2021 academic term, where she will be attending in-person classes again.

Jeni

Jeni identifies as a senior who is planning to graduate with a degree in engineering and psychology with a minor in math. Following high school, Jeni enrolled at a local state college. Following the completion of her 2-year degree, Jeni took time away from school and worked for several years. Jeni decided that she wanted to continue her education and enrolled at the university in both engineering and psychology. Currently, Jeni is working at an engineering firm with a bridge program that connects her academics to her work experience.

Jeni believes that she was raised in a household that valued education. Jeni shared that her grandmother was an English teacher, and Jeni's grandmother would take care of Jeni while her parents were working. During the time that Jeni's grandmother was providing care and teaching her how to read, when Jeni was in the first grade, she was diagnosed with dyslexia. After the diagnosis, Jeni's grandmother learned about teaching children with dyslexia how to read, which helped Jeni do well in school.

Jeni stated that she identifies as a daughter, niece, girlfriend, granddaughter, student, research assistant, engineering student, psychology student, student with a disability, and dancer. When Jeni shared what it was like to have a disability, she stated that it is "like that feeling, you got a golden ticket because you get double time and [she] feel like [it] allows [her] to do much better than some of [her] peers." Jeni further explained that the golden ticket provides her with the ability to take more time on exams in upper-level courses, so she can answer all the questions. Timed exams are a challenge for most students. Jeni found that when she explains her

accommodation to her peers, they tell her that she is lucky. Jeni found this interpretation from her peers to be “hurtful” because of the history of critiques from teachers, fear of being held back, or being placed “on the 504.” When Jeni thinks of the struggles that she went through as a child, she does not see it as a golden ticket completely.

Jeni shared that she believes there is intersectionality between her learning disability and other identities. Jeni believes that both her parents and siblings are dyslexic, and they talk about it as a family. Jeni connects her learning disability with her work. Another example of intersection is when Jeni shares her screen at work and misspells a word, she becomes nervous because she doesn’t have time to proofread what is shared on the screen and others are watching while she is typing. Jeni recalled that the perceived judgment she received from her coworkers was like the judgment she received from her friends in school. When Jeni was asked if she discloses to her coworkers that she has dyslexia, she stated that when she has shared her learning disability in the past, the other person typically becomes silent which is uncomfortable for Jeni. Due to this reaction, Jeni does not typically share her learning disability with her coworkers.

When Jeni attended the local college, she waited a semester before submitting her documentation for accommodations. Jeni describes the process of requesting accommodations from her instructor as a non-verbal process. Jeni was given a “hard paper copy” that was handed to the instructor inside of a manila folder. In this process, Jeni did not have to verbally disclose to the instructors her disability or that she needed more time on exams; however, she still found the process “uncomfortable, but it worked. They never gave [her] any issue or a question or anything” which she appreciated. When Jeni enrolled at the university, she again waited several semesters (2-3) before registering with Student Accessibility Services. Jeni shared that her reason for delaying in registering was to see if she “could just be normal.” Jeni’s decision to

register came when she entered more complex math classes and the accommodation of extra time on exams was again needed. To register, Jeni brought her paperwork to Student Accessibility Services; however, because her documentation was older, she was informed that they would not accept the paperwork. Jeni had to pay \$300 to be reassessed for dyslexia. Following the reassessment, Jeni was granted the accommodation of extra time on exams, reading assistance software for textbooks, and the ability to request recorded lectures. Looking back at the experience, Jeni stated that spending the money to be reassessed was “worth it then compared to failing even one class.” Jeni’s critique of the process was that she wished the testing was offered through Student Accessibility Services.

When Jeni requested accommodations from faculty at the university, she believed the process was smoother than what she experienced at the state college. Jeni shared that the process was all electronic and the facility is “usually very accommodating.” Jeni shared that the staff at the testing center where she takes some of her exams are very nice and understanding because she believes they work with “multiple varieties of people walking through [the] door.” The only difficulty that Jeni has experienced with receiving accommodations from faculty was when Jeni had classes “back-to-back”, and she must request to take an exam early. Jeni shared that when she takes an exam early, she will wait in the testing center until the class has started taking their exams so that the faculty are confident that Jeni is not sharing test answers with the class.

Krystal

Krystal is a biology and psychology major in her second year at the university. Based on her personal experience with ADHD, mental health, and supporting her friends with mental health concerns, Krystal decided that she wants to become a psychiatrist following her graduation from the university.

Krystal shared that her father grew up knowing that he had ADHD, but the family never talked about it. At the end of Krystal's first year at the university, she suspected that she also may have ADHD due to failing her coursework. Krystal waited until November of her second year at the university to get assessed for ADHD. The reason for the delay in the assessment was the cost of the test. Krystal stated that the test typically costs \$400; however, she was able to get a referral from the counseling office, which lowered the cost to \$150. Before Krystal's assessment, she attempted to get support from Student Accessibility Services. Unfortunately, without the assessment, Student Accessibility services was unable to provide accommodations, but referred her to other on-campus resources to assist her with her academics.

Krystal shared her identities as a daughter, friend, person with ADHD, student, and mental health advocate. The identified points of intersection for Krystal come with her passion for mental health advocacy and supporting others to learn more about their learning disabilities. Krystal draws from her personal experiences of not understanding herself when she was younger. Learning more about her struggles with mental health and ADHD has empowered her to help others and help them avoid "the negative stigma that comes with ADHD and mental health issues." Krystal shared that she is challenged with rejection-sensitive dysphoria (RSD), which is often found in persons with ADHD. Now that Krystal has learned about RSD and ADHD, she better understands the connection between the childhood trauma of being emotionally sensitive and experiencing rejection from others.

When Krystal explained what it was like being diagnosed, she described the experience as "this missing puzzle piece that was just put into place and I finally had the answers for the troubling things that happened to me when I was a kid." Though Krystal shared that her diagnoses provides a deeper explanation of herself, Krystal was discouraged by her family from

taking medication. Krystal explained that her father was against medication, likely due to the stigma medication had for him when he was a child. Krystal's mother was concerned about Krystal developing an addiction to the medication. Regardless of the apprehension of medication by Krystal's parents, Krystal still takes medication for her ADHD without their knowledge. The period between November, when Krystal was first prescribed the medication, until January, when she filled the prescription, was difficult; however, Krystal states that she is happy she decided to fill the prescription because the medication has a positive impact.

Though Krystal does not have support from her parents for taking medication, Krystal shared that her sister has been very supportive. Krystal also described peer support she receives from groups at the university for students with ADHD, as well as posts on social media. Krystal recalled a post that detailed a person with ADHD and their journey to being accepted to a psychiatry program and journey through medical school. When describing the impact of the post, Krystal stated that she "got this really overwhelming feeling of relief like someone can do it, so I can do it."

When Krystal was asked to reflect on the support she receives from her faculty, she noted that the faculty are supportive; however, it is difficult for students with ADHD to approach their faculty to request accommodations. Krystal believes that this difficulty is due in part to past experienced trauma of rejection as expressed in RSD. Krystal understands that she must disclose to her faculty to receive accommodations, which is an impactful experience in every class where Krystal receives accommodation. Krystal recognizes that this forced disclosure for others who experiences RSD could cause them to go without requesting accommodation due to fear of rejection from their faculty.

Linda

Linda is a senior planning to graduate with a degree in environmental science. Linda transferred to the university from a local college. Due to the date of Linda's transfer and the university moving to remote instruction, Linda had yet to experience university life. She hopes to become involved at the university with major-specific clubs and groups after in-person instruction returns to the university.

Linda shared that she was diagnosed with dyslexia when she was in second or third grade. Linda remembers the time before her diagnosis as very difficult. Looking back at her experience, Linda believes that the reason she is so introverted is due to how her school accommodated her dyslexia. Linda shared that because of her difficulty learning to read and write, she would be removed from her class and required to learn in another location. This experience made her feel like there was a spotlight on her, which in turn made her shy and introverted. In ninth grade, Linda was additionally diagnosed with anxiety, depression, OCD, and trichotillomania. Linda's critique of her high school experience was that, due to the poor academic performance of the school, they were unwilling to support Linda with the accommodations outlined in her IEP. Linda's mother advocated for her with the school so that Linda would be supplied with the accommodations required. Linda believes that her mother's involvement with her education was extremely impactful on her academic progression.

Linda shared that her younger brother is also diagnosed with dyslexia. Linda talks with her brother about strategies that can support his different way of learning since the study techniques taught in his school are designed for non-dyslexic students. Linda shared with her brother that "it's hard, you have to make your own way if you want to study."

Linda describes her identities as sibling, introvert, friend, shy, outgoing, but has difficulty starting conversations with strangers. When Linda was asked to connect her identities to her learning disability, Linda shared that “anything past from whenever [she] was diagnosed leads back to [her] dyslexia.” Linda described all her friends in high school as extroverts because she has difficulty making connections with others. She knows that extroverts have an easier time making connections, so she surrounds herself with extroverts. Now that Linda is in postsecondary education, she uses the common link of shared classes to talk with strangers and make new friends. For points of intersection, Linda describes that her different diagnoses intersect with each other, which causes a behavioral reaction. An example Linda provided of this intersection is that, due to her OCD, she identifies as a perfectionist and believes that tasks must be completed a specific way and that, if it is not completed as intended, it is incorrect. Linda believes that this knowledge of self has assisted her in avoiding triggers that would result in a negative impact.

When Linda enrolled at the state college following high school, several semesters passed before she began the process registering to receive accommodations. When she went to the Student Accessibilities Services office at the state college, she provided them with copies of her IEP and other supporting documents. The state college did not accept the documents because too much time had passed from the date when she was originally assessed. Linda was frustrated that she had to provide new documents since she still was dyslexic. Due to her mother’s professional connections and Linda’s belief that she would need updated documents at the university, Linda was reassessed by a family friend for free. After Linda received the reassessment documents, she transferred to the university. Linda recalls the experiences of registering for accommodations at the university as much easier than the state college. Linda shared that all she had to do was to

inform the university (Student Accessibility Services) of her diagnoses and her accommodation needs and she was provided support. Linda recalled she was told by staff at Student Accessibility Services that they “honor the students and not make them go through all the hurdles that other places might.” The university provided Linda with extra time on exams, eBooks, a recording device, and a calculator during math exams.

