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# An Investigation of Postsecondary Education Program: Students With Intellectual Disabilities

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# AN INVESTIGATION OF POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION PROGRAMS: STUDENTS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES

By

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# ABSTRACT

Since 2008, the number of students with intellectual disabilities and the number of postsecondary education programs supporting students with intellectual disabilities have drastically increased on college campuses in the United States. The purpose of this document analysis qualitative research was to explore the publicly available information provided by universities with Postsecondary Education Programs (PSP) that have Southern Association of College and Schools (SACS) accreditation and receive Transition Program for Students with Intellectual Disabilities (TPSID) grant funding. K. Patricia Cross's Chain-of-Response (COR) model was the conceptual framework used to frame this andrological inquiry. Lack of information, as identified by Cross (1981) in the COR Model, has been a barrier to participation in higher education. This study examines the availability of public information detailing the inclusivity of eight postsecondary programs using a qualitative document analysis methodology. This dissertation answered three research questions using a directed content analysis to analyze the data collected for this inquiry. The Think College standards, quality indicators, and benchmarks for inclusive higher education (Grigal, et al. 2012) along with the program classification system developed by Hart et al. (2004) were used to guide the directed content analysis. The results of this research indicate that the barrier, lack of information, is present.

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candor, resiliency, joyful spirits, and refusal to accept less than you deserve has and will always inspire my pursuit for educational equality and inclusion.

This dissertation is dedicated to Robert Powell, the Hawk.

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# CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION

## Introduction

In the early 2000s, the number of students with intellectual disabilities (ID) attending college increased as a result of changes in state and federal legislation in the United States (Stodden & Whelley, 2004). These legislative changes provided funding for colleges and universities across the United States to develop Postsecondary Education Programs (PSP) designed to support students with ID during their collegiate experience ("Higher Education Opportunity Act—2008," 2010; Stodden & Whelley, 2004). These legislative changes were implemented with the intent to increase the access to and inclusion of higher education for students with ID ("Higher Education Opportunity Act—2008," 2010). Research has demonstrated that people with ID who attend college are more successful than those who do not (Butler, Sheppard-Jones, Whaley, Harrison, & Osness, 2016). Students with ID who attend college have better jobs, earn higher wages, and are more likely to live independently (Butler et al., 2016). Having the opportunity to attend college with added support from university programs has been critical to the growing success of people with ID in the United States. As the number of students with ID on college campuses increases, there has been an increase in demand for support services for students with ID and their families as they make the college transition (Stodden & Whelley, 2004).

This research explored publicly available information detailing how universities are addressing the needs of students with ID by examining three areas. First, this study assessed the support services and level of inclusion as outlined by the Think College standards, quality indicators, and benchmarks to students with ID. In 2008, Think College, was established to serve as a research center to educate college administrators, parents, and students with ID during their

collegiate transition (Institute for Community Inclusion, 2019). Think College supports research with a focus on helping students with ID at the collegiate level (Institute for Community Inclusion, 2019). Based on their research findings, Think College has developed the standards, quality indicators, and benchmarks for inclusive higher education. Universities should follow these guidelines to create inclusive environments for students with ID. These standards were used to determine a PSP's level of inclusivity based on publicly available information, for this dissertation.

Second, after determining the level of inclusivity of each PSP based on publicly available data, the researcher categorized PSPs into one of three program models, separate, mixed, or inclusive, developed by Hart, Mele-McCarthy, Pasternack, Zimbrich, and Parker (2004). These models developed by Hart et al. (2004) outline a set of characteristics to identify PSPs as either separate, mixed, or inclusive. Separate models segregate students with ID from mainstream students and typically implement a job-skills focused curriculum. Mixed models support moderate levels of integration between students with ID and mainstream students in both the classroom and in social settings, and typically implement an academic and job-skills curriculum. Students with ID who participate in Inclusive models are enrolled in mainstream courses and social settings. Inclusive models do not offer any academic segregation between students with ID, and these students participate in social settings with mainstream students. By categorizing PSP programs investigated in this research as separate, mixed, or inclusive, the researcher used publicly available information to determine the type of experience a student can expect to receive at the PSP.

Third, and finally, the researcher explored if lack of information, a barrier to participation, indicated by the COR model (Cross, 1981) was present. Lack of Information was

identified as the absence of the Think College standards, quality indicators, and benchmarks in the publicly available information.

Barriers to learning exist for all students. As such, colleges and universities have created policies based on students' needs to eliminate barriers to learning. For example, the Think College standards, quality indicators, and benchmarks were developed to eliminate barriers to higher education for students with ID. The COR model identifies a lack of information as a significant barrier to adult participation in higher education. This research analyzed data from publicly available documents to investigate if PSPs are providing information to students and their families regarding the level of inclusivity of each program.

To explore the research areas mentioned in this introduction, this research inquiry is organized into five chapters. Chapter One serves as an introduction to the research study and details background information, the problem statement, the purpose of the study, research questions, the significance of the study, research rationale based on the theoretical framework, limitations, delimitations, and a summary and organization of the remainder of the study. Chapter Two includes a review of the current literature surrounding the inclusion of students with ID in higher education, and Chapter Three details the methodology for this dissertation. Following Chapter Three, Chapter Four presents the data analysis of this dissertation examined through the results of the document analysis using directed content analysis. Chapter Five concludes the dissertation with a summary of the study, followed by a discussion of the results and implications for practitioners and research.

## Background

This section details background information regarding the United States legislation that led to an increase in the number of students with intellectual disabilities attending college in the 2000s. This section begins with an evaluation of the amendments in the Higher Education Opportunities Act of 2008 (HEOA) based on the impact these changes have made on policies impacting both students with ID and universities. After a review of HEOA policies, this section describes how Think College was established, and outlines how Think College provides support to colleges, students with ID, and their families. Finally, the researcher specifies the program classification system developed by Hart et al. (2004) used to categorize PSPs.

Since the mid-20th century, access to educational opportunities for people with disabilities has continued to increase in the United States (Stodden & Whelley, 2004). Laws and policies have been passed at both the local and state levels of government (Keogh, 2007; US Department of Education, 2010) to increase access and enhance the inclusion of students with differing abilities in both primary and secondary education. These laws and policy changes have increased the number of students with disabilities participating in the education system. The influx of students with ID has created the need for new or improved support services for students with disabilities (Stodden & Whelley, 2004; United States of America Department of Education, 2010).

The legislative act that has made the most drastic influence on the number of students with ID participating in PSP is the Higher Education Opportunities Act (HEOA) of 2008 (Wisbey & Kalivonda, 2011). The influx of students with ID enrolling in PSPs created a demand for support services from colleges and universities (Grigal, Dwyre, Davis, & National Center on Secondary Education and Transition, 2006). With the increase of students with ID on college

campuses, how colleges and universities advertise their policies and initiatives to support these students needs to be explored. All students must receive appropriate assistance from their college or university to be successful academically, this directive includes students with ID, a fast-growing population on college campuses (Stodden & Whelley, 2004). Arguably, even more essential, students and their families should have access to information detailing how colleges and universities support students with ID. Students and their families should be able to choose the most appropriate college for themselves based on the level of support and inclusion the student requires. This choice cannot be made if colleges and universities are not providing access to this information.

Although there is no requirement from the HEOA of 2008 for universities with PSPs to advertise their policies and services publicly, the HEOA of 2008 has increased access to higher education in other ways. First, the HEOA of 2008 increased the number of students with ID participating in PSP by increasing funding opportunities available to both individual students and university initiatives supporting students with ID (United States of America Department of Education, 2010). Funding opportunities for students became available when the HEOA of 2008 amended the eligibility criteria for students to apply for federal financial aid. Before the HEOA of 2008, students who were not enrolled in degree-seeking programs were ineligible for federal financial aid, and would typically enroll as a non-degree seeking student because they often failed to meet standardized university admission criteria such as a high school GPA or standardized test scores. Although students with ID could still enroll in courses without being admitted to the university, they would have to pay for tuition privately and were ineligible to receive federal financial aid such as grants or loans. The inability to receive funding was a

financial barrier for many students with ID (United States of America Department of Education, 2010).

