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## Improving Educational Experiences of Students With Disabilities at a Private Postsecondary University

Levenle Jean-Joseph

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Improving Educational Experiences of Students With Disabilities at a  
Private Postsecondary University

by  
Levenle Jean-Joseph

An Applied Dissertation Submitted to the  
Abraham S. Fischler College of Education  
and School of Criminal Justice in Partial  
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the  
Degree of Doctor of Education

Nova Southeastern University  
2020

## Approval Page

This applied dissertation was submitted by Levenle Jean-Joseph under the direction of the persons listed below. It was submitted to the Abraham S. Fischler College of Education and School of Criminal Justice and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova Southeastern University.

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## Statement of Original Work

I declare the following:

I have read the Code of Student Conduct and Academic Responsibility as described in the *Student Handbook* of Nova Southeastern University. This applied dissertation represents my original work, except where I have acknowledged the ideas, words, or material of other authors.

Where another author's ideas have been presented in this applied dissertation, I have acknowledged the author's ideas by citing them in the required style.

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Levenle Jean-Joseph

Name

April 5, 2020

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## Abstract

Improving Educational Experiences of Students With Disabilities at a Private Postsecondary University. Levenle Jean-Joseph, 2020: Applied Dissertation, Nova Southeastern University, Abraham S. Fischler College of Education and School of Criminal Justice. Keywords: barriers, students with disabilities, attitudes toward disabilities, disabilities

The problem addressed in this research study was that students with disabilities were experiencing challenges at a private postsecondary university in the United States that were impacting their educational experience. The purpose of this research study was to discover the challenges individuals with disabilities experience at a private postsecondary university and to find possible resolutions to those challenges. It was anticipated that this research study may improve the education experiences of students with disabilities at a private postsecondary university in the United States. It was equally important to discover (a) challenges experienced by students with a disability in a private postsecondary university and (b) possible resolutions to those challenges.

A phenomenological qualitative approach was utilized to answer three research questions. Data were gathered utilizing a survey developed by the researcher. Data gathered were analyzed utilizing qualitative methodology. A qualitative analysis of the survey results found three predominant themes or challenges that involved (a) course work assignments, (b) exams and testing, and (c) classroom accommodations. An analysis of the responses for course work assignments indicated that 11 (30%) of 38 participants with a disability experienced challenges. An analysis of the responses indicated that 20 (53%) of 38 participants with a disability experienced challenges with exams and testing. An analysis of the responses revealed that 13 (34%) of 38 participants with a disability experienced challenges with classroom accommodations. Interpretation and implications of these findings are described.

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

### **Statement of the Problem**

The problem addressed in the research study was that students with disabilities were experiencing challenges at a private postsecondary university in the United States that were impacting their educational experiences. The researcher, who was a person with a disability at a private university, experienced inaccessibility through physical barriers, as the layout structure of tables and chairs was scattered all around and blocked accessible areas when events were occurring on campus, the lack of prepared faculty knowledge about types of reasonable accommodations that were needed for a student with a specific disability before academic planning for the term, and lack of a designated location on campus for special service vehicles to station when dropping off or picking up students with a disability. These experiences had caused great concern for the researcher. The researcher had also observed others with a disability experiencing the barriers of challenges.

Implementing appropriate learning skills in a postsecondary educational institution was a bit challenging. Therefore, the development of a new infrastructure of strategies for individuals with disability was lacking based on additional services in a postsecondary institution by not implementing services such as helpful workshops, mandatory orientation for faculty preparation, training, or activities to develop a relationship with others individuals such as themselves who experienced lack of services based on their disability for support. According to Marshak, Van Wieren, Ferrell, Swiss, and Dugan (2010), developing a strategic concept of observation to seek help with social groups can offer alternative resources from community outreach programs, such as the Alumni Association.

## **Strategic Planning**

Similarly, strategic planning can help in developing programs such as focus groups and student government associations, or outside sources that are identified, such as reading for the blind or transit methods for individuals with disabilities. These strategic elements can be helpful tools to individuals with disabilities so they have the ability to embrace their insecurities, build confidence and workmanship, and attend school in a comfortable setting. The focus point was to observe the postsecondary education institution's failure to provide enough information about other organizations that are identified as outside sources (Shepherd, McMullen, & Ocasio, 2017). For example, social services on campus for individuals with disabilities can offer additional assistance so students can achieve their main goals in employment and education in a postsecondary institution.

The concept was addressed and improved upon in a new learning organization by incorporating community outreach programs to service as a whole in a postsecondary educational institution and provide assistance to individuals with disabilities. Indeed, the lack of comprehensive services or difficulties for individuals to access those services caused barriers because no rehabilitation structure or community outreach programs existed to assist disabled employees and students in the postsecondary system. It was important to develop focus groups or social groups publicly by possibly addressing the attention toward those who are afraid.

Announcements represent an ideal way to advertise on flyers or email addresses for individuals with disabilities where the office, location, and community outreach programs are helpful, instead of making it difficult for those who are disabled and struggling to find an answer to help support their needs. Additional training can be

implemented to supporting staff to accommodate disabled individuals in every regional site within the postsecondary institution. Assisting with demonstrations on special equipment can illustrate evidence on services identified, as training or workshops may be limited. The policies and procedures of the Americans With Disabilities Act are evident; however, there is no mention of community outreach programs as other organizations that are available to individuals who have special needs. The goal of research on disability barriers on campus is to develop a relationship base on outcomes with community outreach program to incorporate a relationship with postsecondary institutions. Orlin (1995) stated, “Public accommodations and services operated privately are not to discriminate against individuals with disabilities in the delivery of services specifically relevant to social type of agencies” (p. 233).

### **Background and Justification**

The background of this research study began with the informally observed challenges that students with disabilities appeared to experience at the research site. Potential challenges appeared to involve the provision of comprehensive services to students with disabilities or the difficulties of students accessing those services. In regard to policies and procedures on equal opportunity, the mandates of the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990 were enforced throughout all organizational institutions (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2006). The policies and procedures are well followed, and documentations are established to each unit or center of regional sites and publicized on postsecondary websites supported with links directing individuals with disabilities to the Disability Services Office. According to Coleburn (2014), having the ability to communicate with outside services could be helpful for disability specialists at postsecondary institutions that have an increased advocacy role as a third party line of

communication that can help make individuals with disabilities more aware of community outreach programs.

The researcher's observations indicated that advisors, student affair personnel, and directors of the office of human resources were not communicating the existence of community outreach programs to help facilitate additional accommodations for those with disabilities. Huang et al. (2014) indicated the following:

Due to the importance of individuals with disabilities, the U.S. government has enacted pieces of legislation to protect individuals and their rights from discrimination in the public and private sectors by providing reasonable accommodations to meet the needs of job performance in relation to work environment and equipment. (p. 40)

### **Deficiencies in the Evidence**

The literature described previously documented the provision for services to students with disabilities in higher education settings. Although informally observed at the research site, the actual challenges and their impact on students with disabilities were not known, as no study of the problem was extant. The research study was designed to explore this deficiency in the literature.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this research study was to ultimately improve the education experiences of students with disabilities at a private postsecondary university in the United States. It was equally important to discover (a) challenges experienced by students with a disability in a private postsecondary university and (b) possible resolutions to those challenges. The individuals with disabilities affected by the study can be described as those who are visually impaired, special needs students, wheelchair-bound students,

and students with learning disabilities. These students all face challenges regarding the lack of social responsibility related to developing a partnership agreement to create a well-structured community outreach programs beyond the postsecondary institution.