When Linda was asked about the support she has experienced from faculty when requesting accommodation, Linda was not able to give too much detail, as her experience with in-person classes was limited because of COVID-19. Linda believes that the move to online instruction allowed her to receive the extra time on exams needed to be successful without having to request an accommodation of extra time on her exams. Linda was able to share one experience at the university, before remote instruction, where a faculty member was “snappish” when Linda requested extra time on her exam. Due to the response from the faculty member, Linda did not use her accommodation and took her exam with the class because she did not want to ask the faculty member how the process worked. Regardless of this experience, Linda shared that she has no problem requesting extra time on exams; however, she doesn’t always like to ask questions during class because she believes that the faculty already believe she is receiving extra time on exams, and she doesn’t understand the material. To overcome this, Linda uses peer support to answer academic questions.

Mary

Mary identifies as a junior at the university studying Environmental Studies. Mary started at the university directly after high school. The university was her first-choice school due to her desired program of study. Mary describes her high school as a magnet school with a focus on

agricultural science. After her time at the university, Mary would like to run an educational program or work at a nonprofit or a zoological society.

Mary was diagnosed with ADHD in second grade and with both anxiety disorder and depressive disorder before attending the university. In high school, Mary shared that she “didn’t really need much assistance,” however, Mary did receive the accommodation of extended time on exams, as well as an alternative testing site, before attending the university. Mary believes that she didn’t need the extended time on her exams because she was able to complete her exams within the allotted time. Mary believes that the largest impact on her academic performance was from medication. Mary was aware that her teacher and peers noticed a difference in Mary’s behavior in the classroom when she was medicated.

Mary describes her identities as a student, environmentalist, girlfriend, daughter, and friend. When Mary was asked to describe the connection points between her identities and her learning disability, Mary stated that she is not able to differentiate her learning disability from her identities because ADHD is interconnected with her identities. Mary describes her learning disability as “almost a personality trait.” Mary further described this personality trait as like a mask where others expect her to be friendly, high energy, happy, and cheerful, but the mask does not account for past trauma Mary has experienced that has impacted her personality. Mary shared that there are only two people who truly know her, and she has challenges making deep connections with others. Mary’s ADHD clashes with both her anxiety disorder and her depressive disorder. Mary described this clash as when she is “sad and wants to sleep all day” or she doesn’t want to “talk with anyone” she has the other ADHD side of her that “wants to do things.” Mary describes the hyper-focus of ADHD as not just a hyper-focus on one thing, “it is like there are three different voices or opinions.”

Mary states that, as a child, her parents taught her that “ADHD is not an excuse.” Mary believes this lesson is “both good and a little detrimental.” Mary believes that the drive her family gave her in not seeing her ADHD as an excuse caused her to strive to learn and not be held back by perceived limitations. On the other hand, what was detrimental was growing up without an understanding of RSD. Mary describes herself as very emotional and with the context of RSD, Mary would have a better understanding of herself that would explain her heightened emotions, as well as the impact rejection had on her. Now that Mary is an adult, she understands the emotional need for reassurance from her boyfriend as part of her ADHD and RSD.

The accommodation that Mary receives from the university is an alternative testing site, as well as extended test time. Though Mary receives both accommodations from Student Accessibility Services, she does not use the alternative testing site accommodation. Mary describes her rationale for not using the accommodation as finding comfort in seeing others focused on the same exam. The comfort is the same as when she was in high school taking an exam in an alternative location; however, in high school, though the other students might take different exams, they were together in a room. When utilizing the accommodation at the university, Mary finds herself taking the exam in isolation, which impacts her self-confidence.

As Mary prepared for her transition to the university from high school, she needed an updated assessment to receive accommodation to take the SAT. Mary’s mother encouraged Mary to register with Student Accessibility Services to see what accommodations she could receive at the university. Mary describes her mother as an “ADHD mom” who is focused on understanding ADHD and helping Mary receive the support that was required. Mary recalled a time that her mother did not believe that high school was doing enough to prepare Mary for the transition to the university, so she contacted the principal. Mary believes that because her mother works for

the county's education department, she was able to be informed on what was needed and what the school was required to provide to support Mary.

When Mary was asked to provide her thoughts on institutional policies, she talked about the impact of moving from in-person instruction to remote instruction because of COVID-19. Mary believes that this change in modality was detrimental to her academic progression, as she “finds it difficult to pace [herself] on things and to know when it's time to do the things.”

Sara

Sara is a transfer student studying psychology and criminology. Before Sara attended the university, she attended a private university. Before Sara attended a private university, she had never been to the United States. Sara describes differences between her educational experiences at home in Puerto Rico and the education she received in the United States. Due to COVID-19, Sara moved back home to Puerto Rico to attend remote instruction courses at the university. At the time of the interview, Sara had not attended any in-person coursework at the university. Once Sara returns to the United States to attend in-person courses, she plans to be involved in major-specific clubs and honor societies. Sara shared that she is working on the pressure of maintaining her GPA for her involvement due to her “disability.”

Growing up, Sara did not embrace her ADHD. She believes she denied it as an aspect of her life. Sara shared that she was “never really told that [she] had ADHD so she grew up thinking that she was normal but just stupid.” Sara stated that she grew up not thinking she was “less because of the learning disability, just because [she] was less.” Sara was five years old when she was diagnosed with ADHD. As a child, Sara believes her family was supportive as they took her to therapy for motor skills; however, she states that she was a difficult child with

her hyperactive. Once Sara began to attend middle school, she started taking medication for ADHD.

In high school, Sara received accommodations for extra time on exams. Sara recalled a teacher in high school who would alter the test format to assist Sara. Though this modification was not part of her accommodations, it was something that the teacher recognized would be helpful for Sara to demonstrate her understanding of the material. Though Sara received accommodations for extra time on exams, she said she wouldn't use it because she would have to take her test in a different location which she "hated because it made [her] feel more different like [she] wasn't worthy of being with a class." Other than the extra time on the tests and this one teacher's modification, Sara did not receive any additional accommodations.

Sara described her identity as a dog lover, student, artist, writer, sister, daughter, family-oriented, stubborn, and a caring person. Sara describes a point of intersection with her identity as an artist and a writer and ADHD where she has trouble completing her projects. Sara believes that her perfectionism is the reason she finds it difficult to finish certain projects. When Sara believes that she "did something wrong in an art piece, [she] completely leaves." Sara describes her lack of finishing projects as a joke to her family and friends because she gets "so hyper-focused on being perfect." Another point of intersection shared with Sara was that of her family identity (sister) and her ADHD. Sara shared that she came home with a "B" on an assignment and her mother told her that she could do better. Sara shared that she cried because she believed that she received "a bad grade." As Sara looks back at that time, she acknowledges that her sister does well academically and she didn't understand why she wasn't able to do as well as her sister. Sara believes that her denial of ADHD has been instilled in her by her family; however, now that

she is older, she has better recognition of the impact of ADHD on her life, though she still is in denial.

After high school, when Sara attended a private university, Sara registered with the Student Accessibility Services office to receive accommodations. Though she was approved for accommodations, she never took advantage of them. Sara stated that she would “let the teachers know beforehand ‘hey, I have ADHD, if I doze off in class (which happens is a lot), please catch my attention.’” Once Sara transferred to the university, she found out about the Student Accessibility Services office through new student orientation. Sara found the process to register for accommodations at the university easy; her only challenge is remembering to request accommodations at the beginning of each semester. Though Sara is approved for accommodations at the university, she does not believe she needs them since all her classes are currently being taught remotely and there is sufficient time to complete the exams within the time allotted. When Sara was asked if she is planning to use her accommodation of extra time on exams when she attends in-person instruction, she explained that she is not planning to do so at this time. Sara shared that she would likely be focused on the fact that if she had extra time on exams, she would be one of the last students in the classroom. Sara believes that being last in the classroom would make her “feel like [she] is less again.”

When Sara was asked if there was a policy or practice that was impactful to her continuance, Sara recalled a time that a faculty member addressed her ADHD in front of the class. Sara shared that the incident occurred while she was attending the private university and the art faculty was questioning why she had failed to complete the artwork. The faculty member told Sara that it is the perfectionism of her ADHD. Sara wasn’t sure if she informed the faculty member about her ADHD; however, she was still embarrassed that it was addressed in front of

the class. Sara also stated that her experiences in high school were also impactful to her. She shared that she believed that she was singled out for talking in class as well as called lazy by her teachers. These experiences reinforced the “otherness” felt by Sara and reflected in RSD, which is common for students with ADHD.

As Sara reflected on the impact of COVID-19 on her academics, she revealed that the remote instruction has been helpful for her. She believes that she procrastinates on her assignments, but with the extra time to complete them, she has been successful in getting all her assignments done on time. Sara expressed concern about the change from remote to in-person instruction when she comes to campus.

Shannon

Shannon is a senior majoring in human communication with a minor in anthropology. She is a transfer student who chose the university so she could be close to her family but far enough away that she could develop her independence. Shannon identifies as a first-generation college student who has the support of her family with her continued education but lacks experience from her family to guide her through what is expected in higher education. Shannon also identifies as a “nerd who enjoys anime, music, and cannot sit still no matter what.” The semester Shannon transferred to the university was the same semester that the university moved from in-person to remote instruction, so she was unable to be involved with clubs or organizations, though she is looking forward to in-person instruction so she can get the “crowd experience” at the university. Shannon shared that three months before the interview is when she was diagnosed with ADHD.

Shannon shared her identities as a student, first-generation student, transfer student, Hispanic, from a large family, from South Florida, bilingual, fanfiction reader, and a roommate. When Shannon was asked how ADHD fits in with her identities, she responded that she is in a “dilemma” because the characteristics of ADHD have always been part of her life; however, she only recently understands those characteristics to be ADHD. Shannon provided the example of how, when she lived at home, her family knew that she would listen to music late at night and into the early morning and pace. Shannon never thought much of it, and her family accepted it and didn’t address it with her, so Shannon accepted it as a normal part of her behavior. Now that Shannon is diagnosed with ADHD, she understands that the behavior is part of the diagnosis. Shannon described this recognition as “there’s a word for this, other people have it too. It has affected my life in a way that I didn’t know before so I’m still not quite sure where that fits in even though I know it fits in everywhere.” With regards to the intersection between Shannon’s identities, Shannon connects the identities of being a first-generation student, Hispanic, and coming from a large family.