In addition to changing federal financial aid criteria, the HEOA of 2008 instituted grants for colleges and universities to expand their support services for students with ID (United States of America Department of Education, 2010) These grants are called the Transition Program for Students with Intellectual Disabilities (TPSID) grants. TPSID grants financially support the implementation and improvement of PSPs supporting the transition of students with ID into postsecondary education (United States of America Department of Education, 2010). By changing the criteria for federal funding and implementing TPSID grants, the HEOA of 2008 has increased the accessibility of PSPs for students with ID (United States of America Department of Education, 2010). Since 2008, approximately 247 colleges and universities within the United States offer unique support to students with ID (Institute for Community Inclusion, 2019).

As the number of colleges and universities implementing programs to support students with ID continued to grow, Think College was established to help standardize PSP's processes. Think College, located at the University of Massachusetts Boston, is a national organization dedicated to improving access to postsecondary education for students with ID (Institute for Community Inclusion, 2019). Think College researchers, Grigal, Hart, and Weir (2012) developed a list of standards, quality indicators, and benchmarks for inclusive higher education for colleges and universities to utilize to develop, improve, and expand upon the opportunities for students with ID (Institute for Community Inclusion, 2019). The standards, quality indicators, and benchmarks protocol provide criteria for inclusive PSPs and support the Universal Design

for Learning framework outlined in the HEOA of 2008 (Institute for Community Inclusion, 2019).

The standards, quality indicators, and benchmarks protocol (Grigal, Hart, & Weir, 2012) can be used by both institutions of higher education, and by parents and students. Colleges and universities can use the standards, quality indicators, and benchmarks to guide PSP inclusion development, implementation, and evaluation, resulting in greater program access and higher levels of participation. Similarly, when selecting a PSP, students and their families can use the standards, quality indicators, and benchmarks to determine if a PSP meets the individual student's needs for inclusion and support.

In addition to the standards, quality indicators, and benchmarks protocol developed by Think College (Grigal et al., 2012), researchers Hart et al. (2004) developed a classification system to categorize PSPs as either separate, mixed, or inclusive, further developing guidelines for PSP development. Separate programs have traditionally been referred to as "life skills" or "transition" programs and have existed since the 1970s (Hart, Mele-McCarthy, Pasternack, Zimbrich, & Parker, 2004). Students who participate in substantially separate programs do not have regular interaction with students who are members of the general student body (Hart et al., 2004). Comparatively, students in mixed programs have semi-regular interaction with the general student body in both the classroom on a limited basis (Neubert & Moon, 2006) and in shared social spaces such as the cafeteria and recreation center (Hart et al., 2004). Finally, the inclusive programs offer student-centered services (Hart et al., 2004) based on person-centered planning or the individual student's goals ( Neubert & Redd, 2008). Inclusive programs offer students access to traditional college courses (Hart et al., 2004) with no segregated course instruction (Neubert & Redd, 2008). While all programs could meet the

varying needs of students with ID, inclusive models are the preferred PSP model for many programs on college campuses. Supporting the preference for inclusive PSPs, stipulations of the TPSID grants require inclusive practices.

## Problem Statement

The problem addressed in this research study is the availability of public information for students with intellectual disabilities and their families regarding postsecondary education programs at select universities. First, the availability of information detailing the level of inclusion of a college or university's postsecondary education program is unknown. Second, barriers students might encounter as a result of university policy may be identified based on the availability of public information. In this section, the researcher provides the rationale for the problem statement by detailing why it is necessary to locate publicly accessible information regarding support services.

With over two hundred and forty-seven PSP options for students and their families, the standards, quality indicators, and benchmarks for inclusive higher education provide guidelines for students to narrow down their options and make an appropriate program selection. While PSPs are expected to use the Think College standards, quality indicators, and benchmarks, research has not been conducted to explore the accessibility of publicly available information regarding how PSPs are implementing the standards, quality indicators, and benchmarks protocols. These protocols make participation in higher education more accessible and inclusive for students with ID. Access to information detailing how a PSP is utilizing the Think College protocols helps students and their families determine the level of inclusivity, support, and services provided by a PSP prior to the student enrolling at the university. Research indicates that

students who receive transitional support services in college are more successful than students who do not (Grigal et al., 2006). Therefore, it is appropriate for students and their parents to identify information regarding the level of inclusivity and support provided by a university before enrollment.

Access to information regarding PSPs is an essential step towards improving opportunities for students with ID. Exploring the access to publicly available information regarding PSP options will help people with ID, and their families make informed decisions in selecting a college or university. It is crucial to the success of people with ID that access to PSPs remains available and inclusive. Students with ID who participate in PSPs have more positive life outcomes than their peers who do not attend college (Butler et al., 2016). Positive outcomes could include higher salaries, higher self-actualization, and fewer mental health diagnoses. By exploring publicly available information regarding PSP, colleges and universities can make data-driven improvements to the information they provide to prospective students and their families. These changes would provide students and their families the tools they need to help them identify the best PSP to meet the student's individual needs.

## Purpose Statement

The purpose of this document analysis qualitative research study was to explore the publicly available information provided by universities with Postsecondary Education Programs (PSP) that have Southern Association of College and Schools (SACS) accreditation and receive TPSID grant funding. This research investigated PSPs by exploring publicly available information defining support services available to students with ID from select colleges or

universities, classifying PSPs as either separate, mixed, or inclusive, and identifying if the barrier "lack of information," is present for students with ID.

This section will elaborate upon the purpose of this research inquiry, as defined above, by first identifying the areas of research that have been conducted on the inclusion and participation of students with ID in postsecondary education. Next, the researcher will identify how the research conducted for this dissertation will add to the current body of knowledge surrounding this topic. Finally, this section will conclude with a brief description of how data will be collected for this research inquiry.

Programs supporting students with ID on college campuses are relatively new, most have developed since 2008. As a new area of study, the research surrounding these programs is somewhat limited. Based on a review of the literature, research has been conducted with a focus in the following areas: the classification of programs (Hart et al., 2004; Neubert & Moon, 2006), the life outcomes of students with ID who participate in PSPs (Butler et al., 2016), the social inclusion of students with ID on college campuses (Prohn, 2014), the barriers to participation for students with ID (Causton-Theoharis, Ashby, & DeClouette, 2009; Neubert, Moon, & Grigal, 2004; Mock & Love, 2012; Neubert & Redd, 2008; Stodden & Whelley, 2004), and the rates at which students with ID transition into the collegiate environment (Hendrickson, Busard, Rodgers, & Scheidecker, 2013).

This study adds to the current body of research by focusing on access to publicly available information. As such, this study categorized programs, identified if the barrier to participation "lack of information" was present, and investigated the level of inclusion of PSPs with ID by analyzing public documents. Data was collected for this document analysis qualitative research by mining PSPs websites.

## Research Questions

This study has three research questions. The research questions are as follows:

Research Question 1 (RQ1): Do post-secondary education programs that receive TPSID funding with SACS accreditation incorporate Think College standards, quality indicators, and benchmarks (Grigal, et al., 2012) for inclusive higher education to provide support to students with ID based on publicly available information?

Research Question 2 (RQ2): How are post-secondary education programs that receive TPSID funding with SACS accreditation categorized to align with program classification models as identified by Hart et al. (2004) as separate, mixed, or inclusive based on publicly available information?

Research Question 3 (RQ3): Is the institutional barrier, lack of information, present es evidenced the lack of publicly available information detailing the Think College standards, quality indicators, and benchmarks for inclusive higher education (Grigal, et al., 2012)?

## Significance of Study

Limited research exists exploring the life outcomes of students with ID participating in postsecondary education (Butler et al., 2016), the transitional rate of students with ID compared to their peers without ID (Hendrickson, Vander Busard, Rodgers, & Scheidecker, 2013), the social inclusion of students with ID during their college experience (Prohn, 2014), and barriers to participation for students with ID (Causton-Theoharis, Ashby, & DeClouette, 2009; Mock & Love, 2012; D. Neubert, Moon, & Grigal, 2004; Neubert & Redd, 2008; Neubert & Moon, 2006; Stodden & Whelley, 2004). In addition to research focused on the student experience, there is limited research exploring the classification of programs for students with ID (Hart et al., 2004; Neubert & Moon, 2006).