Some of the ways to enhance the experiences of individuals with disabilities include the establishment of equity, equality, and power, as well as meeting needs, and demonstrating responsibility for that segment of the population. In this case, individuals who are living with disabilities are lacking information and resources. The purpose of this research was to explore if the lack of morality claims were applicable to the individuals with disabilities in a postsecondary institution. The ideal strategy was to address the morality claims to improve a new form of resources to assist and incorporate services from outside sources as a whole in the social responsibility setting and provide support to individuals with disabilities. Lindsay (2005) found that implementing priority of morality focuses on the uncertainty of failure toward the present of enhancement of justice (Lindsay, 2005).

### **Audience**

The audience involved individuals providing the education for the affected persons with disabilities at the target institution, as well as other institutions, and the students. Above all, the affected audience involved the individuals with disabilities who experienced the difficulties in a private postsecondary institution and the barriers resulting from lack of benefit of knowing what community outreach programs were available to accommodate their specific needs, specifically funds for transportation, food, tuition, books, and medical expenses. Developing a unity with the third-party organizations and social groups can open the doors to those who feel ashamed or embarrassed to mention needing additional assistance. Postsecondary institutions need to

be more structural, informed, and knowledgeable of social services.

### **Definition of Terms**

For the purpose of this applied dissertation, the following terms are defined.

**Environmental educational plan.** This term refers to a plan to identify the social challenges, social skills, and social connections required to meet the needs of individuals to transition the effects of social functioning (Aron & Loprest, 2012).

**Minority-disability alliance.** This term refers to an organization that exists so students with disabilities can discuss their need for interpersonal support and convey frustration to address the issues at hand (Da Silva Cardoso et al., 2016).

**Supplemental education services.** This term refers to the provision of free academic services for eligible students with disabilities, which is also available outside the usual school times and off campus (Hadjikakou & Hartas, 2008).

**Universal design.** This term refers to the physical environment, such as how space may be reconfigured for accessibility (Sanchez-Rodriguez & LoGiudice, 2018).

**Universal design for learning and universal design for instruction.** This term refers to an emphasis on numerous approaches to identify the needs of students with disabilities and help them with how to represent their course work, how to express their course work, and how engage with their course work (Black, Weinberg, & Brodwin, 2015).

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

The problem addressed in the research study involved the challenges experienced by students with disabilities at a private postsecondary university in the United States. The purpose of this research study was to improve educational experiences of students with disabilities at a private postsecondary university in the United States. In addition, the literature discusses the history of the disability movement motivated by Edward Roberts, a disability activist who firmly believed in taking legal action to protect people with disabilities from discrimination. Furthermore, the researcher dove deeper to discover ethical guidelines that could lead to problematic issues, such as the prevalence of students with disabilities who still exist today based on reasonable accommodations.

Although accommodations are described in the literature, students with disabilities still find themselves facing challenges. The types of required accommodations must be defined by the World Health Organization framework to measure and identify the type of disability a person may have. At the same time, providing the benefits of accessible programs to students with disabilities may enhance their educational experiences in an effort to achieve successfully at a private postsecondary university in the United States.

### **History of the Disability Movement**

People with disabilities have struggled every day of their lives for centuries to gain respect, independence, and normality among people without disabilities living normal lives. Above all, people with disabilities stood ground wanting the moral of their identity to be known and heard, especially those with disabilities both apparent and nonapparent. Despite the struggles and challenges that people with disabilities faced, the problem of inaccessibility came to the attention of Edward Roberts, a disability activist,

who was diagnosed with polio and started the disability movement in 1962. Edward Roberts was the first student with several disabilities to attend the University of California at Berkeley in the United States (Collins, 2013; Perry, 2019).

Roberts firmly believed that individuals with disabilities enrolled in higher education had a chance to succeed in life and set their own goals. Despite the challenges and barriers, he endured with Berkeley. Edward Roberts was not going to stand for it and have others with disabilities go through the same struggles. Likewise, activists protesting around the world had led lawmakers to take measures to correct the problem. Considering others with disabilities both apparent and nonapparent, this was viewed as a problem. The problem brought the first action of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 into law to protect people with a disability from discrimination.

### **Developing Disability Into Law**

From the 1970s to 1990s, Section 504 became the law of the civil rights statute providing students with a disability protection for receiving accommodations to their needs to attend public and private educational institutions. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 was developed to provide federal funds to the educational institutions to create general education programs assisting students with a disability with getting access to education in the United States. The 504 plan is modeled to give students with a disability the freedom to eliminate challenging barriers and provide them the level of individual safety measure to pursue their potential goals the same as any other student without a disability in an educational institution (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2006).

Fast forward 20 years, lawmakers introduced the Americans With Disabilities Act into civil rights law in 1990. The legislation, in relation to Section 504, does not

discriminate against people with a disability on the grounds of all general public and private places and likewise applies to educational institutions. Under the Americans With Disabilities Act, Titles II and III provide funding programs for public and private educational institutions, and they are applied from state and local governments.

Therefore, all public and private educational institutions must comply by law regarding the accessibility of students with a disability and giving them equal opportunity as people without a disability (Flynn, 2016).

### **Ethical Considerations**

Ethics are implemented to serve as a standard policy and procedure to set forth guidelines. These guidelines pertain to the accordance of the rules and practices that are designed to protect public and private educational institutions. Unethical behavior and the failure to comply involve the lack of moral principle. In other words, not following protocol and being unwilling to follow the guidelines of policy and procedures could lead to problematic issues. Therefore, if students with a disability require accommodations, they must communicate with the Office of Disability Services to receive reasonable accommodations to meet their specific needs. The strategic implementation of all public and private educational institutions requires documentation by students to identify themselves as a person with disability and provide evident proof from a third-party medical office identifying indepth descriptions of what types of needs are required (Friedman, 2016). In retrospect, the prevalence of the problem could exist based on the type of accommodations that are defined, such as the types of reasonable accommodation that are implemented in a private postsecondary university.

### **Prevalence of the Problem**

The prevalence of students with a disability is well known in the United States, as

statistics from the Disability Status Report of Cornell University (2018) have shown that 14.4% were attending postsecondary institutions to earn their degrees. However, researchers have made known some students with a disability still face challenges when attending campus activities. The problematic issues can be sustained based on the student's accommodations of his or her disability. Nonetheless, prevalent barriers continue to exist across the United States. To illustrate, researchers at the University of Iowa developed a study called Realizing Educational and Career Hopes to explore the life experiences of some cohort sophomores with intellectual disabilities.