Though Shannon identifies as a “pretty okay student,” the impact of moving from in-person to remote instruction due to COVID-19 was impactful. Shannon describes the original transition to remote instruction as not that bad; however, after the first two semesters of remote instruction, the faculty were less lenient than at the beginning of the pandemic. During the Spring term, Shannon recalls that she was failing all her classes due to losing track of her assignments. Around this time, Shannon found Tik Tok, a social media video platform where she was able to view videos of other persons who were experiencing similar challenges because of remote instruction. Shannon stated that the video creators with ADHD would share their symptoms, and that reminded her of other people in her life who also suggested that Shannon get

tested for ADHD. To find answers, Shannon was referred by the counseling offices to off-campus providers to assess her for ADHD. Shannon shared that in her culture, people don't go to therapists and you don't seek help; however, for Shannon she believed she needed answers to why she was unable to adjust like her peers to remote instruction. Shannon believes that the only reason she was able to pass her classes that semester was that she was assessed, registered with Student Accessibility Services, received her accommodations, and received medication. In total, the off-campus assessment cost Shannon \$300.

Shannon shared that the medication helped her organize her tasks both academically and personally. Before taking medication, the steps of doing laundry would be too much and Shannon would find herself distracted between the steps. The medication assisted Shannon in the organization of her thoughts from the start of a task to completion. Shannon also described that before the medication she would start projects and stop after some time. Shannon believed this was due to being lazy or easily distracted, but now understands that it was due to her ADHD. Shannon is frustrated looking back at her academics and seeing the grades she earned and knowing she could have done better if she would have known about ADHD and medication. Shannon is working to acknowledge that, despite her ADHD and lack of medication, she still made it to college and earned B's. Now looking forward, Shannon has more self-confidence regarding what she can achieve with a greater degree of understanding of her ADHD.

When Shannon was asked to speculate why she was overlooked in grade school for ADHD, Shannon stated that she believed it was because she was never overtly hyperactive or disruptive in class. When she shared with her friends the outcome of the assessment, Shannon's friends were in disbelief. Shannon remembers a time when she was visiting a friend and drinking coffee. Shannon recognized that the coffee calmed her down and helped her focus. When she

shared this observation with her friend's mother, the mother told her that it could mean that she had ADHD. Looking back at that experience now, Shannon believes that the mother was correct and understands why the coffee helped her focus when she was younger.

As Shannon reflected on policies or practices at the university that would impede her success, she acknowledged that the university is designed "for neurotypical people who can do the things that the teachers assign, and they finish it and then the next assignment." Shannon wishes that there would be more flexibility for deadlines to assist all students to succeed instead of designing coursework around the (assumed) majority population. Another impediment that Shannon acknowledges was that she was assessed mid-semester; however, her instructors would not allow her to go back and make up missed assignments regardless of the results of the assessment. Shannon believes this was more of a hindrance that harmed her academics. Regardless of the impact of not being able to make up the missed assignments, if she would have not received her "accommodations and resources in the semester, [she] would have failed [her] classes and wouldn't have come back [to the university]."

Summary

This chapter provided the profiles of the ten participants in this study. Their accounts are to provide a rich and detailed description of participants' experiences with the phenomenon. Though there are similarities within the participants' accounts, there are points of divergence and convergence within their shared experiences of working to complete a degree at a university with a learning disability. The diversity in age of the participants when diagnosed with learning disabilities, the experience of "otherness," family support, access to medication, recognized identities, the connection of identities with learning disabilities, and the experiences of procedural impediments that impact progress towards degree fulfillment are all points of

connection and separation among the participants. The profiles provide the stories needed to understand the phenomenon as experienced by each participant and analyzed by the researcher in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5 FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of this study, connecting responses from the participants with the research questions. Further, analysis of the phenomenon was conducted utilizing Moustakas's (1994) model of phenomenological analysis, modified by Creswell and Poth (2018) to capture and connect the emergent themes among the participants. The findings are organized by the results of the research questions, as well as the emergent themes discovered by the researcher during this study.

Research Question One

The first research question for the study is, “How do undergraduate students with learning disabilities indicate their disability as their primary identity, and do they connect their primary identities to demonstrate intersectionality between their identities?” All participants were asked during the interviews to list their identities. Though all participants were successful in listing their identities, several participants required the researcher to repeat the question or provide an example. The examples provided were carefully presented to the requesting participants in an effort not to prompt a specific response, but simply provide an example of an identity held by the researcher that was likely different than the participants.

Only four participants stated that their learning disability is a primary identity, while the other six listed other identities unrelated to having a learning disability. All participants received acknowledgment of identifying their learning disability, or that their learning disability was not listed. The participants were then asked to describe a time that they remember their identities

intersecting with one another. All participants were successful in identifying times of intersection between their identities. Of the ten participants, nine provided examples of intersectionality between their learning disability and another previously provided identity. The relationship between the responses provided to answer Research Question 1 is illustrated in Table 3.

Table 3.

Results Research Question 1

Participants	Indicate disability as their primary identity	Connect primary identities to demonstrate intersectionality between their identities	Learning disability listed within the intersection
Ciara	✓	✓	✓
Diane	—	✓	✓
Gina	—	✓	✓
Jackie	—	✓	✓
Jeni	✓	✓	✓
Krystal	✓	✓	✓
Linda	✓	✓	✓
Mary	—	✓	✓
Sara	—	✓	✓
Shannon	—	✓	—

Research Question Two

The second research question for this study is: “How do undergraduate students with learning disabilities identify policies/practices as restrictive to their persistence towards degree attainment in higher education?” All participants were able to respond to the policies/practices that they believe impacted their educational experience. The participants provided responses that ranged from grade school experiences to college experiences and experiences at the university. Responses provided by the participants that were inclusive of their college or university experience were captured and recorded to answer the research question.

All ten participants were able to identify policies/practices restrictive to their persistence towards degree attainment in higher education. Of the responses provided, four participants indicated that one point of impact on their progression was their need to be reassessed before being approved for accommodation. Two of the participants indicated that this need to be reassessed created a financial impact, as it was an unexpected cost. Regardless of the need to be reassessed, two participants indicated the need to be registered with Student Accessibility Services was impactful since they were unable to simply request the accommodation from their instructor/faculty member. Lastly, three participants indicated that the act of requesting accommodations from an instructor/faculty member was an impediment toward their progress. A visual representation of how the participants answered Research Question 2, with statements provided by the participants, is illustrated in Table 4.

Table 4.

Results Research Question 2

Participants	Identify Policies/ Practices	Example Provided by Participant
Ciara	✓	<p>Every semester Ciara would need to reinform her instructors in person and/or through email that she is a student who needs accommodation. This additional step was challenging for her due to all the overt action required.</p> <p>Ciara was discouraged from requesting/using her accommodations by an instructor.</p>
Diane	✓	<p>Limited online classes options for Diane.</p> <p>Diane must register with Student Accessibility Services to receive accommodations.</p> <p>The cost of assessment created a delay in Diane being assessed.</p> <p>No assessments for accommodations are conducted on campus or by the university.</p>
Gina	✓	<p>In high school not enough resources to have a separate classroom for testing. As a result, Gina had to sit in the front of the class to avoid distraction.</p> <p>Gina’s experience at another university did not require her to request accommodations every semester from faculty. This process was automated, unlike the university where she is currently enrolled</p>
Jackie	✓	<p>Differences in experiences among students becoming registered with Student Accessibility Services. Each student had a different experience, which could impede getting registered.</p>
Jeni	✓	<p>Student Accessibility Services would not accept old documentation to receive accommodations. This required Jeni to need to update results to receive accommodations.</p>
Krystal	✓	<p>Was not able to receive accommodations without assessment.</p> <p>The act of requesting accommodations from faculty is difficult is due in part to past experienced trauma of rejection as expressed in rejection-sensitive dysphoria.</p> <p>Krystal was able to find a low-cost assessment off-campus.</p>

Participants	Identify Policies/ Practices	Example Provided by Participant
Linda	✓	Old tests were not accepted due to the amount of time that had passed. Linda had to be reassessed if she wanted to receive accommodations.
Mary	✓	Mary had to get retested before accommodations would be provided.
Sara	✓	Sara believes the isolation that comes with alternative testing sites or being the last one in the classroom has been negative and because of this, she does not use the accommodation.
Shannon	✓	Shannon was required to have an assessment to receive accommodations. The timeline to complete her assessment and be approved for accommodations impacted her academic standing in her classes.

Emergent Themes

Within this study, additional emergent themes were presented by the participants to the researcher. Though the emergent themes were not part of the conceptual framework designed by the researcher, the themes were of note and added additional insight into the participants and their shared phenomena.

Otherness

Several participants indicated feelings of “otherness.” The term otherness comes from the work of Lalvani (2015), who describes otherness as the differences between students who received accommodations and those who do not require modifications to their learning environment. Lalvani further describes the core area of contention between parents, students, and teachers in deciding to provide modifications (alternative testing locations) as the tension between the inclusion of students with their peers and shielding students from peer rejection.

This tension has created arguments for both inclusive and exclusive educational environments for students. For students who experience otherness, they see themselves as different from others, which is typically reinforced with how they learn and express learning acquisition. Though otherness is not inherently a negative concept, how otherness is viewed by both the students who receive the accommodations and the students who do not require accommodation may bring about feelings of depression and isolation for the students with accommodations and opportunities for discrimination for able normative students.

Of the ten participants within this study, eight expressed moments of experiencing otherness as it related to their learning disability. From the accounts of the eight participants who shared experiences of otherness, the impact of the experiences created barriers in which the participants were less likely to request accommodations or delay in becoming registered with Student Accessibility Services.

When Sara was asked about the accommodations she received in grade school, she shared information about the accommodation she was granted, as well as her experience with otherness.