Despite the preexisting research detailed above, further inquiry is needed to explore the publicly available information detailing a program's level of inclusion, the classification of PSPs, and barriers to participation. Students who are supported and utilize transitional student support services during their PSP experience are more successful than those who do not seek out resources (Neubert et al., 2004). For students and their parents to make appropriate enrollment decisions, they need access to information regarding the support students would receive in a PSP program. This study explored publicly available information regarding a select number of PSPs.

The lack of research in this area could be attributed to the length of time students with ID have been invited to participate in postsecondary education. Most support programs on college campuses for students with ID were initiated after 2008. At the time this dissertation is being written, 2020, the changes that have occurred in higher education for students with ID have existed for no more than 12 years, leaving little time for research to be conducted.

More programs supporting students with ID are expected to emerge in higher education. This anticipated increase in programs for students with ID elevates the importance of adequately understanding and analyzing the publicly available information regarding support services offered to students with ID. This dissertation adds to the existing literature regarding PSP for students with ID, adding depth, and understanding of how colleges and universities are responding to these new changes in higher education.

## Conceptual Framework

This section identifies and describes the conceptual framework and participation model that were used to guide this study. Adult learning was the selected field that guided this inquiry, and the chosen adult learning theory was andragogy. The Chain-of-Response (COR) model (Cross, 1981) was the conceptual framework used to inform the participation of students with ID in PSP for this study. In addition to the COR Model, the program classification criteria developed by Hart et al. (2004) was used to classify PSPs as either separate, mixed, or inclusive, and the level of inclusivity of each PSP selected for this study was determined using the Think College standards, quality indicators, and benchmarks protocol (Grigal, et al., 2012). The Think College standards, quality indicators, and benchmarks protocol (Grigal, et al., 2012), the program classification criteria developed by Hart et al. (2004), and barriers to participation for students with ID will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Two Literature Review.

In this section, the rationale for selecting andragogy, an adult learning theory, will be discussed by further defining andragogy as a theory of adult learning. Next, the criterion identified by andragogy theory will be applied to different characteristics of this study. These characteristics include a student's desire to learn, the andragogy-pedagogy continuum, and

formal and informal learning. By analyzing these characteristics through the lens of adult learning, this section will provide evidence supporting the selection of an adult learning framework to direct this inquiry.

After adult learning is defined and defended as a field of study to guide the framework for this study, the Chain-of-Response (COR) model will be introduced. The COR model is used throughout this study to identify why adults choose or choose not to participate in adult learning. The variables of the COR model will be defined, followed by an investigation of the barriers to adult participation. Andragogy, in coordination with the COR Model, with an emphasis on the barriers and information variables within the model, will inform the research approach and methodology of this study.

## Adult Learning

The field of adult learning hosts a myriad of theories, models, and principles to describe the phenomena of how and why adults learn (Merriam, Caffarella, & Caffarella, 1999). Andragogy describes the general characters of adult learning and provides guidelines for practice (Merriam et al., 1999). As the most predominant adult learning theory, andragogy defines adult learners and operates under a set of six assumptions (Merriam et al., 1999). First, as a person matures, they progress from being directed by others to being self-directed (Knowles, 1980). Second, adults have accumulated experiences that serve as a learning resource (Knowles, 1980). Third, an adult's readiness to learn is directly related to the knowledge needed within their social roles (Knowles, 1980). Fourth, adults view time as it associates to their learning as immediate rather than futuristic (Knowles, 1980), that is to say, what they learn now is immediately applicable to their current lives. Fifth, adults are more motivated by internal forces compared to

external variables (Knowles, 1984), and sixth, adult learners need to understand why there is a need to learn (Knowles, 1984). The six assumptions defined by Knowles (1980;1984) provide a framework for defining adult learners and are referred to as a "model of assumptions" (Knowles, 1980 p. 43) and a "system of concepts" (Knowles, 1984, p. 8).

Based on these criteria, Knowles (1980), identified a program-planning model developed by both the student and the instructor based on the student's desire to learn (Falasca, 2011; Merriam et al., 1999). This model is similar to Person-Centered Planning (PCP), a model of learning often used for students with ID. In the PCP model, a group of facilitators works with each individual to develop a learning plan based on the students' desire to learn and their future goals. Based on the similarity between the program-planning model and PCP model, the argument can be made that students with ID who use the PCP model can be classified as adult learners.

While some researchers seek to clearly define the difference between andragogy and child-learning, pedagogy, Knowles (1980), suggests that andragogy and pedagogy should be conceptualized as two opposite poles on a continuum (Merriam et al., 1999). This model allows for the assumptions of both andragogy and pedagogy to somewhat be applied to both adult-learners and child-learners as needed, based on the individual learner (Merriam et al., 1999). The flexibility of the continuum allows researchers and practitioners to use an adult-learning model or a child-learning model based on the researcher's discretion. For this dissertation, an adult learning framework was used to guide the research inquiry.

Adult learning involves both formal education, such as participating in a PSP, and informal education, for example, reading an instruction manual to put together a piece of furniture (Merriam et al., 1999). Adults learn because they have a need to learn or an interest that

could be satisfied by learning (Merriam et al., 1999). Students with ID who participate in PSP are learning based on either need or interest. The student may need to attend a higher education institution (HEI) because they want a higher paying job, or they may be interested in participating in the HEI experience. Regardless of need or interest, students with ID who participate in PSP are engaging in adult-learning by either fulfilling a need or pursuing an interest.

An example of both formal and informal adult learning is a Community of Practice, a term identified by Lave and Wenger (1991). Communities of Practice are groups of people with different skills who work together to identify and solve problems (Merriam et al., 1999). Examples of Communities of Practice include families, volunteer groups, and formal education, including HEIs and PSPs (Merriam et al., 1999). As participants in PSPs, students with ID are members of a Community of Practice, further defining them as adult learners.

Based on the definitions of adult learners described above, an adult learning framework was appropriate for this study. Students with ID who participate in PSP can be classified as adult learners based on a few factors. First, students with ID are pursuing a need or interest by participating in a formal education setting. Second, based on Think College standards, students with ID in PSP should utilize individualized educational planning based on the student's goals and interests (Grigal, et al., 2012). Third, students with ID who participate in PSPs are members of a Community of Practice, a model of adult learning. Finally, utilizing the andragogy-pedagogy continuum approach, the researcher has the discretion to determine where on the sliding scale, the learners being studied lie.

After a review of the research, the researcher for this study determined that students with ID participating in PSP most closely align with the definition of adult-learners

rather than child-learners. It should also be noted that TPSID legislation does not specify an age range for student participants in PSPs (United States Department of Education, 2010). Due to no age specification, students of any age over eighteen years of age who are eligible to receive free public education under the Individuals with Disability Act (20 USC 1140) can participate in PSPs.

## Chain-of-Response Model

The Chain-of-Response (COR) Model is an adult learning model developed by K. Patricia Cross (1981) and was selected as a framework for this dissertation. The COR model identifies a set of variables that exist in adult learning and further explains how these variables intersect. The model suggests that participation in adult education is not a single act or decision but instead, an action based on the result of a chain of responses grounded in an individuals' evaluation of their environment (Cross, 1981; Salomonson, Moss, & Hill, 2001).

Variables in the COR model include self-evaluation, attitudes, the importance of goals, life transitions, opportunities and barriers, information, and participation (Cross, 1981). The COR model can be used to describe and understand participation in adult learning. The model provides a framework for why an adult may or may not choose to involve themselves in adult learning. A participation model was selected for this study because PSPs were developed to increase opportunities for students with ID to participate in higher education.

Self-evaluation and attitude are the only constructs within the model that account for internal factors (Salomonson et al., 2001). The self-evaluation component encompasses how an individual perceives their own ability to accomplish goals (Salomonson et al., 2001). The attitude construct defines how an individual perceives education and the value education can have

on one's goals or life outcomes (Salomonson et al., 2001). These internal factors, in turn, intersect with external forces, life transitions, opportunities and barriers, and information to determine participation (Salomonson et al., 2001). Although the COR Model identifies multiple variables, an emphasis was placed on the barriers and information variables for this study.