The instrument in the study was described as a designed program model to illustrate the life experiences that the cohort sophomores with intellectual disabilities were experiencing. The focused areas of the model included inclusive student life, person-centered planning and academic enrichment, career development and inclusive internships, and post-program support. The University of Iowa's program model researched students with intellectual disabilities ranging from 18 to 25 years across the United States. Of the students who participated, 35% were Iowa residents and 65% lived out of state.

The researchers found the demanding lack of challenges ranged from weekly advising, tutoring sessions, mentor assistance on the basis of problem-solving skills, managing personal issues, and academic goal setting. The general findings of the University of Iowa study indicated there is more research needed to understand the cultural climate of students with a disability on the basis of identifying their independent variables, such as problematic issues and institutional experiences. In retrospect, the prevalence of barriers takes form in different aspects. Barriers may include such things as insufficient funding and physical inaccessibility among others.

### **Public Postsecondary Institutions**

Scott (2009) discussed the method of ground theory on how disability is understood and perceived in a public postsecondary institution by developing a qualitative questionnaire distributed online. Over 400 responses were submitted from those who identified as being disabled. The author analyzed himself as a Latino man living the experience with a disability within the same theory. In relation to disability theory regarding barriers are the experiences African students faced and how Africa explored their challenges of physical disabilities. Another study focused on groups and analyzed a theoretical framework to guide researchers' insights to specific barriers of disabilities (Cahill, Rotter, Lyons, & Marrone, 2014).

In addition to experiences in the theory of disabilities are the challenges. In their case study, Cahill et al. (2014) discussed individuals with brain injury, how they faced challenges going to postsecondary institution, and how they overcame obstacles. Three results were found "(1) the balancing act, participants using their own tactics, (2) reality versus injury, participants felt asking for assistance would set them apart, and (3) square peg in a round hole, felt more distant from non-disabled individuals" (p. 93). The next study involved an oral interactive presentation that discussed related issues and challenges supporting evidence involving special need students to making decisions on their needs in higher learning organizations in education (Gaad & Almotairi, 2013).

### **Private Postsecondary Institutions**

One study described a model developed for providing students with disabilities access to a range of resources via the Internet that served as an information center for higher education (Bandyopadhyay & Scott, 2006). In another study, the researchers discussed supplemental education services, which enabled the possibility of offering free

services to eligible students in locations other than on campus. The researchers' results from three substudies were as follows:

(a) States are implementing supplemental education services similarly across the nation, (b) states are struggling with a variety of challenges to implement services, (c) students with disabilities typically are missing from current tracking procedures and service provision requirements, and (d) states are working hard to meet the new law's requirements. It is concluded that students with disabilities for the most part are out of sight and out of mind in current supplemental education services provision. Implications for research and practice are specified.

(Ysseldyke, Lehr, & Bulygo, 2008, p. 333)

In place of the outcome of supplemental education services, the researchers discussed that the access to and provision of services are limited in higher education. Researchers indicated 8% to 10% of students with disabilities are attending higher education institutions. Of those 10%, 15 attended private postsecondary institutions. Those 15 participants were chosen from Cyprus University for focus groups to determine the current provisions and issues (Hadjikakou & Hartas, 2008). After clear review, the disability theory of barriers on site identified the difficulties an individual with a disability experienced while attending a public or private educational institution and perceived the outcome of those individuals with disabilities. The aspects of this research were to explore the barriers of one's disability, such as how someone identified as a visually impaired individual experienced life attending a private postsecondary institution. The research was developed as a qualitative study to provide relevant evidence of limited services at a nonprofit postsecondary institution.

## **Types of Disabilities**

The phenomenon of identifying type of disability was integrated by the World Health Organization in 2001 to help detect the type of disability a person may have based on the standard level of capacity, performance, and perspectives of individual body functions (Sánchez, Rosenthal, Chan, Brooks, & Bezyak, 2016). The World Health Organization developed an instrument called International Classification of Functioning, Disability, and Health to measure a person's health and disability. According to Sánchez et al. (2016), the International Classification of Functioning framework identifies all levels of a person's overall "biological, environmental, and personal factors" (p. 288) to define personal abilities. The researchers continued to define the framework's three components identified as follows: "The framework is composed of three major components: (a) body functions and structure, (b) activities (related to tasks and actions by an individual) and participation (involvement in a life situation), and (c) contextual personal and environmental factors" (Sánchez et al., 2016, p. 288).

In comparison to Sánchez et al.'s (2016) description of the three major components of the International Classification of Functioning, Silveira-Maia, Lopes-dos-Santos, and Sanches-Ferreira (2017) composed a study utilizing the framework as a guide to assess individuals who may require accommodations from an educational program in Portugal. The research defined the individuals' assessment targeting their functionality and disability (Sánchez et al., 2016; Silveira-Maia et al., 2017). The international framework is utilized globally as a model to classify the types of disability a person may have, such as visual impairment, hearing impairment, physical impairment, traumatic brain injury, medical disabilities, and learning disabilities. According to Goldwasser, Martin, and Harris (2017), utilizing assessment tools is the "best practice for identifying

developmental educational programs” (p. 10) and targeting the functional type of disability a person may have. For instance, a person with a visual impairment may experience the loss of vision, limited vision, or blindness. The same applies to hearing impairment.

Another type of disability identified by the World Health Organization’s framework is physical impairment. Physical impairments target limited moves, such as motor skills, daily living performance, and independent movements. Above all, the framework analyzes the three components identifying the conditional factors of a person living with a disability (Colquitt et al., 2018). According to Pogrund (2018), after individuals are assessed and the types of disability are defined, disability services across the world uniquely implement accommodations to assist individuals with a disability while modifying changes to a reasonable working environment at a postsecondary institution (Pogrund, 2018).

### **Types of Barriers**

The following paragraphs include a discussion of some of the barriers faced by individuals with disabilities. These barriers include insufficient funding, physical inaccessibility, the accommodation process, and dismissive attitudes or stereotypes.

**Insufficient funding.** Higher education institutions often lack funds to assess the needs of students with disabilities; granted the emphasis is on focusing on the budget to meet the fiscal year, but, with the level of complex issues regarding eligibility of requirements and restricted procedures and policies of human rights, institutions face financial barriers regarding the identification of disabilities. According to Chambers, Bolton, and Sukhai (2013), implementing policy to enforce an accessibility program can better serve students with an apparent or nonapparent disability and significantly reduce

the financial burden to stakeholders in private postsecondary institutions. An accessibility program is identified as including grants and scholarships, social income assistance, government student grants, and state and local bursary programs.

The researchers continued by stating that incorporating such policies may allow students with a disability the opportunity to have access to the available funds, such as scholarships specifically individualized for their needs, to utilize education (Chambers et al., 2013; Hoggatt, 2017; Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2003). Once again, researchers find the value of implementing ideal accessibility programs, and local agencies and special education services continue to face numerous challenges regarding effectiveness because of financial barriers in a private postsecondary university (Aron & Loprest, 2012).