I had reasonable accommodation, but I, I never really used it at all, you know, like, there was also there was a chance that you could like ask to be taken to the library alone, and have like a more secluded space, but I always hated that idea because it made me feel more different. Made me feel like I wasn't worthy of being with a class, so I never took that. And I always took the full amount of time that it took in the class. I never asked for more time. I think there were there were opportunities. I just never realized I said they were there, and I never wanted to take them out (Sara, personal communication, May 20, 2021).

When Sara was asked about experiences in which she believes she was not supported by a teacher or faculty member, she provided the following account:

I would get called out in class a lot for people talking to me, because, and it was so frustrating, because I would talk back and I'm part of the fault, but why do you have to call me out on it, you know, and I felt like that was a little bit because they knew that I was had accommodation. So, they were like, oh, it must be Sara that started the conversation. I'm like, 'No, I'm just following the flow of James here who is just talking to me.' And so that was a little frustrating, because, you know, nobody likes to be called by a teacher. And I was a sensitive kid. I want to cry just for you calling out my name. And that was in middle school. And then in high school, there was a teacher who, um, lumped us all as lazy. Looking back and I was mad, but I cried that day because she was talking about people in the class, and evident that she was signaling people with accommodation. She was just like, 'Oh, you guys are so lazy. You don't need the extra time because you don't know the material, you guys need to study more.' It was just so insulting to me. I felt so sad about it (Sara, personal communication, May 20, 2021).

Though Sara is registered with Student Accessibility Services, she shared reluctance to utilize her accommodation of a separate testing location because use of the alternative testing location would make her feel she was "not being worthy" of a place at the university (Sara, personal communication, May 20, 2021).

Another example of otherness provided by a participant came from an interview with Jackie. During the interview, the researcher asked Jackie about her experience registering for accommodations. Jackie's experience in becoming registered with Student Accessibility Services

included an example of otherness and the reason for the delay in seeking accommodations at the university.

I registered with Student Accessibility Services, um, that was hard for me. That took a lot for me to get there. Um, because I, again, I was diagnosed when I was seven, but I never had any, like accommodations or medication or anything growing up, like throughout high school. I never had any, my teachers knew I had ADHD. Math was a subject that was just particularly difficult for me, because I get easily overwhelmed when there are a lot of problems, if you just put one problem in front of me, I'll be the first one done. But if you give me like a front and back piece of paper with a lot of problems, I zone out, I forget that I'm even taking a test, I get bored, it's too much mental exertion for me. So, like, in like, fourth and fifth grade, my teachers would give me my tests, one page at a time. And that was a lot better for me. So, since then, I haven't had any accommodations or anything up until college. That was something of which I was really proud. I was like, even with ADHD, I did all this all by myself, and I didn't have medication, or I didn't get an IEP or anything. Looking back [at that time], that was an interesting perspective to take. But I think just a lot of American culture and culture, in general, is really focused on like, accomplishing things by yourself and medication for mental issues as seen as like, unnecessary or like, like a crutch that you shouldn't have to use, you know, rather than like, just fixing the chemical imbalance in your brain so that you can get your work done. I bought into that [concept] growing up because that was what I was surrounded with, you know? It took me a while to kind of get over myself and it like I said, it was a calculus that finally led me to be like okay, going to ask for a referral to a psychiatrist and see about finally getting medicated and so that I did that and then I was like, wow, I'm

like, starting my homework not an hour before it's due crazy (Jackie, personal communication, June 15, 2021).

Rejection-Sensitive Dysphoria

Connected to the concept of otherness, several participants in this study identified rejection-sensitive dysphoria (RSD) as being a personal challenge they are still working with following their diagnosis of ADHD. The research of Bedrossian (2021) indicates that people with RSD experience emotional distress when there is a perceived failure to meet the expectations of others or self. Bedrossian (2021) estimates that RSD impacts 99% of all persons with ADHD, while one-third of those diagnosed with ADHD identify RSD as one of its impactful characteristics. Typically, people with RSD have experienced feelings of failure, rejection, embarrassment, low self-esteem, anxiety in social settings, difficulty with relationships, and thoughts of self-harm (Bedrossian, 2021). As persons with ADHD have experienced incidents of being separated from peers for alternative testing locations and/or failing to achieve an unrealistic academic accomplishment, they have experienced otherness.

The point of connection between RSD and otherness occurred during the interview with Krystal. During Krystal's time at the university, she was diagnosed with ADHD. Krystal was asked if, before her diagnosis, she requested accommodations from her instructors/faculty. Krystal responded to the prompt as follows:

I've never gone to a professor and asked for more time, because that's like, in my brain, it's like, that's a no can do. I mean, even freshman year, I couldn't even stand the idea of being late to class, which for someone with ADHD is like, that's not going to happen. That's not, you're not going to never be late to class, which led to me not going to class

because I decided, in my freshman brain, if I was going to be late to class, I just won't go even if it's five minutes late. I just won't go. So, I never asked for accommodations. And I mean, I should have because freshman year, I had a paper to turn in. And I turned it in like that was in the middle of my depressive episode. So, I turned it in like, a week or two late, and I ended up with an F on that. Luckily, I had done well enough on the tests to still get like a B in the class. But no, I never asked them for accommodations, because I thought the answer would be no (Krystal, personal communication, May 21, 2021).

When Krystal described her involvement with a group comprised of students with ADHD, she again shared her reservations in requesting accommodations from instructors/faculty:

We do give each other advice on how to approach issues that we come across, especially with talking to professors and stuff like that... I think a lot of people have anxiety about [talking with professors], I have anxiety about that. I've talked to a total of like, maybe two of my professors. I know the worst thing they can say is no, but with rejection-sensitive dysphoria, it's like that's, that destroys you. So how are you supposed to go see a professor and be told no? But yeah, I think that'd be really helpful to talk about (Krystal, personal communication on May 21, 2021).

Age of Diagnosis, Diagnosis, Accommodation, Sex, and Race

To provide more context on the participants of this study, additional demographic information was collected. This information is intended to add to the personal stories of the participants. Of the ten participants interviewed, eight of the ten were diagnosed with their learning disability during grade school. Eight of the ten participants identified as being diagnosed with ADHD, two with dyslexia, and three with co-diagnoses. All participants received extra time

on exams as part of their accommodation from Student Accessibility Services; however, five participants received additional accommodations to assist with their academics. All participants interviewed are female. Six of ten of the participants identify as Caucasian, while the other four identify as Hispanic/Latina/Latinx. Table 5 illustrates the similarities and differences between the participants as it relates to their demographics.

Table 5

Age of Diagnosis, Diagnosis, Accommodation, Sex, and Race

Participants	Age at Diagnosis	Diagnosis	Accommodation	Sex	Race
Ciara	5	Dyslexia, ADHD, and Sensory Processing Disorder	Extra time on exams, text-to-speech device	Female	Caucasian
Diane	11	ADHD	Extended time on exams	Female	Caucasian
Gina	11	ADHD and Dyslexia, Depression, and Anxiety	Extra time on exams, Recording pen, separate testing room	Female	Caucasian
Jackie	7	ADHD	Extended time on exams	Female	Caucasian
Jeni	5	Dyslexia	Extended time on exams, reading assistance software, request a recording of lectures.	Female	White Hispanic
Krystal	20	ADHD	Extended time on exams	Female	Caucasian
Linda	6	Dyslexia	Extra time on exams, eBook, calculator, recording allowed to use a recording	Female	Caucasian
Mary	6	ADHD, Anxiety, and Depressive Disorder	Extra time on exams and alternative testing site	Female	Hispanic; Latinx
Sara	5	ADHD	Extra time on exams	Female	Hispanic; Latina
Shannon	21	ADHD	Extended time on exams	Female	Hispanic

Impact of Social Media and Social Connection

During the interviews with the participants, the impact of social media and social connections for persons with ADHD became a reoccurring theme. Through social media, participants were able to find normalization of ADHD, as well as lifestyle modifications that could be applied to improve quality of life. Through social connection, participants were able to

navigate institutional policy to become registered with Student Accessibility Services, as well as find support from others and their experiences to assist with better integration into the university with their learning disability.

Social Media

Shannon shared during her interview that she had lived most of her life unaware that she had ADHD. After high school, Shannon enrolled at the university and was performing average with her academics. Following the start of the global pandemic of COVID-19, all of Shannon's classes were moved to remote instruction. It was during this time that Shannon began to struggle academically. Shannon found herself watching videos on social media about ADHD and recognizing some of the characteristics presented by the content creators as like her behaviors. When Shannon reflected on her upbringing and her behaviors of jumping between hobbies, not being able to sit still during movies, and her difficulty switching from in-person instruction to remote, Shannon decided to get assessed for ADHD. Shannon first went to Student Accessibility Services to receive support; however, without an assessment, Student Accessibility Services would not provide Shannon with accommodations. Shannon was directed to the tutoring services at the university while she waited to be assessed. Shannon described the process of being assessed as "fast" because she believes she was showing the obvious symptoms of ADHD. Once Shannon received the results of her assessment and submitted the documentation to Student Accessibility Services, she was able to receive the accommodation of extended time on exams to assist her with her course work.

As Shannon looked back at the experience of finding out about ADHD through social media, she recognizes that the diagnosis was the "missing piece" in understanding her behaviors

and why they were different from her friends and family (Jackie, personal communication, May 20, 2021). Shannon found it odd that her family was unaware that she might have ADHD and when presented the outcome of the assessment to them, they were surprised. Shannon believes that her family just accepts her for who she is and believed her behaviors were just normal for Shannon. Shannon recognizes that through social media that she was able to learn about ADHD, get her assessment, and salvage her academic year once she received the accommodations.

Another example of how social media impacted participants was through the ability to find solutions for behaviors commonly found in persons with ADHD. During the interview with Jackie, she shared that she has struggled with able-normative behaviors such as cleaning her room, remembering her medication, and taking showers. Jackie shared that her mother has offered guidance, but her mother is “neurotypical” and unable to provide effective solutions to assist Jackie and complete tasks that are viewed differently by neurotypical persons than persons with ADHD (Jackie, personal communication, June 15, 2021).

Jackie was able to find a solution for keeping her room clean by acquiring additional trashcans. Jackie learned about this technique through social media and reading about solutions offered by people with ADHD. Jackie stated that keeping her room clean was an issue for her before, when she had only one trashcan, because the act of going to the one trashcan in her room was “too much.” Now with three trashcans in her room, “there’s always one within reach” (Jackie, personal communication, June 15, 2021).