Information can be a barrier to adult participation and was the construct guiding the problem addressed in this study. The problem addressed in this dissertation is the availability of public information regarding postsecondary education programs at select universities. The availability of information detailing the level of inclusion of a college or university's postsecondary education program is unknown and will be investigated for this research inquiry. Therefore, how information affects adult participation in higher education was framed using the COR model in this inquiry.

In addition to information, other barriers to adult participation have been identified by researchers and have existed for students throughout the history of higher education. Most efforts to engage adults in learning opportunities began with the attempt to eliminate barriers and increase positive outcomes (Cross, 1981). Therefore, to properly engage students with ID in PSPs, it is essential to discuss and recognize barriers to participation. Barriers have existed throughout history for people with disabilities, including barriers to participation in both K-12 and higher education (Wisbey & Kalivonda, 2011). TPSID grants were created to eliminate barriers to higher education for students with ID. The COR Model (Cross, 1981) identifies types of barriers to learning for adults; these barriers include situational, institutional, and dispositional barriers (Cross, 1981).

Before further defining the barriers associated with the COR model, previous research on barriers to adult participation should be examined. In 1965, researchers Johnstone and Rivera grouped ten barriers to adult participation into two categories: external and situational, or internal and dispositional (Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2007). Building on the work of Johnstone and Rivera, Darkenwald and Valentine (1985) developed the Deterrents to Participation Scale to identify six main deterrents to adult participation. These deterrents include lack of confidence, lack of course relevance, time constraints, low personal priority, cost, and personal problems (Darkenwald & Valentine, 1985). Each of the deterrents identified by Darkenwald and Valentine (1985) can be categorized as situational, institutional, or dispositional. These barrier categories are further defined below.

Situational barriers variables that are out of the individuals' control and could include time and cost (Merriam et al., 2007). Lack of time is the most cited reason for adults as a barrier to participation (Edwards, Sieminski, & Zeldin, 2014). Adults cite work schedules and family responsibilities as activities that take up most of their time, leaving little time for educational pursuits (Edwards et al., 2014). Although a few studies have noted that adults who work part-time have an increase in leisure time, this increase in free-time does not guarantee that adults are using this time towards education. Perceived high costs associated with education is another example of a situational barrier. Many studies suggest that adults who cite cost as a barrier have little to no idea how much additional education would cost (Edwards et al., 2014).

Institutional barriers are the focus for this study concerning Research Question 3. Institutional barriers are a result of procedures or policies put in place by a university or learning institution that discourages adult participation (Cross, 1981). For this inquiry, the lack of information regarding PSP policy, was used as a framework to analyze RQ3.

Institutional barriers exist as a result of HEIs historically catering to young, white, middle-class students (Edwards et al., 2014). As HEIs have become increasingly diverse and accessible, many policies have unintentionally created barriers for these "non-traditional" students (Edwards et al., 2014).

Dispositional barriers involve attitudes and perceptions of higher education by the individual (Edwards et al., 2014). Examples of these attitudes include hostility towards school, a lack of awareness of educational needs, or lack of confidence in one's ability to learn. Each of these attitudes provides the individual with a personal excuse, or barrier, to adult education.

Each of these barriers will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Two Literature Review, along with research surrounding barriers for students with disabilities and barriers for students with ID in higher education. In addition to further investigating participation-barrier research, Chapter Two Literature Review will also examine other studies that have used Cross's Chain-of-Response model as a theoretical framework to guide the study as they relate to this dissertation.

## Research Design and Methodology

A qualitative design was selected as the methodology for this inquiry. This section provides a rationale for selecting a qualitative design and identifies how other researchers have implemented research inquiries to explore programs for students with intellectual disabilities. Following the rationale, this section will further define qualitative research and expand upon why qualitative research is used as a methodology for this inquiry. This section concludes by identifying this dissertation as a document analysis qualitative study.

Based on a review of the literature, both quantitative and qualitative methods have been used by researchers to assess programs for students with ID. Researchers have administered quantitative methods in the form of survey assessments to determine if PSPs are mixed, separate, or inclusive. Conversely, researchers have applied a qualitative paradigm to investigate PSPs by implementing qualitative research methods. For example, researchers have both interviewed and observed program administrators, parents, and participants to examine PSPs from different perspectives.

This study employed a qualitative research design, the most common type of research design in the applied fields of education, administration, health, social work, and counseling (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Qualitative researchers aim to derive meaning and understanding from a specific phenomenon or situation (Creswell, 2014; Johnson & Christensen, 2016; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Patton, 2002; Salmons, 2016). For this study, the phenomenon was the development of PSPs in colleges and universities. The design for this study allowed the researcher to examine data to further understand and explore the inclusivity of PSPs by accessing publicly available information detailing PSP services and characteristics.

Qualitative researchers seek to understand the meaning people assign to their lives and how they make sense of their experiences (Creswell, 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Salmons, 2016). Meaning-making is derived from analyzing data collected through qualitative methods by providing a detailed and in-depth description of the issue or phenomenon with close attention to detail (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Patton, 2002). For this study, data were derived from documents mined from publicly available websites. The researcher analyzed the data to provide a detailed and in-depth description of the phenomenon to create meaning.

Qualitative research is inductive and should be used by researchers if there is inadequate data or analysis available to explain the phenomenon (Meriam & Tisdell, 2016). Based on the review of the literature, there is limited research focusing on publicly available information, detailing the support services provided to students with ID in PSP. Therefore, it is appropriate that a qualitative inquiry was initiated for this study.

The qualitative paradigm selected for this study was a qualitative document analysis. Document analysis can be defined as, "an unobtrusive technique that allows researchers to analyze relatively unstructured data given the meanings, symbolic qualities, and expressive contents they have and of the communicative roles they play in the lives of data sources" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016 p. 49). Document analysis allows the researcher to derive meaning from written text and can be used the same way that interview of observation data is used (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The purpose of this document analysis qualitative research study was to explore the publicly available information provided by universities with Postsecondary Education Programs (PSP) that have Southern Association of College and Schools (SACS) accreditation and receive TPSID grant funding. It was appropriate to select

a qualitative document analysis paradigm for this study because the purpose of this inquiry was dependent on the investigation of publicly available information.

## Definition of Terms

The following terms are used throughout this study.

*Intellectual disability (ID)*

The term "intellectual disability" is defined by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (1975) in section 300.8 as "Significantly sub average general intellectual functioning, existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior and manifested during the developmental period, that adversely affects a child's educational performance,".

*Comprehensive transition and postsecondary program (PSP)*

As defined by the Higher Education Opportunities Act (2008), a PSP is a degree, certificate, or nondegree program offered by a higher education institution that meets specific criteria. PSPs are "designed to support students with intellectual disabilities who are seeking to continue academic, career and technical, and independent living instruction at an institution of higher education in order to prepare for gainful employment." Students enrolled in a PSP must have access to advising and must be enrolled in credit-bearing courses with nondisabled students.

*Higher education institution (HEI)*

A higher education institution is any educational institution in any state that admits students after having completed high school, is legally authorized to provide educational services, awards bachelors or associate degrees, is public or nonprofit, and is accredited (United States of America Department of Education, 2010).

## List of Acronyms

The following acronyms are used throughout this study.

Table 1

List of Acronyms

| Full Name | Acronym |
|---|---|
| Americans with Disabilites Act | ADA |
| Chain-of-Response Model | COR |
| Education for All Handicapped Childrens Act | EAHCA |
| Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities | FCSUA |
| Florida Consortium on Inclusive Higher Education | FCIHE |
| Higher Education Institution | HEI |
| Higher Education Opportunities Act | HEOA |
| Individuals with Disabilities Act | IDEA |
| Intellectual Disabilities | ID |
| Postsecondary Education Programs | PSP |
| Research Question One | RQ1 |
| Research Question Three | RQ3 |
| Research Question Two | RQ2 |
| Souther Association of Colleges and Schools | SACS |
| Transition Program for Students with Intellectual Disabilities | TPSID |

## Limitations

There were three limitations of this study. The first limitation addresses the criteria for PSP selection. This study only included colleges and universities that received a 2015-2020 TPSID grant and are accredited by SACS. This limitation restricted the number of PSPs that were explored in the research inquiry. The second limitation involved the data collection methods, which are further discussed in Chapter Three. The data for this study only included publicly available data. This limitation confined the amount of data that was collected for this study. The third limitation was the lack of participants. This study only includes data collected

from publicly available documents and did not include participant data. This limitation restricts the type of data that was collected.