Jiar, Handayani, and Xi (2014) strongly suggested that emerging consultation guidelines funded by the U.S. government may help to establish an understanding of the needs of students with a disability and their life experiences and well-being on campus. Thus, researchers attempt to find elements to support the development of policy guidelines to assist new and future accessibility programs and, in return, break down the insufficient fund barriers that higher education faces. In addition, stakeholders are advised to “explore the influence of program characteristics, such as type of program, length of program, and local U.S. agencies; options are ideal for collaborating community partnerships (Plotner & Marshall, 2015, p. 58). Mock and Love (2012) related with other researchers, as implementing policy toward an accessibility program may cause tension between stakeholders, government, and local agencies in the United States, targeting restrictions that are barriers and reducing chances for students with an apparent and nonapparent disability to achieve their goals inclusively in a private postsecondary

institution.

Morgado, Cortés-Vega, López-Gavira, Álvarez, and Moriña (2016) found that, instead of developing an accessibility program, implementing an inclusive community may be essential to private postsecondary universities in the United States, further reconstructing an inclusive strategy to collaborate on teaching techniques and improve communication with peers and faculty. To illustrate, two universities in South Africa's higher education sector suggested that policy makers should aim toward social inclusion to find out what type of support is required for students with disabilities to develop a social networking concept, giving students with apparent and nonapparent disabilities more freedom to be themselves on campus (Mutanga, 2018).

**Physical inaccessibility.** Physical barriers continue to be encountered at the postsecondary university due to inaccessible pickup and drop-off areas designated for transportation on campus when events and meetings are occurring. Lack of communication between campus facilities management and public or private transportation services has been identified as challenges for students with a disability (Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2003). According to Soorenian (2013), international British students with disabilities are struggling and have been experiencing the lack of inclusive structural design for transportation caused by endless barriers in the postsecondary universities located in London and England. Among the problems, stakeholders are lacking funds due to economic and political strains and lack of knowledge on accessible accommodations.

In addition, the lack of standard designated architectural planning for an inclusive site for transportation services throughout the campus grounds causes difficulties for students with disabilities as they try to navigate social activities across the entire campus

(Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2003; Soorenian, 2013). For example, the researcher, who has a disability, is living the life experience on campus with similar barriers mentioned from researchers' journals. Genova (2015) stated, "Architectural barriers have strongly affected accessibility to education making public transport, and getting to the campus is an obstacle in Spain" (p. 1042).

**Accommodation process.** The accommodation process involves providing students with a disability specific services so they can experience the outcomes of education in a higher learning setting. Postsecondary institutions in the United provide policies to establish the accommodations required by students with a disability. The type of requirement for accommodations involves reconfiguring a classroom, removal of obstacles that are barriers, modifying one's need regarding ability, and offering auxiliary aids such as assistive technology devices. Therefore, the accommodation process begins with the student visiting the Office of Disability Services and requesting the reasonable accommodations with supporting documents from a professional physician, outlining the specific accommodation required for the individual (Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2003).

Waterfield and Whelan (2017) found that, when investigating the processing of accommodations at a Canadian University, the university's accessing of accommodations involved the least equitable process. Researchers found that students with learning disabilities were often not adequately provided accommodations, and they suffered from the lack of limited services received (Waterfield & Whelan, 2017). The accommodation process for a student with a disability may take time due to insufficient delays that cause provisions of an exclusive supply of need to receive information from the student with the disability or by not providing the information for support to the student with a

disability. In a likely manner, recommendation for “further research to determine how widespread this pattern of stratified access to accommodations is lacking based on limited services not provided in a private university” (Waterfield & Whelan, 2017, p. 1001).

**Dismissive attitudes or stereotypes.** Students with disabilities continue to hide their identities due to negative attitudes and stereotypes as they try to live the life experiences in the higher educational environment. The attributes may be taken by faculty, students, and staff with the basis of lack of knowledge and the sensitivity that may cause difficulty and affect students with disabilities. The lack of individualization may cause others to perceive students with disabilities as weak and unable to reinvent themselves (Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2003).

### **Barriers to Educational Experiences by Persons With Disabilities**

Students with disabilities often find themselves hiding their identity when transitioning from secondary school to postsecondary education, so others are not aware of their disability, which is why there are some barriers in U.S. postsecondary universities. This approach gives students with a disability an opportunity to reinvent themselves, considering they can make it on their own; however, the outcome may or may not turn out that way. Marshak et al. (2010) stated the following:

College students with disabilities’ reasoning of why they did not use accommodations includes a desire to redefine personal identity, to avoid social stigma and negative peer and faculty reactions, difficulty explaining their disability-related needs, and being disappointed with the utility of accommodations received. (p. 160)

Indeed, the frustration about information regarding accommodations and services can be overwhelming for some students with a disability. However, limiting the barriers

students may encounter by wanting to know more facts can help with their ability to succeed in living the experience of college life. With excessive research, studies have shown that a variety of different forms of barriers in the postsecondary educational services can take a toll of unforeseen measures. For instance, the measures are insufficient funding, physical inaccessibility, accommodation process, and dismissive attitude or stereotype.

### **Benefits of Accessibility to Educational Experiences by Persons With Disabilities**

The success of students with disabilities in private institutions starts with accessibility to the university, which then can manifest into mobility access, self-advocacy, social inclusion, and specialized programs. The access to accommodation represents an institution's earnest attempt to ensure the educational success of the students. The benefits of accessibility are essential for reasonable accommodations. Therefore, regardless of the disability, the environment is still different. Developing an environmental educational plan can help to identify the social challenges, social skills, and social connections to meet the needs to transition the effects of social functioning (Aron & Loprest, 2012). Some of the elements of a specialized program to address the needs of students with a disability include (a) early contact with students, (b) early acclimation to campus, (c) parent alliances, (d) specialized academic advising, and (e) ongoing support during the first year.

These accommodations can reduce the numbers of barriers and increase the potential achievements toward success, laying the groundwork for success of students with disabilities at postsecondary universities. Students with a disability experience challenges and struggles daily to become independent. Transitioning to higher learning may be difficult for some; however, the benefits of developing environmental educational

plans can be beneficial. According to Flynn (2016), implementing individualization education program represents a step toward setting long-term goals to enhance a student's experience in an initial inclusive educational environment.

### **Enhancing the Educational Experiences of Persons With Disabilities**

Developing an initial inclusive educational environment can benefit and enhance the educational experiences of students with a disability. According to Thomas and Whitburn (2019), integrating social groups may effectively break the barriers that challenge students with a disability in the classroom and on campus. Today, there are many inclusion programs that can help private postsecondary universities in the United States establish a healthy inclusive educational environment. According to Baker, Lowrey, and Wennerlind (2018), creating an opportunity to generate a postsecondary educational inclusive program for students with a disability will successfully build a cultural environment.