Jackie learned that keeping her medication next to her bed in the same location assisted with the routine of remembering to take it. Jackie also stated that she learned to keep her medication loose so that there are no barriers between herself and her pills. Jackie believes that the act of leaving her pills loose next to her bed is something that neurotypical individuals would

not be able to suggest, as they do not understand the executive dysfunction that Jackie works through in her daily activities.

Though Jackie did not find guidance on how to take a shower more often, she shared that when she was able to see that others with ADHD also struggle with the act of taking a shower, it helped to normalize her behavior and the tension that she felt from understanding the need to take a shower, but the inability to do it without mental preparation.

Jackie described the process of learning more about ADHD and finding connection with a community of other people with ADHD:

...understanding that to a certain extent, that's literally it's just the way that I'm wired and it's not some personal flaw of mine. I felt a lot of relief. I felt less alone. I thought I was just so weird, for so many things. And then when I started finding more accounts online run by people with ADHD talking about their daily life struggles. I'm talking about very specific things that I thought I was the only person in the world who dealt with and then saw it in writing... I was like, 'I'm just like, oh, my goodness, that's it, that's me!' I never told anybody that, like, it's so hard for me to like, get in the shower. It's just a whole process in my mind. Like, there are so many mental blocks around it and must sit there and psych me up and be like, 'okay, I'm showering tonight.'" I have to make myself and then once I'm in, I'm good, but it's getting there... I never told people that because that's weird, you know, but then I saw people posting about it as, like, Oh, that's just like an ADHD thing. It's hard for us to do things because executive dysfunction is a real issue. ADHD is very poorly named. And seeing all of that, like that's things that other people deal with, too. It made me feel a lot less alone. It made me feel really validated. And it made me feel excited because I was seeing ways that people were coping with the issues

that I was dealing with, in different ways and the ways that I've been told all my life that I should be coping, because they were ways developed by people who actually had ADHD instead of neurotypicals (Jackie, personal communication, June 15, 2021).

Social Connection

Diane shared the importance of her social connections before her attendance at the university. During Diane's interview, she shared that she knew a student who informed her of the resources present at the university and what was required to become registered. Diane also stated that, because of the information shared with her by her friend, she knew that she wanted to attend the university. With the guidance offered by her friend, Diane was able to complete her needed assessment before transferring to the university. Once Diane transferred, she was able to follow the guidance of her friend to get registered with Student Accessibility Services.

Another impact of social connection was communicated during the interview with Ciara. Ciara described herself as an older student at the university whose grade school experience was largely impacted by family members who advocated for her to receive the accommodation necessary for her to graduate from high school. Following graduation, Ciara's family was able to work with state resources to support Ciara's continued education and completion of her associate's degree. Following Ciara's enrollment at the university, she worked as part of a student group designed to increase awareness of persons with disabilities on campus. Though the program is new at the university, Ciara believes in the impact that activism can have on creating change, just as it did in her life with her family advocating for her. Currently, Ciara works in education supporting students with special needs to find success in education. Ciara's account of

the impact advocacy and activism has had on her life is being reapplied on both the university's campus as well as in Ciara's place of employment.

During the interview with Krystal, she shared that her passion for the ADHD community has guided her towards her desire to attend medical school and assist others to become more aware of ADHD and to further normalize ADHD in society. Krystal shared that she has worked to connect others who have disclosed to her that they believe they might have ADHD to get assessed so that they can get registered with Student Accessibility Services. Krystal's passion for activism and advocating for ADHD awareness derives from the lack of awareness she had growing up with ADHD and the stigma of taking medication.

Summary

This chapter described the findings from this study to answer the research questions: how undergraduate students with learning disabilities indicate their disability as their primary identity and if they connect their primary identities to demonstrate intersectionality between their identities, as well as if undergraduate students with learning disabilities identify policies/practices as restrictive to their persistence towards degree attainment in higher education. Within this study, the researcher interviewed ten undergraduate students with learning disabilities who are currently registered with Student Accessibility Services to gain further insight into this phenomenon. During this study, three emergent themes were presented by the participants: otherness, rejection-sensitivity dysphoria, and the role of social media and social connections on the participants' ability to make meaning of their learning disabilities and to navigate institutional policies/practices to support their persistence. Throughout this chapter, direct quotes were used to aid the researcher in telling the story of the participants' shared phenomena.

In chapter 6, the researcher will interpret data provided by the participants to the conceptual framework of this research study. Chapter 6 will conclude this study and further highlight the emergent themes to create recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter provides a summary of the study, followed by a discussion of the findings that emerged from the data analysis of the participants' interviews with the researcher. The data will be applied to the conceptual framework to interpret implications and recommendations for the application of what was learned from this study. Lastly, the researcher will share observations to provide recommendations for future research.

Summary of Study

This study began with the desire to report the personal accounts of students with learning disabilities and what they identify as impediments to their degree attainment. The researcher believes this research is necessary, as students with disabilities have higher rates of attrition compared to students without disabilities. Furthermore, students with learning disabilities are believed to be the majority population of students with disabilities in higher education, according to NCES (2011), which is why students with learning disabilities were the target population to study this phenomenon. With this goal in mind, the researcher created two research questions to guide the researcher:

1. Do undergraduate students with learning disabilities indicate their disability as their primary identity and do they connect their primary identities to demonstrate intersectionality between their identities?; and
2. Do undergraduate students with learning disabilities identify policies/practices as restrictive to their persistence towards degree attainment in higher education?

A conceptual framework was designed by the researcher to guide the exploration of the phenomenon and to assist in the development of suggestions to support student persistence as they navigate institutional policy and practices. This conceptual framework was designed to include the interconnection between both the Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity and Critical Disability Theory. The individual accounts of the participants are unique based upon their experiences; however, the theories are used to provide connection between the group of students with the commonality of having learning disabilities (Abes, Jones, & McEwen, 2007; Procknow, Rocco, & Munn, 2017).

A hermeneutical phenomenological design was selected because the researcher intended to gather the emotional experiences as described through multiple viewpoints of a shared phenomenon by participants. Though there was intended to be variation between the participants' descriptions of the phenomenon, the multiple descriptions through multiple viewpoints provide a better understanding of the phenomenon and connect points of interconnections between the participants (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Student Accessibility Services assisted in the study by sending email invitations to students registered at the university to receive accommodations who were both undergraduate students and identified as having a learning disability. A total of 1,250 email invitations were sent to students to participate in the study during the summer of 2021. A total of 36 students completed the Online Questionnaire linked on the email invitation. Of the 36 completed questionnaires, ten participants were identified and participated in this study.

Discussion of Findings

As stated in Chapter 5, through the interviews between the researcher and the participants, sufficient data was gathered to answer the research questions. As additional data was gathered during the interviews between the participants and the researcher, the additional information will provide insight into the interconnection between the participants, as well as direction for further research.

Research Question 1: How do undergraduate students with learning disabilities indicate their disability as their primary identity and do they connect their primary identities to demonstrate intersectionality between their identities?

The findings for Research Question 1 revealed that of the ten participants, only four participants indicated their learning disability as a primary identity. Though it may appear that the participants do not identify as having a learning disability, when the researcher acknowledged that the participants included or failed to include their learning disabilities, the participants provided a deeper understanding of their relationship with their learning disability. Of the ten participants, two participants (Ciara and Jackie) acknowledged that their learning disability is more complex than an identity. Ciara informed the researcher “that every aspect of [her] life has been influenced by [her] learning disability” (Ciara, personal communication, May 20, 2021). Like Ciara, Jackie described her learning disability as the center of her identities and noted that it provides contexts for all her other identities.

Though only four participants listed their learning disability as a primary identity, all but one participant (Shannon) identified their learning disabilities as being interconnected with their other identities. It is important to note that Shannon was diagnosed three months before the

interview with the researcher. Furthermore, within the interview with the researcher, Shannon was able to identify behaviors from before her diagnosis that were emblematic of a person with ADHD. Though Shannon failed to describe the intersection between her identities and her learning disability, she describes the process of being diagnosed with ADHD as finding the “missing piece” in learning about why her behaviors were different from others (Shannon, personal communication, May 21, 2021).

Though only four participants listed their learning disability as a primary identity, all participants were able to indicate that they acknowledge the intersection between their provided identities. All participants were able to provide examples to the researcher to demonstrate understanding of their identities and how they connect at different times to create an experience that can be recalled and shared with others.

Following the review of the rich data provided by the participants, the researcher believes that sufficient responses were provided to fully answer Research Question 1. Though not all participants indicated that their learning disability was a primary identity, all participants were able to indicate a deep understanding of themselves connected to their learning disabilities. Even though both Krystal and Shannon were diagnosed with their learning disabilities within the six months of the interview with the researcher, both participants were able to describe how their learning disability impacts their academic lives.

Research Question 2: *How do undergraduate students with learning disabilities identify policies/practices as restrictive to their persistence towards degree attainment in higher education?*

The findings for Research Question 2 reveal that all participants were able to identify policies/practices as restrictive to their persistence toward degree attainment in higher education. Though all participants were successful in identifying policies/practices as restrictive to their persistence, not all the examples provided by the participants reflected policies/practices occurring at the university where the study was conducted, as several of the participants attended other institutions of higher education before they attended the university where the study was conducted.

Responses provided by Diane, Jeni, Linda, and Mary indicated that outdated assessments impacted them. For these participants, there was a need to discover where to go to be reassessed and pay out-of-pocket for a new assessment, which created additional stress on the participants. All participants (Diane, Jeni, Linda, and Mary) indicated that there was little to no change from their previous assessments; however, the reassessment was still needed for the participants to be registered with Student Accessibility Services and receive their accommodations.

Responses provided by Ciara, Gina, and Krystal indicated that the act of having to disclose to their instructors/faculty is a policy/practice that impacts them. Krystal identified that the impact of Rejection-Sensitivity Dysphoria makes the decision to approach her instructors/faculty very difficult, as she experienced prior trauma with rejection.