## Delimitations

The first delimitation for this study involved data collection. For this study, the research only retrieved data from publicly available documents online. Additionally, programs that were analyzed were chosen purposively. Data only consisted of documents collected from SACS accredited institutions that are recipients of TPSID grants during the 2015-2020 grant cycle. There were no participants in this study; this research inquiry only consisted of electronic data collection and document analysis.

## Summary and Organization of the Remainder of the Study

This dissertation is organized into five distinct chapters, followed by a reference list and APPENDICES. Chapter Two is a review of the literature addressing, the history of students with intellectual disabilities in relation to K12 and higher education, the history of transitional postsecondary education for students with ID, and an explanation and brief history on the development of Think College and the history of TPSID grants in relation to the Higher Education Opportunities Act of 2008. Chapter Two also contains a synthesis of research studies that have used Cross's Chain-of-Response Model as a theoretical framework to guide the research study as well as details regarding Hart et al. (2004) research regarding PSP classification. Finally, Chapter Two concludes with a summary of the body of research that has been conducted surrounding the inclusion of students with ID in higher education. Chapter Three contains the research methodology which will be used for this study. Following Chapter Three,

Chapter Four contains the results of the study and Chapter Five concludes the dissertation with a discussion of the results, recommendations for future research, and suggestions for practitioners.

The number of students with ID participating in higher education will continue to increase as the funding and support systems for students with ID continue to grow. This dissertation answered three research questions to better understand the level of inclusivity of each HEI selected for this study based on publicly available information. First the Think College standards, quality indicators, and benchmarks (Grigal et al., 2012) for inclusive higher education were used to analyze publicly available data to determine the level of inclusivity for each HEI as well as if the barrier, lack of information was present. Finally, PSPs selected for this study will be classified as either separate, mixed, or inclusive based on the Hart et al. (2004) classification system.

# CHAPTER TWO - LITERATURE REVIEW

## Overview

Chapter Two includes an overview of the research, laws, and policies involving the implementation of postsecondary education programs (PSPs) for students with intellectual disabilities (ID) and is divided into three sections. The first section begins with an overview of the history of students with ID concerning K12 and higher education as well as the history of transitional postsecondary education for students with ID. Section one concludes by expanding upon the development of Think College and the history of TPSID in relation to the Higher Education Opportunities Act of 2008. The second section of this chapter expand upon andragogy as an adult learning framework, followed by a synthesis of research studies that have used Cross's Chain-of-Response Model as a conceptual framework to guide research inquiry. Section two concludes with an investigation of the research regarding Hart et al.'s (2004) research on PSP program classification. Finally, the third section concludes the chapter with a summary of the body of research that has been conducted surrounding the inclusion of students with ID in higher education. Each part of this chapter contains background information to further explain the scope of higher education and the inclusion of students with ID as it relates to this study.

## Section One: Historical Policy and Law

The first section of this literature review will explore the legal history of disability policy in the United States. This section expands upon policy and how it has impacted people with disabilities throughout the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries with a focus on education. Topics in this section include: Disability History, The Rehabilitation Act, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and the Higher Education Opportunities Act. It is necessary to include an exploration of disability history in the United States to provide a historical perspective of inclusion as it relates to students with ID in the U.S education system. Table two below lists the laws and policies that will be discussed in this section with the year each law or policy was passed.

Table 2

List of Disability Laws and Policies

| Name of Law or Policy | Year |
|---|---|
| Higher Education Opportunities Act | 1965 |
| The Rehabilitation Act<br>Resulted in Section 504 | 1973 |
| The Education for All Handicapped Childrens Act<br>Resulted in Public Law 94-142<br>Later named the Individuals with Disabilities Act | 1975 |
| Americans with Disabilities Act | 1990 |
| Higher Education Opportunities Act (amended)<br>Resulted in TPSID Grants<br>Resulted in Think College | 2008 |

## Disability History

People with intellectual and developmental disabilities have been cited throughout history (Braddock & Parish, 2001). In the book of the Bible, Leviticus 19:14 (The New King James Version), it is commanded not to trip the blind or trick the deaf. This passage is referred to as the first legislation protecting people with disabilities (Braddock & Parish, 2001). In ancient Greece and Rome, people with disabilities were thought to have displeased the gods, and their disability was a result of the gods' displeasure. During the Reformation in the 1500s, ministers John Calvin and Martin Luther preached that people born with disabilities were a result of the child's parents' disobedience to God (Braddock & Parish, 2001). Practicing the teachings of John Calvin and Martin Luther, the puritans in the United States during the colonial period in the 1700s believed that people with disabilities had not only displeased God but were wicked and should not be a part of society (Braddock & Parish, 2001). As evidenced by many of these early beliefs, people with disabilities have been historically mistreated and misrepresented, leading into the 18th and 19th centuries.

In the 18th and 19th centuries in the United States, people with disabilities were often institutionalized or enrolled in boarding schools so as not to burden their families or their community (Braddock & Parish, 2001). Parents and families of people with disabilities did not know how to care for a person with a disability properly, and it was common practice to send people with disabilities to an institution, instead of integrating them into society (Braddock & Parish, 2001). During the 19th and 20th centuries, people with disabilities were often over-medicalized, their conditions were treated as a medical issue with medications and treatments prescribed, creating an economic disturbance as money was continuously funneled into private hospitals in an effort to address their needs (Braddock & Parish, 2001). Not only did

this create an economic issue, but it also further segregated people with disabilities from the rest of society (Braddock & Parish, 2001).

In the 19th and 20th centuries, the segregation of people with disabilities was viewed by society as a merciful act (Braddock & Parish, 2001). However, by separating people with disabilities from the rest of society, people with disabilities were hidden out of sight in mental institutions. This segregation created an environment for biases surrounding disability to continue (Braddock & Parish, 2001). After both WWI and WWII, hundreds of veterans returned home from war with visible disabilities as a result of war injuries (Braddock & Parish, 2001). This increase in the number of Americans with disabilities influenced social and political changes regarding disability rights. For the first time, individuals with disabilities were a part of society (Braddock & Parish, 2001).

This study investigated the level of inclusion of select PSPs. As is demonstrated early on in disability history, the inclusion of people with disabilities has long been an issue and continues to be a concern today.

## The Rehabilitation Act

In the 1950s and 1960s, the disability rights movement started to gain momentum (Braddock & Parish, 2001). During the 1960s, when the civil rights movement began, people with disabilities followed the momentum of other marginalized groups and began to speak out to gain equal opportunity, access, and treatment. Similar to other minority groups in the United States, people with disabilities have had to challenge stereotypes and lobby politically for equal rights. It was during this time that parents of children with disabilities began to argue for the rights of their children more prominently. Parents widely believed that their children should

not be sent to asylums and institutions, but instead insisted that their children be allowed to live at home and attend public schools. Parents argued that it was developmentally crucial for children with disabilities to have the opportunity to interact with and learn alongside other children without disabilities. The 1960s in the first documented instances of parents organizing together to argue for inclusive models of disability education.

The fight for disability rights ultimately led to the first piece of United States legislation protecting individuals with disabilities, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The Rehabilitation Act (1973) established that it was unlawful to discriminate against a person based on ability and that entities that receive government funding, including public schools, must be equal opportunity employers as well as provide reasonable accommodations to people with disabilities as cited in Section 504 (1973). The Rehabilitation Act was a monumental step in the disability rights movement and was the first of many legislative changes to secure more rights for citizens with disabilities.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act was the first piece of civil rights legislation that began to influence access to public education for children with disabilities (Edwards, Sieminski, & Zeldin, 2014). Section 504 was intended to protect students with disabilities from being discriminated against in the public school system based on ability by mandating that all public schools provide free appropriate education (Schraven & Jolly, 2010). Appropriate education, as defined by Section 504, is as education provided by public elementary and secondary schools, including special education, that is designed to meet each student's needs (North Dakota Department of Public Institutions, 1999). Further, Section 504 mandated that the needs of students with disabilities must be met as adequately as the needs of non-disabled students (North Dakota Department of Public Institutions, 1999). Despite Section 504 providing civil

rights protections to children with disabilities in the public school system, it was not without its limitations.