In other words, the infrastructure of an inclusive educational setting must take precedence. Bentley-Williams, Grima-Farrell, Long, and Laws (2017) suggested implementing a community partnership with preservice teachers who are gaining experience in teaching inclusive learning to students with a disability. Of course, stakeholders may require a measurable set of goals, such as pursuing cultural inclusion as a mission to collaborate with experienced professional preservices teachers to help students with disabilities cope with their real-life challenges on campus. Baltaru (2019) suggested developing a unique infrastructure of inclusion as reasonable policy will encourage other universities to establish their own goals and mission (Baltaru, 2019). Some of the ways to enhance the experiences of individuals with disabilities include the establishment of equity, equality, and power, as well as meeting needs, and

demonstrating responsibility for that segment of the population.

**Equity.** Equity represents a form of the outcomes and rewards. According to Singh and Walsh (2012), the lack of services that cause barriers means no fundamental structure or community outreach programs have been established to assist the understanding by students with disabilities regarding the information given about embracing what is out there to assist the individual in achieving personal goals, such as special equipment, software, materials, and other specific assistive devices. Some institutions have developed focus groups or social groups that publicly inform students about the assistance given from word of mouth and from doctors. However, it can be difficult to possibly address those needs because individuals with disabilities are often afraid to find sources to assist them.

Individuals with disabilities are frequently afraid to inform others about their lack of knowledge regarding equity. The key word *disabled* is a very sensitive word. The fear of announcing or publicizing it is evidence of the need to advocate a message indicating that individuals with disabilities must be given equity, and community outreach programs can be supportive. In a report by Singh and Walsh (2012) entitled “We Decide,” their approach of realizing equity and ethical responsibility is not to make it difficult; instead, it is important for the message to be helpful to those with disabilities who are struggling to find an answer to help support their needs. Additional training can be provided to faculty and staff in an effort to support individuals with disabilities and accommodate them at every campus of public and private postsecondary intuitions.

The characteristics of equity in goods and services, which are not always visible, can illustrate evidence of the need fulfillments that are limited. The policies and procedures of the Americans With Disabilities Act exist to guide the social responsibility

for the services that postsecondary institutions provide; however, the legislation does not mention the morality plea for helpful resources that individuals with disabilities are requesting in postsecondary institutions. Individuals with disabilities seek equity in their lives every day. The barriers that are considered challenges can develop into positive relationships based on the outcomes provided by the colleges and universities. Orlin (1995) discussed that the public accommodations and services provided by private colleges and universities are not meant to discriminate against individuals with disabilities but to deliver services specifically relevant to the social type of social responsibility.

**Equality.** Some individuals with disabilities feel they have the equal opportunity to make an ethical decision in regard to collective responsibility. In relation to policies and procedures on equal opportunity, the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990 was implemented throughout the target institution. The policies and procedures were well followed, and documentations were provided to each regional site and were publicized on to the website of the postsecondary institution supporting the message directed to individuals with disabilities about those policies and procedures. According to Coleburn (2014), having the ability to communicate with outside services could be helpful for individuals with disabilities in a public and private postsecondary institution by increasing the advocacy role as a third party line of communication that can help make other individuals with disabilities more aware of community outreach programs. The moral claim here is to equally share the sources that can be implemented to benefit those who lack resources.

The ability to understand manifests itself in showing individuals with visual impairments, individuals with special needs, individuals who are wheelchair bound, and

individuals with learning disabilities the behavior ethics of morality that are embedded in an awareness of communicating the knowledge of outreach programs to help facilitate additional accommodations for those with disabilities. According to Huang et al. (2014), meeting the equality needs of individuals with disabilities means providing the additional outreach services that will enact pieces of legislation to protect individuals' rights against discrimination in society by providing reasonable accommodations to meet the needs of jobs, higher learning, and performance in relation to work environment, training, and social living.

**Power.** Power is considered high authority, and the evidence of focus groups or social groups in the literature is an ideal form of moral claim (Barragan, 2012; Collins & Fulton, 2017; Loftis, 2005). The power of incorporating social responsibility should offer an illustration of third-party organizations developing or structuring resources for individuals with disabilities who are helpless, uneducated, and have limited access to resources. Public and private postsecondary institutions should modify their stance on social responsibility by incorporating a structure of knowledge that stands bold pertaining to advocating resources to the population of individuals with disabilities attending a postsecondary institution (Loftis, 2005).

Third parties described as community outreach programs of organizations are examples of developing a related structure to enhance the ability to generate a community resource (Loftis, 2005). The organization can support individuals with disabilities in meeting their needs for special accommodations. Focus groups or social groups can engage in morale-building types of activities, such as open-door policies, community gatherings, and conferences. Power is what individuals with disabilities will feel when they know there are sources of information out there to help support them to achieve their

goals. The postsecondary institution needs to recognize the lack of services concerning the population of individuals with disabilities and their need for support.

**Need.** A new structure needs to be developed in the postsecondary institution, along with the ethical knowledge of addressing the lack of service in relation to more resources (Dieterich, Chan, & Price, 2017; Moraña & Morgado, 2018; Osifuye & Higbee, 2014). To begin the process of this new development, the postsecondary institution can conduct interviews and implement focus groups to jumpstart the framework designed to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities and carry out various types of morality claims that are related to social responsibility. The affected audiences are the individuals with disabilities in the higher learning environment who lack resources to achieve their goals (Paul, 2000).

The population of individuals with disabilities will benefit from knowing what community outreach programs can incorporate for their accommodations and specific needs. Such resources include funds for transportation, food, education, social living, and medical expenses. Developing a unity that includes social responsibility can open the doors to those who feel ashamed or embarrassed to mention the need for additional assistance. Community outreach programs meet those needs by providing resources regarding more educated and informal morality of ethical thinking to help sterilize the structure, which is exciting because it builds a new strategy to add additional resources to accommodate individuals with disabilities in a postsecondary institution (Paul, 2000; Waterfield & Whelan, 2017).

**Responsibility.** The morality claim is to be responsible for sharing the resources to accommodate individuals with disabilities. Gostin and Powers (2006) stated, “The core value of focusing on the needs of the most disadvantaged can bring the outcome of the

moral claim to stand together to develop a positive aspect for disabled individuals to achieve their success in higher learning” (p. 1053). The responsibility means that community outreach programs represent the concepts of goods and services, thus informing individuals with disabilities about the equal opportunity to share their power of authority on ethical knowledge of thinking what social responsibility upholds for them as a resource of information in a higher learning environment.

The morality aspect of responsibility involves motivating individuals with disabilities to become more knowledgeable about community outreach services and providing additional resources to sustain the confidence of knowing what resources the postsecondary institution offers as an additional to support their needs. These efforts will help individuals with disabilities to adapt to the morality claims of social responsibility. Gubler, Kalmoe, and Wood (2015) stated, “The ethical claim is to increase and implement the moral behaviors of positive aspects for social responsibility by encouraging the disabled they do matter” (p. 705).