Responses provided by both Krystal and Shannon indicated that before receiving accommodations, a student must be registered with Student Accessibility Services. It is important to note that both Krystal and Shannon both were diagnosed with ADHD while in attendance at the university. Both Krystal and Jackie were doing poorly in their coursework, which prompted them to seek support. Krystal shared that she advocates for others who are not currently diagnosed or registered with Student Accessibility Services. Krystal attempted to receive support from Student Accessibility Services before her diagnosis, however, she was not qualified for accommodation without registration. Due to the delay in Shannon's assessment, she fell behind in her coursework and had difficulty getting support from her faculty.

Jackie's response to this question indicated that she is aware that there are students who attempt to register with Student Accessibility Services but are provided different information as to what is needed to become registered. Jackie shared that she is part of a student group for persons with ADHD and, though her experience becoming registered was fairly easy, other students within the group experienced different requirements for documentation before becoming registered. When Jackie reflected on her experiences, she considered herself "lucky" (Jackie, personal communication, June 15, 2021).

Sara's response to this question indicated that she struggles with the uniformity of the alternative testing site accommodation that she is provided. Sara stated that the action of her having to leave her classroom to sit in another location causes her to recall her experience in grade school, which makes her feel "not...worthy" to be at the university (Sara, personal communication, May 20, 2021).

Integration of Conceptual Framework

For the creation of the Conceptual Framework, the researcher proposed that student experiences would progress students along toward degree attainment. For students with disabilities, and more directly for this research, students with learning disabilities, the interaction between their identities (Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity) and the limitations they possess related to their learning disability interact with the limitations externally assigned to them within their environment. As the students progress toward degree attainment, they must conform with institutional policies and practices to reach graduation.

From the data gathered in this research study, the participants were able to share information about their student experiences. The participants' experiences ranged from first-year students never physically coming to campus due to the global pandemic of COVID-19, transfer students choosing to come to the university due to the resources available at Student Accessibility Services, to soon-to-be graduating seniors who spent their entire academic career at the university. A point of consideration with the students' experiences was the fact that all participants within this study identify as female and all participants identified as Caucasian or Hispanic. Though there are differences between all people who share a sex or racial demographic, the similarities were still noted by the researcher.

The participants were asked to share information about their experiences with their learning disability to the researcher could learn more about their connection points with Critical Disability Theory. Eight of ten of the participants were diagnosed with their learning disability before age 12, while two participants were diagnosed in their twenties. Regardless of the differences in ages of diagnosis, the average age of diagnosis is 9.7 years of age. When excluding the two participants who were diagnosed during their twenties, the average age of

diagnoses for the other eight participants is 7 years. The eight participants were able to live most of their lives understanding that they were diagnosed with a learning disability and spent their formative years in grade school being qualified for accommodations. These experiences provided most of the participants with an understanding of their learning disabilities as it relates to their overall understanding of self, as well as how others interpret and assign meaning to having a learning disability. These experiences allow the participants to have a formative understanding of the application of Critical Disability Theory.

As the participants were able to identify policies/practices that were impactful to their progression, this aspect of the conceptual framework appears to be accurately placed within the model. Furthermore, with nine of the ten participants' description of the policies/practices being something they must progress through (registration with Student Accessibility Services/requesting accommodations from instructors) the graphic depiction of a funnel is accurate and fitting to represent the restrictive natures of the policies/practices encountered by the participants.

For the final part of the conceptual framework, persistence, all participants were currently enrolled in undergraduate coursework and did not disclose any continued academic difficulty. As all participants were registered with Student Accessibility Services at the time of the study, the impact of failing to be registered to receive accommodations is unclear. The only insight that was provided on this point was from the accounts of both Krystal and Shannon. Both participants shared that before their registration with Student Accessibility Services, they were not doing well academically. They acknowledged that due to their diagnosis of ADHD and their ability to register to receive accommodations, they are currently doing well academically. Grade Point Averages were not collected as part of this study, so the researcher must rely on the accuracy of

the participants. Though all the participants are registered with Student Accessibility Services, two participants, Gina and Sara, indicated that they do not use their accommodations. During Gina's interview, she shared that she used the accommodation when she was taking her teaching test, while Sara stated that she does not like to use her accommodation due to her experiences with otherness. As is clear from the participants' statements that their registration with Student Accessibility Services has been beneficial to their academic persistence, additional research is needed to understand the impact of persons with learning disabilities who fail to be registered and receive accommodations. As indicated in the research of Madaus, Grigal, and Hughes (2014), though students who receive accommodations are more likely to persist, the true number of students who would otherwise qualify for accommodations is unknown.

Implications and Recommendations

The findings in this study provide several implications for both secondary education and institutions of higher education to consider when working to support students with learning disabilities. The recommendations for educators and administrators within secondary education are to increase awareness of developing theories that impact student persistence and assist with the transition of students with accommodation needs from secondary education to higher education. The recommendations for higher education administrators include the integration of measurements of student success, the creation of institutional policies designed to support students with learning disabilities, the interpretation of state and federal law, and the exploration of universal instruction design to support all learners in higher education.

Recommendations: School Teachers and Administrators

From the accounts of several participants, the impact of experiencing "otherness" created a lasting impact. When considering the account of Sara, being singled out because of her learning

disabilities has created a lasting impact where she is resistant to receiving accommodations regardless of her needs. The researcher recommends that both teachers and administrators in grade schools become more aware of the impact of their words and actions. Though this is Sara's account of her experiences, the impact of what she remembers is just as impactful to her regardless of the accounts of the teachers who made the statements. The focus of this study was not on the difference between an inclusive or exclusive classroom during grade school; however, the decision points for inclusion versus exclusion have a lasting impact on students. Additional research is needed in this area to assist grade schools in the creation of policies designed to support their student populations.

It is also recommended that high schools communicate with students as they prepare to graduate to assist them with the transition from high school to higher education, as the laws that govern accommodations within high school differ significantly from those governing higher education. In the account of Ciara, she was able to navigate the points of transition easier than most students due to family support, as well as that of her school.

Recommendations: Higher Education Administrators

Administrators and policymakers within higher education should integrate measurements of student success with the creation of institutional policies designed to support students with learning disabilities. From the data gathered, the students were able to identify impediments that interrupted their academic progression. The rationale behind some restrictive policies is unclear from the research and from the data supplied by the participants. Though there is an institutional need to collect data to demonstrate compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, compliance should not be confused with student support. Both state and federal laws are designed to identify basic compliance. Shifting focus from compliance to student success,

institutions of higher education will be able to comply with the law and ensure dynamic support for students.

When considering the interview with Shannon, who was diagnosed with ADHD while in attendance at the university, if she would have missed social media from others with ADHD, she would have not known to get tested for ADHD. Shannon would have likely failed to persist at the university; however, the university would still have followed federal law at the cost of a student (Shannon) who needed support from the institution. Furthermore, once Shannon was able to receive the accommodations after being assessed and registered with Student Accessibility Services, she still struggled to complete the backlog of missed assignments. Shannon shared that she tried to get support before getting assessed, but both the instructor and Student Accessibility Services were unable to provide accommodations without an assessment.

From this study, social media and social connections were identified as impactful to connect students with support services at the university. Furthermore, several students mentioned their attendance within groups for students with ADHD. These groups can assist institutions in shifting from “able normative” policy creation to community-based policy creation where there is an intentional “seat at the table” for students with disabilities to aid in the creation of institutional policies and practices.

Based on Shannon’s account, there was not a focus on student success. The focus was on compliance with ADA. This focus is not unlike the findings of Leake and Soddien (2014) who found similar results. Should there have been a commitment to universal instruction design, the institution would be able to provide a more holistic delivery and assessment of mastery of course content from the different types of learners within higher education.

Limitations and Delimitations

This study utilized phenomenology, which was intentionally selected by the researcher to capture the experiences of the participants. The researcher attempted to tell the stories of the participants as they relate to the shared phenomenon; however, not unlike all phenomenological research, the positionality of the researcher is always important to acknowledge. Within this study, the researcher provided a positionality statement, supplied motivation for the research with the participants, incorporated an independent coder to review the raw data to identify the themes within the interviews, and supplied a rich description of each participant using their own words from the interviews. Regardless of this focus on both accuracy and trustworthiness, the researcher acknowledges the limitations of the universal application of this study, as it was designed to tell the story of ten undergraduate students with learning disabilities working to graduate from a university.

The first limitation of this study is that all participants identified as female. It is unlikely that the females within this study are representative of the population of the university where the research was conducted. Though the solicitation email to participate in this study was sent to all undergraduate students with learning disabilities and registered with Student Accessibility Services, it is notable that all participants who agreed to be interviewed were female. When reexamining the responses to the questionnaire that followed the solicitation email, there was only one potential participant who may have identified as male based upon the supplied gender-normative name. The potential male participant failed to respond to schedule an interview, so the researcher moved forward with the other participants. Though the focus of this study was not on the sex of the participants, this result is notable and may have created a limitation in the results.

The second limitation identified by the researcher was that four of ten participants identified as Hispanic, while the remaining six participants identified as Caucasian. The researcher found it notable that members of a differing race/ethnic groups did not participate in this study. As the study was conducted at a Hispanic-Serving Institution, the researcher found it reasonable that there would be a larger portion of participants in this study who identify as Hispanic; however, the complete absence of all other races/ethnicities except Caucasians is noteworthy.

The third identified limitation was that the study was conducted while the research site was the transition from face-to-face instruction to remote instruction as a response to the COVID-19 virus. As a result of this change at the site of the study, all interviews were conducted online via Zoom without the option to meet face-to-face.

With regards to delimitations, only undergraduate students with learning disabilities registered with Student Accessibility Services were contacted to participate in this study. This was an intentional decision by the researcher to ensure participation by students. As noted by Madaus, Grigal, and Hughes (2014), students attending higher education have multiple identities, and having a disability might be one. Currently, there is little knowledge of the true population of persons who could qualify for accommodations, as it takes the overt act of a student to register with Student Accessibility Services. As students who would otherwise qualify for accommodations fail to become registered, the researcher was concerned that this unknown population would impact the ability to gather accurate data for this study. Therefore, the researcher's focus was only placed on students currently registered with Student Accessibility Services and not all students who would otherwise qualify for accommodations for a learning disability.