Section 504 was created to protect the rights of students with disabilities in federally funded schools; however, school districts were not provided additional federal funding to implement these mandates (Schraven & Jolly, 2010). Each state was responsible for funding extra support for students who qualified for disability-protection, as outlined in Section 504 (Schraven & Jolly, 2010). Lack of federal funding limited the amount of support school districts were able to provide for students with disabilities (Schraven & Jolly, 2010).

In addition to a lack of federal funding, other limitations to the Rehabilitation Act manifested after the legislation was implemented. For example, immediately after Section 504 was passed, many school districts focused their inclusion efforts on ensuring physical access to education spaces, not on providing programmatic, educational access (North Dakota State Dept. of Public Instruction, 1999). Ramps were installed, and elevators were added to buildings to ensure physical access to educational spaces, however education programs and curriculum were not altered based on individual student needs (North Dakota State Dept. of Public Instruction, 1999). While physical access to schools is important and necessary, in many cases, changes to curriculum did not take place until the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA), later named the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), was passed in 1975.

### Education for All Handicapped Children Act & Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

Two years after the Rehabilitation Act was passed, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA) was passed in 1975, resulting in Public Law 94-142. The EAHCA was

made into law after a group of parents sued the state of Pennsylvania for refusing to allow their children with disabilities to participate in public education (Keogh, 2007). EAHCA later named the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), stated that all children, despite ability, should have access to free, public, and appropriate K12 education. Although not reported in PL 94-142, the court also issued the opinion that students with disabilities should be placed into mainstream classrooms and not separated from their peers (Keogh, 2007). Despite the court-issued opinion in 1975 on the inclusion of students with disabilities in mainstream classrooms, students with disabilities are, in many cases, separated from their peers in the K12 education system in the 21st century (Keogh, 2007).

Both IDEA and Section 504 protect students with disabilities within the public education system. While both pieces of legislation may seem redundant, it is essential to discuss the differences between the two. IDEA governs special education laws within the United States compared to Section 504, which is a civil rights statute (Schraven & Jolly, 2010). As a civil rights statute, Section 504 has a broader definition of disability and impacts a more significant number of students (Schraven & Jolly, 2010). In contrast, IDEA is only applicable to students who are diagnosed as having at least one of thirteen pre-defined disabilities, which, in turn, must have been proven to have a negative impact on the child's academic progress (Schraven & Jolly, 2010). The IDEA definition of disability limits the number of students who qualify for IDEA accommodations (Schraven & Jolly, 2010).

In addition to a more narrow definition of disability, IDEA also limits the age at which students are eligible to receive IDEA benefits (Schraven & Jolly, 2010). Under IDEA, students can receive accommodations up to their twenty-second birthday. In contrast, Section 504 protects student's educational rights up to any age (Schraven & Jolly, 2010).

While it may seem that IDEA is not as effective as Section 504 due to its limitations previously discussed, IDEA has many positive implications. First, IDEA is funded by the federal government, ensuring all school districts have monies to support students who qualify for IDEA accommodations (Schraven & Jolly, 2010). This funding has not only paid for services for students with disabilities, but it has also been used to provide additional training, assistive technology, assessment materials, and other support to teachers and administrators who implement IDEA guidelines (Schraven & Jolly, 2010). This additional support has led to improved outcomes for students with disabilities who receive IDEA accommodations (Schraven & Jolly, 2010).

## Americans with Disabilities Act

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the EAHCA/IDEA greatly impacted the disability rights movement. However, it was not until 1990 that it became illegal to discriminate against a person with a disability in any service provided by the local and state governments (Percy, 1993; Pfeiffer, 1993). In 1990, the U.S Congress passed the Americas with Disabilities Act (ADA), designed to end the discrimination of people with disabilities in the U.S (Percy, 1993). The ADA mandated that it was illegal to discriminate against people with disabilities in the following areas: public places, public transportation, employment, and telecommunications (Percy, 1993). When President George H.W. Bush signed the ADA into law, all public places were expected to expand their accommodations to allow for equal access to all people. ADA was also the first act of legislation that mandated businesses make reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities beyond the K12 education system.

As discussed previously, there were many pieces of U.S legislation leading up to the ADA in 1990. While these early laws were a step towards eliminating the discrimination of people with disabilities, they were primarily viewed as inadequate by many civil rights groups (Percy, 1993). In 1989, a survey conducted by the Gallop Organization identified that in 1985 large percentages of U.S citizens with disabilities could not use public transit systems, had difficulty accessing public buildings, were unemployed, and had been discriminated against in their place of business (Percy, 1993). The results of this survey indicated that the civil rights groups were correct; the laws preceding ADA were inadequate in eradicating the discrimination of people with disabilities.

It is important to note that the ADA was not intended to eliminate or overwrite the Rehabilitation Act or the IDEA. The ADA was proposed to enhance support for individuals with disabilities (Percy, 1993). By making ADA a federal law, congress effectively sent the message that discrimination of a person based on their ability was equally as wrong as discrimination against someone based on race of sex (Percy, 1993). ADA was the first piece of U.S legislation that influenced the private sector. ADA defines employers responsible for disability rights as "any person or entity affecting commerce," employing fifteen people or more (Percy, 1993). By defining companies based on affecting commerce, ADA spread the protection of people with disabilities to private companies (Percy, 1990).

The passing of the ADA had many positive implications (Percy, 1990). However, implementing mandates for ADA compliance was difficult for many organizations (Percy, 1990). When ADA was first passed, organizations focused their efforts on studying and amending policy based on ADA compliance as well as identifying physical spaces that did not meet ADA accessibility standards (Percy, 1990). Municipalities across the U.S. have faced

difficulties in meeting ADA standards due to the complexity of varying disabilities as well as costs associated with implementing ADA requirements (Percy, 1990).

## Higher Education Opportunities Act

After the ADA in 1990 was passed, the Higher Education Opportunities Act (HEOA) of 2008 was reauthorized for the eighth time since its original implementation by President Lyndon Johnson in 1965 (Madaus, Kowitt, & Lalor, 2012). Although reauthorized eight times prior, in 2008, the HEOA drastically changed the landscape of higher education for people with disabilities (Madaus et al., 2012). The original intent of the HEOA in 1965 was to improve access to higher education for qualified students (Madaus et al., 2012). In 2008, the amendments made to the HEOA increased access to higher education for students with intellectual disabilities (Madaus et al., 2012).

The HEOA (2008) increased access to higher education for students with ID in two ways. First, it changed the criteria necessary for students to receive federal funding (U.S Department of Education, 2010). Before the HEOA of 2008, only students in a degree-seeking program were eligible to apply for and receive federal financial aid such as Pell Grants, Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants, and Work-Study (Lee, 2009; Madaus et al., 2012). Second, the HEOA (2008) provided higher education institutions (HEIs) the opportunity to apply for Transitional Postsecondary Institutional Development (TPSID) grants to improve and create PSPs. Both of these legislative changes will be expanded upon in this section.

Financial aid recipient criteria were a financial barrier to many students with ID who did not meet the standard admissions criteria to participate at a university as a degree-seeking student. Before the HEOA (2008), students with ID could audit college classes at a university.

Still, they had to pay for tuition privately because they would often not qualify to receive federal financial aid. After the HEOA of 2008, students enrolled in PSPs became eligible to receive federal financial aid (Lee, 2009; Madaus et al., 2012). By permitting students with ID access to non-degree seeking PSPs and changing aid criteria, the HEOA of 2008 removed a cost barrier for students with ID (Lee, 2009; Madaus et al., 2012). Students who could not afford to go to college previously can now apply to non-degree seeking PSPs and receive federal financial aid.