The core values of the additional support services involve the performance of the outcome that lies within the norms of the social responsibility (Gubler et al., 2015). The actions of each norm support the sources for individuals with disabilities, such as visually impaired, individuals with special needs, individuals who are wheelchair bound, and those with learning disabilities. The morality claim is to achieve the best results for society duty to help those who need assistance. Dole and Hurych (2009) stated, “Analyzing and resolving an ethical issue can result in an ethical result of access information” (p. 449).

Certainly, the research has explored the morality issues related to lack of services (Gubler et al., 2015; Moriña & Morgado, 2018; Paul, 2000). The purposes of community

outreach programs are ideal for meeting the requirements of equity, equality, power, need, and responsibility and the lack of services provided by postsecondary institution to the population of individuals with disabilities. The ethical knowledge is mentioned to improve the morality claims of the services that the postsecondary offers currently. In retrospect, individuals with disabilities deserve to be aware of other resources beyond the institution to support their needs and sharpen their ethical thinking and skills to achieve their goals (Paul, 2000; Spenceley & Wheeler, 2016).

### **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretic framework, based on the problem of individuals with disabilities experiencing lack of services in postsecondary institutions, was grounded in the disability theory of barriers on campus (Barragan, 2012). This theory, originally developed by Barragan (2012), was primarily used to study the attitudes of individuals without disabilities toward individuals with disabilities. The sources supporting this theory involved the educational challenges and experiences of individuals with disabilities (Osifuye & Higbee, 2014).

It was important to explore the process of overcoming obstacles (Cahill et al., 2014), with evidence supporting related issues (Gaad & Almotairi, 2013) in public and private postsecondary institutions. In addition, the sources supporting the theory involved improving various services related to all types of disabilities (Bandyopadhyay & Scott, 2006) and conveying possibilities for eligible individuals with the opportunity to receive effective supports and services without cost outside an organization. The most challenging experiences of individuals with disabilities involved the limited access to outside support services (Hadjikakou & Hartas, 2008).

## **Research Questions**

The following research questions were established to guide this applied dissertation:

1. What are the challenges faced by participants with disabilities at a private postsecondary institution?
2. How do these challenges impact students with disabilities?
3. What steps can be taken to minimize or eliminate these challenges?

## **Chapter 3: Methodology**

### **Introduction**

The problem addressed in the research study was that students with disabilities were experiencing challenges at a private postsecondary institution in the United States that were impacting their educational experiences. The purpose of this research study was to discover the challenges participants with a disability experienced at the private postsecondary university and find possible resolutions to those challenges. The point of research into disability barriers on campus is to develop a relationship based on the outcomes of community outreach programs to incorporate a relationship with the nonprofit postsecondary institution. Orlin (1995) stated, "Public accommodations and services operated privately is not to discriminate against individuals with disabilities in the delivery of services specifically relevant to the social type of agencies" (p. 233). Chapter 3 describes the research methodology to be utilized to answer the research questions posed in Chapter 2.

### **Participants**

The population for this study involved students with disabilities at a private postsecondary university in a large southeastern state in the United States. The sample population consisted of students with varying disabilities that were not limited to physical or visual impairment. The sample was a convenience one aimed toward including students with disabilities at one private postsecondary university. The sampling procedure involved nonprobability sampling, representing some characteristics of the population selected, involving participants with disabilities who experienced challenges at the private postsecondary university, and finding possible resolutions to those challenges. According to Creswell (2015), "nonprobability sampling is the selection of

participants because they are available, convenient, or represent some characteristic the investigator wants to study” (p. 141).

### **Instrument**

One instrument was utilized to collect data for this study (see Appendix). The researcher created an instrument called the accessibility survey, with five open-ended questions and eight closed-ended multiple-choice questions to discover the experiences of participants with disabilities at the private postsecondary university and to find possible solutions to those challenges. The survey instrument was categorized into four parts. Part 1 was structured to obtain participants’ demographic backgrounds. Part 2 was developed to discover participants’ experiences, challenges, and involvements at the private postsecondary university. Part 3 related to transportation experiences, and Part 4 provided opportunity for comments.

### **Pilot Test**

The instrument was piloted following the suggestions provided by Fink (2002), which began by creating questions for the survey that would provide information to answer the study’s research questions. Next, three coworkers read and completed the test to assess clarity and face validity. Each participant completed the survey within 10 minutes. After taking the survey, each participant was asked to provide feedback by answering the self-administered questions. Each participant was asked about the clarity and ease of understanding of the instructions, directions, and content of the questions. They were also asked about the clarity of the response choices and were given an opportunity to offer suggestions for making the test more user friendly.

The coworkers identified that piloted participants’ feedback was positive. They suggested rewriting some of the questions for clarity. For instance, Question 3 was left as

an open-ended question. Participants suggested an option to have a scale range of age instead of having participants write the answer. Another suggestion was to remove the marital status. Based on the structure of the survey, it was not necessary. The proposal was taken into consideration, and revisions were made by the researcher. Subsequently, the coworkers' submissions of the revised instrument were given to formative and summative committee members. They reviewed and approved for presentation to Project Assignment 3. The revised instrument was approved by the committees.

### **Procedures**

**Design.** The phenomenological research design was utilized for this research study. This design was an appropriate strategy in order to understand participants who have lived the experience of the phenomenon. The phenomenon was based on participants' characterized limitations in accessing auxiliary services at a private postsecondary university. According to Creswell (2015), this approach includes obtaining detailed descriptions of participants' experiences through narratives of a typical day in their lives.

**Data collection.** Upon approval by the Institutional Review Board, the researcher provided the Office of Student Disability Services with information to share with potential participants regarding the study and a consent form to sign and return if they chose to participate. The researcher drafted a statement of appeal to encourage students with disabilities to participate in the online survey. Students with disabilities were anonymous; therefore, the exact number of potential participants was unknown. All students who returned the signed consent form within 3 business days were provided a copy of the survey to complete and return within 1 week. Data were collected over a 2-week period to allow for as many participants as possible. The data-collection period was

extended an additional week if needed to collect more surveys.

**Data analysis.** Data were analyzed using qualitative methods as described by Creswell (2015). According to Creswell and Guetterman (2019), the data from the open-ended questions should be transcribed and reviewed for themes or comments that are similar to determine whether a consistent pattern or theme emerges among the respondents. These themes were organized and analyzed in order to determine answers to the study's research questions. The researcher's notes, thoughts, or remarks were written in a documented margin that involved answers from the surveys and responses from participants with a disability in a semistructured format in an indepth matter (Creswell, 2015; Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). The researcher sorted and sifted through materials by identifying the theoretical framework of critical guided research questions structured through the label of defined data. Data that provided descriptive analysis ranged from recurrent themes, patterns, and processes, as well as commonalities, differences in a built sequence of events, and developed theory of the study (Creswell, 2015).

**Ethical considerations.** The researcher maintained confidentiality by not sharing information with others and gained participants' trust by informing them of the purpose of the study and their role as part of the survey. The researcher showed respect for the research site, followed its rules, and used ethical research practices. The researcher also followed all university guidelines.