Recommendations for Future Research

As indicated within Implementation and Recommendations, the researcher recommends that additional attention and research be focused on the concept of otherness. The impact of this concept was expressed through multiple interviews with the participants. Furthermore, the impact of the individuals who experienced otherness has a lingering effect on the connection between their identities, as well as their learning disability. Additional research on this concept may provide insight to teachers of both grade school and high school on strategies to avoid or confront this phenomenon.

Another recommendation for further research is to develop strategies to assist institutions of higher education to discover techniques to incorporate universal instruction design within the pedagogy. Participants disclosed a variety of impacts from the global pandemic of Covid-19. Some participants indicated that they were thriving within their course work since they were able to set their schedules, while others expressed that the pandemic caused their grades to drop due to the lack of structure. Regardless of the impact on the participants, the global pandemic confronted higher education with a need to deliver information in different ways, which provided opportunities for some students while challenging others. The alternative the structure of remote education can be an opportunity for students who are unable to physically be present in the classroom. Another added benefit offered by Linda during her interview was that with remote instruction she was able to plan for the semester and excel academically.

The final recommendation for future research is the difference between the sexes and genders as they relate to becoming registered for accommodations with Student Accessibility Services. As stated within this study, females were the only participants. Data from the National Center for Education Statistics (2016) indicates that males are more likely to be diagnosed with

learning disabilities. It is notable that, in this research, no males volunteered to participate. Though there are lessons learned from this research, the homogeneity of the population is missing male voices. Additional research should be considered to include the personal accounts of this population.

Concluding Remarks

This hermeneutical phenomenological research was designed to bring forward the stories of ten participants whose experiences with their learning disabilities shaped the way they work to earn their degree within higher education. The researcher appreciates the trust the participants placed in this study by sharing their stories to add their voices to the current research and to assist policymakers in the future design process intended to support access and support for student success.

All the persons who participated in this study, as well as those who agreed to be interviewed by the researcher, are fully deserving of all the time and focus needed to support student success regardless of ability. The researcher is reminded of the complexity of the experiences of the participants and the population of persons with learning disabilities. The researcher appreciates the difficult task for administrators to support the individual needs of this population who have different degrees of integration of understanding of their learning disability within their personal identities. Only through taking the time in policy development to intentionally provide support to students will administrators begin to answer the needs of this student population to progress towards academic completion. Institutional policy should not be the reason students with learning disabilities fail to earn their degrees.

APPENDIX A: IRB APPROVAL LETTER



UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

Institutional Review Board
FWA00000351
IRB00001138, IRB00012110
Office of Research
12201 Research Parkway
Orlando, FL 32826-3246

EXEMPTION DETERMINATION

April 12, 2021

Dear Michael Gilmer:

On 4/12/2021, the IRB determined the following submission to be human subjects research that is exempt from regulation:

Type of Review:	Initial Study, Category 2(ii)
Title:	The Intersection of Critical Disability Theory, Multiple Dimensions of Identity, and Institutional Policy on Students' Persistence Towards Degree Attainment
Investigator:	Michael Gilmer
IRB ID:	STUDY00002786
Funding:	None
Grant ID:	None
Documents Reviewed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HRP-251- FORM - Faculty Advisor Scientific-Scholarly Review fillable form.pdf, Category: Faculty Research Approval; • Appendix A-Email Invitation.docx, Category: Recruitment Materials; • Appendix B-Online Questionnaire.docx, Category: Survey / Questionnaire; • Appendix D-Interview Protocol.docx, Category: Interview / Focus Questions; • HRP-254-FORM Explanation of Research - MSG -3.0.pdf, Category: Consent Form; • HRP-255-FORM - Request for Exemption - MSG 3.0.docx, Category: IRB Protocol

This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made, and there are questions about whether these changes affect the exempt status of the human research, please submit a modification request to the IRB. Guidance on submitting Modifications and Administrative Check-in are detailed in the Investigator Manual (HRP-103), which can be found by navigating to the IRB Library within the IRB system. When you have completed your research, please submit a Study Closure request so that IRB records will be accurate.

APPENDIX B: EMAIL INVITATION

Dear <<Student>>

You are receiving this message because you have been identified as a student who is receiving services from Student Accessibility Services. My name is Michael Gilmer, and I am conducting a research study to better understand the institutional obstacles in place that impact your overall academic success as it relates to the support you receive with Student Accessibility Services. More specifically, I am interested in learning more about you.

Should you be interested in participating in this research study, please follow the link below. Please be assured that your identifiable information will not be included in any future writings or publications and your participation in this study is an indication of your informed consent.

<<Link>>

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Michael Gilmer

APPENDIX C: ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE

Name: _____

Email Address: _____

1. What is your major?
2. What support do you receive from Student Accessibility Services?
3. Do you utilize the services of Student Accessibility Services for all your courses?
4. How would you describe your racial demographic?
5. How would you rate your personal financial status?
6. How would you describe your registered disability?

Mobility Hearing Impaired Learning disability Visual Impairment Other

7. When reflecting on you and all the facets of your life that have helped/hindered your progression into/while in higher education, what do you believe to be the most meaningful?

(List all that apply).

8. How would you rate your self-confidence?

1 2 3 4 5

Very low Average Above average

Do you believe that your response to question 8 related to your registered disability? (Why/why not)

APPENDIX D: IRB EXPLANATION OF RESEARCH

EXPLANATION OF RESEARCH

Title of Project: The Intersection of Critical Disability Theory, Multiple Dimensions of Identity, and Institutional Policy on Students' Persistence Towards Degree Attainment

Principal Investigator: Michael Gilmer

Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Thomas Cox

You are being invited to take part in a research study designed to gather accounts from students who have experienced challenges in their overall success. Though all students have a story to share as it relates to their overall success and challenges in higher education, this research study is focused on undergraduate students with Learning Disabilities (Including but not limited to: Dyslexia, ADHD, ADD, Dyscalculia, and/or Dysgraphia).

You are being contacted directly because you receive accommodations from Student Accessibility Services, and you may be part of the group listed above.

For students selected to participate in this study, we will meet virtually via Zoom for a 45–60-minute interview on a date and time that works best for you.

Please be aware that your interview will be audio recorded. If you do not want to be recorded, please discuss this with the researcher; you will be able to be in the study. During the interview, the researcher will take notes from the conversation which will be shared with you following the conclusion of the interview to ensure that the information captured was what you wanted to share. Please note that all recordings both audio and written notes will be kept in a locked, safe place.

Participation in this study is voluntary. You are free to withdraw your consent and discontinue participation in this study at any time without prejudice or penalty. Your decision to participate or not participate in this study will in no way affect your relationship with UCF, including continued enrollment, grades, employment, or your relationship with the individuals who may have an interest in this study.

For this research study, the researcher will collect your name and student email address; however, this information will be kept confidential and will not be accessible to any other person without your expressed knowledge and permission.

To participate in this study, you must be:

- 18 years of age or older,
- Academically considered an undergraduate student (less than 120 hours),
- Be registered for accommodation support through Student Accessibility Services, and
- Have one or more diagnoses that would be considered a "Learning Disability."

APPENDIX E: EMAIL TO SELECTED PARTICIPANTS

I want to write you and first thank you for taking the time to answer the survey questions I sent to you. After reviewing the people who responded, I would like to interview you to learn more about you and gather additional information as it relates to this study.

As I shared with you in my email as well as on the survey the purpose of this research is to learn more about the institutional barriers in place that impact your persistence toward degree attainment. After reviewing your responses, I believe that your story will add to the larger conversation about what can be done to better support students with accommodation needs.

Should you still wish to participate in this research, please select the date and time that work for you. If you are unable to find a date and time for our interview that works for you, please email me directly (michael.gilmer@knights.ucf.edu) and I will coordinate with you. After you have selected your date and time, I will email you the Zoom meeting information.

Please plan for our interview to last between 45-60 minutes. As a reminder, I plan to audio record our interview; however, your name and personally identifiable information will not be included in my research as it will be considered confidential.

To signup for your interview time, please follow this link:
<https://doodle.com/mm/michaelgilmer/book-a-time>

Thank you again and I am looking forward to meeting you!

Michael Gilmer
Doctoral Student
Educational Leadership and Higher Education
College of Community Innovation and Education

APPENDIX F: VISUAL REPRESENTATION OF CODEBOOK FOLLOWING INTERVIEWS

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
1	Order	Description	Diagnoses	Diagnoses	Diagnoses	Diagnoses	Diagnoses	Diagnoses	Diagnoses	Diagnoses	Diagnoses	Diagnoses
2	Order	Description	Diagnoses	Diagnoses	Diagnoses	Diagnoses	Diagnoses	Diagnoses	Diagnoses	Diagnoses	Diagnoses	Diagnoses
3	Accommodations requested by SAS	Accommodations requested by SAS	Accommodations requested by SAS	Accommodations requested by SAS	Accommodations requested by SAS	Accommodations requested by SAS	Accommodations requested by SAS	Accommodations requested by SAS	Accommodations requested by SAS	Accommodations requested by SAS	Accommodations requested by SAS	Accommodations requested by SAS
4	When diagnosed	When diagnosed	When diagnosed	When diagnosed	When diagnosed	When diagnosed	When diagnosed	When diagnosed	When diagnosed	When diagnosed	When diagnosed	When diagnosed
5	Personal identity	Personal identity	Personal identity	Personal identity	Personal identity	Personal identity	Personal identity	Personal identity	Personal identity	Personal identity	Personal identity	Personal identity
6	Example of intersectionality	Example of intersectionality	Example of intersectionality	Example of intersectionality	Example of intersectionality	Example of intersectionality	Example of intersectionality	Example of intersectionality	Example of intersectionality	Example of intersectionality	Example of intersectionality	Example of intersectionality
7	Policy impact	Policy impact	Policy impact	Policy impact	Policy impact	Policy impact	Policy impact	Policy impact	Policy impact	Policy impact	Policy impact	Policy impact
8	COVID impact	COVID impact	COVID impact	COVID impact	COVID impact	COVID impact	COVID impact	COVID impact	COVID impact	COVID impact	COVID impact	COVID impact
9	Example of Otherness	Example of Otherness	Example of Otherness	Example of Otherness	Example of Otherness	Example of Otherness	Example of Otherness	Example of Otherness	Example of Otherness	Example of Otherness	Example of Otherness	Example of Otherness
10	Misdiagnosis	Misdiagnosis	Misdiagnosis	Misdiagnosis	Misdiagnosis	Misdiagnosis	Misdiagnosis	Misdiagnosis	Misdiagnosis	Misdiagnosis	Misdiagnosis	Misdiagnosis
11	Self-Confidence Score	Self-Confidence Score	Self-Confidence Score	Self-Confidence Score	Self-Confidence Score	Self-Confidence Score	Self-Confidence Score	Self-Confidence Score	Self-Confidence Score	Self-Confidence Score	Self-Confidence Score	Self-Confidence Score
12	Rationale	Rationale	Rationale	Rationale	Rationale	Rationale	Rationale	Rationale	Rationale	Rationale	Rationale	Rationale
13												
14												