In addition to increasing access to higher education for students with ID through the availability of financial aid, the HEOA also provided higher education institutions (HEIs) the opportunity to apply for Transitional Postsecondary Institutional Development (TPSID) grants. TPSID grants are awarded to a certain number of colleges and universities to implement, improve, and expand programs for students with ID on college campuses. TPSID grant recipients should focus on teaching methods, strategies, transition programs, education accessibility, and training for educators to serve students with ID at each HEI (Madaus et al., 2012). HEIs that receive TPSID funding are expected to work with Think College, a model demonstration program, to implement best practices (Lee, 2009). Think College is funded by the HEOA to provide technical assistance, evaluation, improvements, and recommendations (Lee, 2009), to all TPSID grant recipients.

## Transitional Postsecondary Institutional Development

In 2008, through the HEOA, the federal government authorized funds supporting the inclusion of students with ID in higher education in the form of TPSID grants ("Higher Education Opportunity Act—2008," 2010). In 2010, twenty-seven of approximately 100 higher

education institutions that applied for the first round of TPSID grants were awarded the grant to support opportunities for students with intellectual disabilities at postsecondary institutions (Ryan, 2014). Federal support for students with ID in postsecondary education is relatively recent; therefore, little research has been conducted to determine if the TPSID funded programs have met their objectives.

Colleges and universities that have received TPSID funding and are developing support services and initiatives to support students with ID are required to assess their progress and processes. Think College, a TPSID funded organization that distributes information and conducts research on PSP opportunities, directs the evaluation process (Lee, 2009). The PSPs selected for this study have Southern Association of College and Schools (SACS) accreditation and received TPSID grant funding for the 2015 grant cycle.

## Think College

The purpose of this study was to explore the publicly available information provided by universities with Postsecondary Education Programs (PSP) that have Southern Association of College and Schools (SACS) accreditation and receive TPSID grant funding. Think College, located at the University of Massachusetts Boston collects and distributes information about postsecondary education programs on a national level (Institute for Community Inclusion, 2019). This section details an overview and history of Think College and the services it provides to students, families, and universities.

"With a commitment to equity and excellence, Think College supports evidence-based and student-centered research and practice by generating and sharing knowledge, guiding institutional change, informing public policy, and engaging with students, professionals and families, Institute for Community Inclusion, 2019 p.1)." Think College has been identified as the National Coordinating Center for twenty-five TPSID grants that were distributed by the federal government in 2015 (Institute for Community Inclusion, 2019). The center has four main objectives including: coordination, training and technical assistance, dissemination, and research (Institute for Community Inclusion, 2019).

Think College offers webinars, modules, and one-on-one instruction to recipients of TPSID grants to provide training opportunities to college administrators. These learning opportunities help administrators make informed decisions regarding the PSPs at their respective institutions (Institute for Community Inclusion, 2019). In addition to providing continuing education for administrators, Think College also produces and supports publications for review expanding upon best practices for colleges and universities (Institute for Community Inclusion, 2019). These publications and trainings are expected to be utilized by TPSID recipients during

program processes and implementation. By providing training sessions and conducting research, Think College strives to ensure that all TPSID funded institutions are implementing programs based on national best practices (Institute for Community Inclusion, 2019).

Along with publications and training, Think College is committed to distributing information to its constituents (Institute for Community Inclusion, 2019). Think College collects and organizes information for students with ID and their families seeking PSP opportunities (Institute for Community Inclusion, 2019). The Think College website makes it easier for students to search for PSP by state, program support, and university amenities including on-campus housing (Institute for Community Inclusion, 2019). Students and their families are not the only benefactors of the information provided by Think College. Colleges and universities have access to Think College's services and research. College administrators can access Think College resources on best practices and receive assistance in the creation, implementation, and evaluation of PSP programs (Institute for Community Inclusion, 2019). Think College aims to help colleges and universities create and implement PSP opportunities that are equitable, appropriate, and supportive of students with ID (Institute for Community Inclusion, 2019).

Think College developed the Inclusive Higher Education Assessment for higher education institutions to use to assess their PSP. This assessment tool helps program administrators determine the program's current level of inclusion based on eighty-six key practices and Benchmarks developed by Think College research. The eighty-six Benchmarks are part of eight broader categories of Standards: Academic access, career development, campus membership, self-determination, alignment with college systems and practices, coordination and collaboration, sustainability, and ongoing evaluation (Grigal et al., 2012).

The first standard is academic access. Colleges meeting the academic access standard ensure students with ID have access to a variety of college courses that also enroll students without ID. Additionally, Academic access requires the institution to provide opportunities for students to acquire skills to access learning opportunities (Institute for Community Inclusion, 2019). The second standard is career development which requires universities to provide career focused support and internship experiences for students, helping them learn the necessary skills required to obtain and sustain employment (Institute for Community Inclusion, 2019). Campus membership, the third standard, states that students should have both access and support to participate in pre-existing social clubs, organizations, and opportunities on campus including access to facilities and technology (Institute for Community Inclusion, 2019). The fourth standard is self-determination and involves student centered planning. This standard ensures that students are involved in identifying their own personal and professional goals and are provided support to help reach their goals (Institute for Community Inclusion, 2019). The fifth standard, alignment with college systems and practices ensures that students are following the same university protocol and processes that students without ID are expected to follow (Institute for Community Inclusion, 2019). Alignment includes course advising, student conduct, community living standards, and campus resources (Institute for Community Inclusion, 2019). The sixth standard, coordination and collaboration, is similar to the fifth standard because it involves creating and maintaining relationships with on campus constituents and partners (Institute for Community Inclusion, 2019). The coordination and collaboration standard emphasizes the importance of buy-in and collaboration between PSP administrators and campus partners. The seventh standard, sustainability, emphasizes the importance of planning ahead and providing a diverse source of funding for the program (Institute for Community Inclusion, 2019). The

sustainability standard ensures the longevity of the program in order to maintain the PSP overtime. The eighth and final standard, ongoing evaluation, requires administrators to consistently assess and modify the PSP program to continue to make program improvements (Institute for Community Inclusion, 2019). All TPSID grant recipients should be working with Think College to meet the standards criteria.

According to Think College, approximately 247 post-secondary institutions including four-year universities, community colleges, and trade schools have created programs that welcome and support students with intellectual disabilities to engage in the campus climate (Institute for Community Inclusion, 2019). The only states that do not support any type of program for students with intellectual disabilities in the higher-education are Idaho, Oklahoma, and the District of Columbia (Institute for Community Inclusion, 2019). According to the Think College National Coordinating Center 2013-2014 Annual Report:

> Over 883 students with intellectual disabilities have had the opportunity to access college courses, participate in internships and integrated competitive employment, and engage in the same social and personal development activities that other college students enjoy throughout the country. (Grigal et al., 2015) p.88)

In 2009, Think College conducted a National Survey to provide a snapshot of what colleges and universities were offering to students with ID to determine if institutions were meeting the standards of admission, course access, and housing access (Hart, Grigal, & Weir, 2010). One hundred and forty-nine institutions responded to the survey from 37 states. In response to admission practices, of the respondents, 60% of institutions indicated that students

with ID were officially enrolled at the institution (Hart et al., 2010). Fifty six percent of respondents reported special criteria for university admittance for students with ID and 71% of institutions reported that students with ID do not take college admittance exams for admission (Hart et al., 2010). Course access and social engagement results indicated that 75% of institutions offered courses and social events specifically designed for students with ID and 75% of institutions offered courses to students with ID that are also offered to students without intellectual disabilities (Hart et al., 2010). Only 39% of respondents presented university housing options (Hart et al., 2010). Based on this assessment, many PSP programs are either meeting or working towards completing the standard criteria. More assessments are needed to determine if improvements have been implemented.

Based on the review of Think College, the center has made tremendous strides in conducting research and disseminating information regarding PSPs to students, families, and universities. Think College has conducted research to determine if PSPs are implementing the standards, quality indicators, and benchmarks for inclusive higher education by surveying participating HEIs. In contract, this study will investigate if PSPs are implementing the standards, quality indicators, and benchmarks for inclusive higher education based on publicly available information provided by each PSP selected for this study.