**Trustworthiness.** The trustworthiness of the study was important to the researcher. Ethical guidelines were followed in recruiting the participants, collecting and storing the research data, and presenting the findings of the study.

**Potential research bias.** The purpose of the study was to discover the experiences faced by individuals with disabilities and explore the challenges in their daily

lives at one private postsecondary university. This study was designed to acknowledge the need for change and improve the additional services required for individuals with disabilities on campus. Implementing the discovered challenges can lead to positive gains for the private postsecondary university.

### **Summary**

The researcher understood the importance of defining the purpose of the study, setting aside time for completion of the survey, and separating herself from the participants when interviewing. The researcher showed respect for the research site by not acting inappropriately. With all the aspects associated with ethical consideration, maintaining confidentiality was practiced by the researcher. The researcher kept all participants' names anonymous, kept all documented notes confidential, and met participants in an enclosed area for privacy.

## **Chapter 4: Results**

### **Introduction**

The problem addressed in the research study involved the challenges experienced by students with disabilities at a private postsecondary university in the United States. The purpose of this research study was to discover the challenges participants with disabilities experienced at the private postsecondary university and finding possible resolutions to those challenges. Chapter 4 presents the findings and answers to the research questions posed in Chapter 2. The researcher created an instrument called the accessibility survey, with five open-ended questions and eight closed-ended multiple-choice questions designed to explore the experiences of students with disabilities at the private postsecondary university and to recommend possible resolutions to those challenges. The survey instrument was categorized into four parts. Part 1 was structured to obtain participants' demographic backgrounds. Part 2 was developed to discover participants' experiences, challenges, and involvements at the private postsecondary university. Part 3 related to transportation experiences, and Part 4 provided opportunity for comments.

### **Participants**

The population for this study involved students with disabilities at a private postsecondary university in a large southeastern state in the United States. The sample population consisted of students with varying disabilities that were not limited to physical or visual impairment. The sample was a convenience one aimed toward including students with disabilities at one private postsecondary university. The sampling procedure involved nonprobability sampling, representing some characteristics of the population selected, involving participants with disabilities who experienced challenges

at the private postsecondary university, and finding possible resolutions to those challenges. According to Creswell (2015), “nonprobability sampling is the selection of participants because they are available, convenient, or represent some characteristic the investigator wants to study” (p. 141).

### **Findings for Research Question 1**

What are the challenges faced by participants with disabilities at a private postsecondary institution? The researcher’s analysis of the survey results found three predominant challenges that included (a) course work assignments, (b) exams and testing, and (c) classroom accommodations. An analysis of the responses for course work assignments indicated that 11 (30%) of 38 participants with a disability experienced challenges. An analysis of the response indicated that 20 (53%) of 38 participants with a disability experienced challenges with exams and testing. An analysis of the responses revealed that 13 (34%) of 38 participants with a disability experienced challenges with classroom accommodations.

### **Findings for Research Question 2**

How do these challenges impact students with disabilities? In light of the three predominant challenges indicated by participants (e.g., course work assignments, exams and testing, and classroom accommodations, the researcher discussed why participants were experiencing these problems.

**Challenge of course work assignment.** An analysis of survey responses from participants indicated that seven (18%) of 38 participants experienced problems based on being “unable to focus, trouble understanding assignments, lack of communication, difficulty reading, lack of time, and needing more explanation.”

**Challenge of exams and testing.** An analysis of survey responses from

participants indicated that 18 (47%) of 38 participants reported problems that included “misunderstanding of the academic structure, lack of staff assistance, lack of faculty knowledge to accommodations, lack of learning course materials, and miscommunication with faculty.”

**Challenge of classroom accommodations.** An analysis of survey responses from participants indicated that 11 (29%) 38 participants reported they experienced problems with “lack of space, room configuration, lack of service, issues with faculty, and lack of communication with faculty.”

### **Findings for Research Question 3**

What steps can be taken to minimize or eliminate these challenges? As a result of the researcher’s analysis of the three predominant challenges with (a) course work assignments, (b) exams and testing, and (c) classroom accommodations, the following paragraphs include a discussion of how to minimize or eliminate these problems.

**Challenge of course work assignment.** An analysis of survey responses from participants indicated that 18 (47%) of 38 reported that they needed more clarity with defining which assignments are permitted, more time to complete without penalty both online and in class, more notice to access extra time, quicker response time for approval or denial of requests, more available access to a real person versus a recording, regularly scheduled opportunities to discuss any issues that a student may be having, and better channels of communication.

**Challenge of exams and testing.** An analysis of survey responses from participants indicated that 22 (58%) 38 participants indicated that professors and instructors needed to be more aware of and consistent in providing needed accommodations without students needing to remind themselves of student needs, to

provide study groups and locations where students can receive study support, and to provide reteaching and tutoring as needed.

**Challenge of classroom accommodations.** An analysis of survey responses from participants indicated that eight (21%) 38 participants reported that rooms have no wheelchair accessible tables, poor lighting, and not enough chairs. Power strips are exposed in opened areas that may cause liability, they have difficulty seeing the board due to residue marks from erasers. The participants also reported faulty equipment projection, causing difficulty in capturing images and hearing the information being presented.

### **Summary**

The results of this chapter included an analysis of findings to the survey responses to five open-ended questions and eight closed-ended multiple-choice questions designed to explore the experiences of individuals with disabilities at a private postsecondary university and recommend possible resolutions to those challenges. The researcher analyzed three themes of challenges that were discovered. Data were analyzed using qualitative methods, and three research questions were addressed and answered. The data collected indicated that most participants with a disability experienced challenges that included (a) course work assignments, (b) exams and testing, and (c) classroom accommodations at a private postsecondary university in the United States.

## Chapter 5: Discussion

### Overview of the Research

The problem addressed in the research study involved the challenges experienced by students with disabilities at a private postsecondary university in the United States. The purpose of this research study was to discover the challenges participants with a disability experienced at a private postsecondary university and to find possible resolutions to those challenges. Chapter 5 presents interpretation and implications of research findings. The following research questions were established to guide this applied dissertation:

1. What are the challenges faced by participants with disabilities at a private postsecondary institution?
2. How do these challenges impact students with disabilities?
3. What steps can be taken to minimize or eliminate these challenges?

### Interpretation and Implications

The following paragraphs include an interpretation of the findings for the three research questions and implications for those findings.

**Research Question 1.** What are the challenges faced by participants with disabilities at a private postsecondary institution? The challenges included (a) course work assignments, (b) exams and testing, and (c) classroom accommodations. An analysis of student responses indicated that participants reported difficulty understanding and completing course work assignments. Students also reported experiencing difficulties with understanding and completing tests and exams. Students further reported a lack of numerous accommodations needed, such as power strips adjustment, difficulty seeing the board due to residue from previous writing on the board, and adequate wheelchair

accessibility.