REFERENCES

- Abes, E. S., Jones, S. R., & McEwen, M. K. (2007). Reconceptualizing the model of multiple dimensions of identity: The role of meaning-making capacity in the construction of multiple identities. *Journal of College Student Development, 48*(1), 1-22.
- Abes, E. S., & Wallace, M. M. (2018). "People see me, but they don't see me": An intersectional study of college students with physical disabilities. *Journal of College Student Development, 59*(5), 545-562.
- Adams, M., Blumenfeld, W., Castaneda, C., Hackman, H. W., Peters, M. L., & Zuniga, X. (Eds.) (2013). *Readings for diversity and social justice (3rd ed.)*, 461-535. New York, NY: Routledge.
- American Psychiatric Association. (2013). Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (5th ed.). <https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.books.9780890425596>
- Ancil, T. M., Ishikawa, M. E., & Tao Scott, A. (2008). Academic identity development through self-determination: Successful college students with learning disabilities. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals, 31*(3), 164-174.
- Bedrossian, L. (2021). Understand and address complexities of rejection sensitive dysphoria in students with ADHD. *Disability Compliance for Higher Education, 26*(10), 4-4. <https://doi.org/10.1002/dhe.31047>
- Behling, K., & Linder, K. E. (2017). Collaborations between centers for teaching and learning and offices of disability services: Current partnerships and perceived challenges. *Journal of Postsecondary Education and Disability, 30*(1), 5-15.

- Belch, H. A. (2004). Retention and students with disabilities. *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory and Practice*, 6(1), 3-22. doi:10.2190/MC5A-DHRV-1GHM-N0CD
- Burgstahler, S., & Doe, T. (2006). Improving postsecondary outcomes for students with disabilities: Designing professional development for faculty. *Journal of Postsecondary Education & Disability*, 18(2), 135.
- Behling, K., & Linder, K. E. (2017). Collaborations between centers for teaching and learning and offices of disability services: Current partnerships and perceived challenges. *Journal of Postsecondary Education and Disability*, 30(1), 5-15.
- Chickering, A. W. (1969) *Education and identity*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Chickering, A. W. & Reisser, L. (1993). *Education and Identity* (2nd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Cirino, P. T., Chin, C. E., Sevcik, R. A., Wolf, M., Lovett, M., & Morris, R. D. (2002). Measuring socioeconomic status: Reliability and preliminary validity for different approaches. *Assessment*, 9(2), 145-155. doi:10.1177/10791102009002005
- Cole, J. R. (2009). *The great american university: Its rise to preeminence, its indispensable national role, and why it must be protected* New York: Public Affairs, c2009; 1st ed.
- Cooper, D. L., Cuyjet, M. J., Howard-Hamilton, M. F., & Linder, C. (2016). *Multiculturalism on campus*. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing.
- Crenshaw, K. W. (1989). Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist politics. *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 1989, 139-167.

- Creswell, J. W. (1994) *Research design: Qualitative & quantitative approaches*. Thousand Oaks CA: Sage.
- Creswell, J. W. (2008). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (3rd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education.
- Creswell, J. W., Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Denhart, H. (2008). *Deconstructing barriers: Perceptions of students labeled with learning disabilities in higher education* *Journal of Learning Disabilities*.
- Elisa, S. A., Susan, R. J., & Marylu, K. M. (2007). Reconceptualizing the model of multiple dimensions of identity: The role of meaning-making capacity in the construction of multiple identities. (1), 1. doi:10.1353/csd.2007.0000
- Evans, N. J., Broido, E. M., Brown, K. R., & Wilke, A. K. (2017). *Disability in higher education: A social justice approach* (First edition. ed.) Jossey-Bass, a Wiley brand.
- Evans, N. J., Forney, D. S., & Guido DiBrito, F. (1998). *Student development in college: Theory, research, and practice* (1st ed. ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Erikson, E. (1959). *Identity and the life cycle (Vol.1)*. New York: International Universities Press.
- Erikson, E. H. (1968). *Identity: Youth and crisis*. New York: Norton.
- Fleming, A. R., Oertle, K. M., & Plotner, A. J. (2017). Student voices: Recommendations for improving postsecondary experiences of students with disabilities. *Journal of Postsecondary Education & Disability*, 30(4), 311-328.

- Freedman, J., & Ferri, B. A. (2017). Locating the problem within: Race, learning disabilities, and science. *Teachers College Record*, 119(5), 49-76.
- Garland-Thomson, R. (1997). *Extraordinary bodies: Figuring physical disability in american culture and literature*. Columbia University Press.
- Getzel, E. E. (2008). Addressing the persistence and retention of students with disabilities in higher education: Incorporating key strategies and supports on campus. *Exceptionality*, 16(4), 207-219.
- Hong, B. S. S. (2015). *Qualitative analysis of the barriers college students with disabilities experience in higher education* Journal of College Student Development.
- Horkheimer, M. (1982). *Critical theory : selected essays*. Continuum Pub. Corp.
- Hosking, D. L. (2008). *Critical disability theory*. Paper presented at the Fourth Biennial Disability Studies Conference, Lancaster University, Lancashire, England.
- Jones, S. R., & McEwen, M. K. (2000). A conceptual model of multiple dimensions of identity. *Journal of College Student Development*, 41(4), 405-414.
- Kaplin, W. A., & Lee, B. A. (2013). *The law of higher education: A comprehensive guide to legal implications of administrative decision making* (Fifth edition. ed.) Jossey-Bass.
- Kegan, R. (1982). *The evolving self: Problem and process in human development*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Kegan, R. (1994). *In over our heads: The mental demands of modern life*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

- Lalvani, P. (2015). *Disability, stigma and otherness: Perspectives of parents and teachers*. *International Journal of Disability, Development & Education*, 62(4), 379–393.
- Leake, D. W., & Stodden, R. A. (2014). Higher education and disability: Past and future of underrepresented populations. *Journal of Postsecondary Education and Disability*, 27(4), 399-408.
- Lee, D. H., Oakland, T., Jackson, G., & Glutting, J. (2008). Estimated prevalence of attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder symptoms among college freshmen: Gender, race, and rater effects. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 41(4), 371-384.
- Liasidou, A. (2012). Inclusive education and critical pedagogy at the intersections of disability, race, gender and class. *Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies*, 10(1), 168-184.
- Liasidou, A. (2014). The cross-fertilization of critical race theory and disability studies: Points of convergence/ divergence and some education policy implications. *Disability & Society*, 29(5), 724-737. doi:10.1080/09687599.2013.844104
- Liasidou, A. (2016). Discourse, power interplays and "disordered identities": An intersectional framework for analysis and policy development. *Emotional & Behavioral Difficulties*, 21(2), 228-240.
- Madaus, J. W. (2011). *The history of disability services in higher education* doi:10.1002/he.429
- Madaus, J. W., Grigal, M., & Hughes, C. (2014). *Promoting access to postsecondary education for low-income students with disabilities* Career Development and Transition for Exceptional Individuals.

Mamiseishvili, K., & Koch, L. C. (2011). *First-to-second-year persistence of students with disabilities in postsecondary institutions in the united states* Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin.

Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2016). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation* (Fourth edition. ed.) Jossey-Bass.

Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education. (2016). Number and percentage distribution of students enrolled in postsecondary institutions, by level, disability status, and selected student characteristics: 2015-16.

Newman, L., Wagner, M., Knokey, A., Marder, C., Nagle, K., Shaver, D., Wei, X., National Center for Special Education Research, (ED). (2011). The post-high school outcomes of young adults with disabilities up to 8 years after high school: A report from the national longitudinal transition study-2 (NLTS2). NCSER 2011-3005. *National Center for Special Education Research*.

Procknow, G., Rocco, T. S., & Munn, S. L. (2017). *(Dis)ableing notions of authentic leadership through the lens of critical disability theory* doi:10.1177/1523422317728732

Raue, K., Lewis, L., & National Center for Educational Statistics. (2011). *Students with disabilities at degree-granting postsecondary institutions. first look. NCES 2011-018*. National Center for Education Statistics.

- Sanders, C. (2003). Application of Colaizzi's method: Interpretation of an auditable decision trail by a novice researcher. *Contemporary Nurse, 14*(3), 292-302.
- Schlossberg, N. K. (1989). Marginality and mattering: Key issues in building community. *New Directions for Student Services, 48*, 5-15. doi:10.1002/ss.37119894803
- Stack-Cutler, H., Parrila, R. K., Jokisaari, M., & Nurmi, J. (2015). *How university students with reading difficulties are supported in achieving their goals* Journal of Learning Disabilities.
- Staszak, J.-F. (2020). Other/Otherness. In *Encyclopedia of Human Geography* (Second Edition, pp. 25–31). Elsevier Ltd. <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-08-102295-5.10204-5>
- Tinto, V. (2012). *Leaving college: Rethinking the causes and cures of student attrition* (2nd ed. ed.) University of Chicago Press.
- Tinto, V. (2017). *Enhancing student persistence: Lessons learned in the United States*.
- Tinto, V., & Pusey, B. (2006). *Moving from theory to action: Building a model of institutional action for student success*. Washington, DC: National Postsecondary Education Cooperative.
- United States Department of Labor (2019). *Frequently asked questions*.
- Yvonne, R. (2007). Why we quit. *Scientific American Mind, 18*(4), 74.