The practical implications for universities with students with disabilities in their classrooms are that these students need additional support with assignments, exams and tests, and classroom accommodations. One of the findings indicated by Collins and Fulton (2017) as an essential tool to help students with disabilities doing challenging course work is that faculty members can provide notebooks to students, such as a composition book or spiral notebook, to keep handy during complicated course work. The notebooks can be utilized to identify the difficult topics, as well help with reading and writing. The central concept of this unique tool is for faculty members to introduce a strategic infrastructure specifically designed to include instructions for lesson components. The components involve introducing the notebook, providing the instruction on setup-sort-record materials that are confusing, analyzing the data using charts, diagrams, or sketches, and finding the outcome of the course work (Collins & Fulton, 2017).

Another finding that supported the results of this study, provided by Da Silva Cardoso et al. (2016), indicated that social support was the key factor in developing a program called the Minority-Disability Alliance, which emphasized the importance of providing accommodations to support students with disabilities in dealing with challenging course work. Students with disabilities can use the alliance to discuss their needs for interpersonal support and their frustrations with addressing the issues at hand (Da Silva Cardoso et al., 2016).

There are countless support methods to help students with disabilities reduce the challenges they face in learning and completing their course work. Black et al. (2015) found that applying the universal design for learning and the universal design for

instruction emphasized numerous approaches to identify the needs of students with disabilities and help them in the design of how to represent their course work, how to express their course work, and how to engage with their course work. These approaches help students with disabilities discover ways to introduce instructions toward course work, demonstrate the difference in learning, and participate in class discussions to find the potential to succeed in education and set long-term goals for their careers (Black et al., 2015).

**Research Question 2.** How do these challenges impact students with disabilities?

The impact of these challenges included the three predominant challenges of (a) course work assignments, (b) exams and testing, and (c) classroom accommodations. An analysis of student responses indicated that participants reported lack of communication, lack of faculty knowledge to accommodations, lack of space, and lack of room configuration. The practical implication for universities with students with disabilities in their services is to revisit the policies and procedures guidelines.

One of the findings of Spenceley and Wheeler (2016) indicated that the extended time accommodation for students with a disability to complete an exam or test does not give the students enough time to complete their exam. Based on the student's disability, disability services should consider a different approach. Spenceley and Wheeler emphasized that the university's department of disability services should consider balancing out the necessary accommodations when students with a disability request extended time when needing to take an exam or test. Most students may complete their exams on time during 1.5 extended time. However, some may need more time to complete their exams or tests. An implementation may be required to develop new guidelines for disability services and faculty members to allow students with a disability

more time to complete exams and tests (Spenceley & Wheeler, 2016). Dieterich et al. (2017) suggested that faculty members must understand the federal legislation laws for students with a disability to help support them with their need for reasonable accommodations.

**Research Question 3.** What steps can be taken to minimize or eliminate these challenges? An analysis of student response indicated that participants reported rooms have no wheelchair accessible tables, poor lighting, and not enough chairs. Power strips are exposed in opened areas that may cause liability, they have difficulty seeing the board due to residue marks from erasers. The participants also reported faulty equipment projecting images, causing difficulty to capture images and hearing. The practical implication for universities with students with disabilities is to be mindful and revisit the policy and procedure guidelines.

The university should restructure the physical environmental space, lighting, furniture, and other elements that relate to the needs of a specific student with a disability. One of the findings of Sanchez-Rodriguez and LoGiudice (2018) found that the universal design of physical environmental, such as space, may be reconfigured for accessibility. Universities should consider the essential element to restructure the policies and procedures in regard to reasonable accommodations for specific students with disabilities (Sanchez-Rodriguez & LoGiudice, 2018). Countless challenges for classroom accommodations are still a battle with universities worldwide. Moriña and Morgado (2018) emphasized that universities need to be mindful and readjust to the needs of students with disabilities. Adapting to an inclusive universal design is the principal aspect on helping to reduce the challenges students with disabilities are facing regarding classroom accommodations (Moriña & Morgado. 2018).

**Limitations**

Three limitations of the current study were identified. First, the participant sample was low. A second limitation was that face-to-face interviews with participants were not possible, which would have made it easier for pursuing additional information for clarification of responses given. Third, the current study included students from only one private university in a large southeastern state in the United States.

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Appendix  
Accessibility Survey

## Accessibility Survey

The purpose of this research study is to discover the challenges individuals with disabilities experience at a private postsecondary university and possible resolutions to those challenges.

### Section 1: Demographics

1. I identify as:

- A. Male
- B. Female
- C. Other

2. I identify as: (select all that apply.)

- A. Black or African
- B. American Native or Alaska Native
- C. Asian
- D. Pacific Islander
- E. Hispanic or Latino
- F. White or Caucasian
- G. Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_
- H. Prefer not to answer

3. My age is:

- A. 18 - 24
- B. 25 - 34
- C. 35 - 44
- D. 45 - 54
- E. 55 - 64
- F. 65 - 74
- G. 75 or older

### Section 2: Challenges

4. Based on your disability diagnosis, what overall challenges do you experience?

- A. I experience challenges in the Classroom
- B. I experience challenges with testing/exams
- C. I experience challenges with Course work
- D. I experience challenges with Faculty
- E. I experience challenges with Transportation
- F. All the above
- G. None of the above
- H. Multiple (Please write which options apply to you): \_\_\_\_\_
- I. Other (Please write if there are other overall challenges you experience): \_\_\_\_\_

5. In what ways has the Office of Student Disability Services been helpful to you? Please explain.
6. What overall challenges do you experience while on campus, related to your disability diagnosis?
- A. I experience challenges in the Classroom
  - B. I experience challenges with testing/exams
  - C. I experience challenges with Course work
  - D. I experience challenges with Faculty
  - E. I experience challenges with Transportation
  - F. All the above
  - G. None of the above
  - H. Multiple (Please write which options apply to you): \_\_\_\_\_
  - I. Other (please write if there are other overall challenges you experience while on campus):
7. In what ways can the Office of Student Disability Services be of more help/assistance to you? Please explain:

### **Section 3: Transportation**

8. How often do you ride Broward Paratransit TOPS Transportation Shuttle to the university?
- A. Always
  - B. Sometimes
  - C. Never
9. If you have ridden TOPS, does the driver have difficulty finding your location on campus for pickup?
- A. Always
  - B. Sometimes
  - C. Never
10. In your opinion, what designated location on campus should TOPS be assigned for pick-up/drop-off?
11. What other means of transportation services do you utilize to and from the university?
- A. Taxi
  - B. Uber
  - C. Lyft
  - D. Transit Bus System
  - E. Tri Rail System
  - F. None of the above
  - G. All of the above
  - H. Multiple (Please write which options apply to you): \_\_\_\_\_
  - I. Other (Please write if there are other overall challenges you experience while on campus):

12. In your opinion, would a designated location on campus for drop off/pick up for these types of transportation services be beneficial to you? If yes, please explain why:

**Section 4: Comments**

13. If you have any additional comments please feel free to share them here.