## Section Two: Conceptual Framework

Section two of this literature review, Conceptual Framework, includes a discussion of four frameworks as they relate to this inquiry: andragogy, the COR Model, barriers to participation, and PSP classification. First, andragogy will be defined as an adult learning framework used to guide this study, followed by an explanation of Patricia Cross's Chain-of-Response (COR) Model. After the COR model is defined, how the COR model was applied to the research conducted for this study will be discussed. Following the discussion of how the COR model relates to this study, other studies that have used the COR model to guide the research inquiry will be explored. After the COR discussion, barriers to adult education, and barriers to education for students with ID will be identified. Following barrier identification, how barriers to participation relate to the research conducted for this inquiry will be further explained. Finally, this section concludes with an investigation of Hart et al.'s (2004) program classification system with a rationale for how this study used the classification system to categorize PSPs investigated in this study.

### Andragogy

In 1968, Malcolm Knowles introduced andragogy as a theory of adult learning to distinguish adult-learners from child-learners (Merriam et al., 2007). Knowles (1980, p.43) defined andragogy as "the art and science of helping adults learn, in contrast to pedagogy as the art and science of teaching children." When Knowles initially defined andragogy, he did so with four critical assumptions that he later expanded into six key assumptions (Merriam et al., 2007). Those assumptions are as follows. First, as a person matures, they progress from being directed by others to being self-directed (Knowles, 1980). Second, adults have accumulated experiences

that serve as a learning resource (Knowles, 1980). Third, an adult's readiness to learn is directly related to the knowledge needed within their social roles (Knowles, 1980). Fourth, adults view time as is associates with their learning as immediate rather than futuristic (Knowles, 1980); that is to say, what they learn now is immediately applicable to their current lives. Fifth, adults are more motivated by internal forces compared to external variables (Knowles, 1984), and sixth, adult learners need to understand why there is a need to learn (Knowles, 1984). The six assumptions defined by Knowles (1980;1984) provide a framework for defining adult learners and are referred to as a "model of assumptions" (Knowles, 1980 p. 43) and a "system of concepts" (Knowles, 1984, p. 8)

After Knowles introduced andragogy as an adult learning theory, adult educators and researchers were split between acknowledging andragogy as a way to differentiate adult-learners from child-learners, and critically analyzing the validity of andragogy as an adult learning theory (Merriam et al., 2007). While some researchers accepted andragogy as an adult learning theory, to be tested for validity through empirical studies (Davenport & Davenport, 1985), others (Brookfield, 1986; Hartree, 1984) noted that it was unclear whether Knowles had developed a learning theory or a teaching theory (Merriam et al., 2007). Furthering the debate, Brookfield (1986) noted that three of the six assumptions become problematic when put into practice (Merriam et al., 2007). Specifically, Brookfield (1986) argues that assumption one (as a person matures, they progress from being directed by others to being self-directed), assumption three (an adult's readiness to learn is directly related to the knowledge needed within their social roles), and assumption four, (adults view time as is associates to their learning as immediate rather than futuristic) are problematic, and the only reliable assumption is the second

assumption (adult learners use their previous experience to enhance their learning) (Merriam et al., 2007).

Early critiques of andragogy, such as that listed above, were defended by Knowles (1984, p. 112) when he explained that he "prefers to think of [andragogy] as a model of assumptions about learning or a conceptual framework that serves as a basis for an emergent theory." By asserting that andragogy should be and can be used as the basis for theory development, Knowles expertly communicated that andragogy could be built upon, expanded, and explored through further research and inquiry.

After the initial critiques of andragogy and Knowles' (1989) explanation of andragogy as a foundation for theory development, other critiques of andragogy emerged. These critiques contested that Knowles' theory of andragogy only focused on the individual learner with no mention of external factors or the environment in which the individual lives (Merriam et al., 2007). These critiques (Grace, 1996; Pratt, 1993) note that Knowles' theory of andragogy does not address the social context or external forces surrounding the individual (Merriam et al., 2007). In summation, the most significant critique of Knowles' model of assumptions is the "lack of attention to the context in which learning takes place," (Merriam et al., 2007, p.88).

As such, other adult learning theorists have developed models of practice, expanding upon Knowles' (1980;1984) assumptions of adult learners and andragogy. Specifically, Patricia Cross (1981) developed the Chain-of-Response Model to explain adult participation in adult learning with a focus on external factors. More information on Cross's Chain-of-Response model is detailed in the following section. The COR model was used to guide this research study. Support for andragogy as the foundation framework for this study can be found in the Theoretical Framework section of Chapter One – Introduction.

## Chain-of- Response Model & Other Adult Participation Models

The adult learning theory, the Chain-of-Response model (Cross, 1981), was selected for this research study as the guiding conceptual framework. The rationale for the selection of an adult learning theory to guide this study is discussed in greater detail in the Theoretical Framework section of Chapter One – Introduction. In this section, other models of adult learning will be expanded upon concluding with an explanation of the COR model and rationale for selecting the COR model to guide this study.

After a review of the literature, several models, in addition to Cross's COR model, have been developed to help explain and expand the knowledge base regarding adult participation in higher education. These models include: Miller's force-field analysis model (1967), Rubenson's expectancy-valance model (1977), and Tough's model (1971). These models will be further explained in this section.

Harry Miller (1967) developed the force-field analysis adult-participation model based on the relationship between socio-economic status and participation. Using Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs as a foundation, Miller (1967) postulated that a person's needs dictate their involvement in higher education. Miller (1967) indicated that both positive and negative forces influence individuals, and these forces are flexible based on each individual's socio-economic status. While Miller's force-field analysis provides a framework explaining why adults may or may not chose to participate in higher education, it is not without its shortcomings. Most notably, for this study, Miller's force-field analysis does not address life transitions, as found in Cross's COR model. Cross's model is a broad and flexible model that allows for internal and external forces in the accompaniment of barriers, information, and life transitions as factors that influence participation.

Rubenson's (1977) expectancy-valance model is similar to Miller's (1967) model, as it is rooted in psychological theory. Rubenson (1977) argued that a person's actions are a direct response to the individuals environment. Rubenson's (1977) model is rooted in expectations and results. The expectancy portion of the model relates to an individual's expectation of educational activity. (Rubenson, 1977). For example, if a person expects to have a positive life outcome after participation, then the outcome will be positive. Conversely, the valance portion of the model refers to the effect participation has on the individual (Rubenson, 1977). Although Rubenson's (1977) model takes external factors into account, it does not emphasize barriers to participation or information, a key element to Cross's COR model, and essential to the foundation of this study.

Similarly to Rubenson's (1977) expectancy variable, Tough (1979) proposed that an adult's anticipation of the reward that accompanies participation is both a conscious thought and a major motivational force influencing participation in adult learning. Tough (1979) argued that if a person can identify a benefit or reward for participating in a learning activity, they are more likely to participate. While Tough's (1979) model provides a simple explanation for adult motivation, it does not address the impact a person's environment could have on their motivation to participate. Cross's COR model not only includes motivation, but it also considers environmental factors.

Based on the analysis of Miller's force-field analysis mode (1967), Rubenson's expectancy-valance model (1977), and Tough's model (1971), the COR model was selected for this study due to its thorough explanation of adult participation including barriers, internal forces, external forces, motivation, environment, and information. Next, the COR model will be discussed in greater detail.

The Chain-of-Response model developed by Cross (1981) was developed to explain why adults participate in adult learning. The model identifies variables that affect adult learning and participation while providing a framework for how these variables interact with each other (Cross, 1981). The model suggests that participation in adult education is not a single act or decision but instead, an action based on the result of a chain of responses grounded in an individual's evaluation of their environment (Cross, 1981). The COR model is more comprehensive than the other models discussed and is an appropriate framework for this study. The model indicates that "forces for participation in adult learning activities begin with the individual and move to increasingly external conditions.... forces flow in both directions" (Cross, 1981 p. 125).

Point (A) self-evaluation, in the model, represents how an individual perceives their abilities. Point (A) self-evaluation directly interacts with point (B) attitudes about education and attitudes towards learning. If a person has both a positive self-perception and a positive attitude towards education, they are likely to move onto points (D) life transitions and (C) value of goals and expectations that participation will achieve goals. Conversely, if a person has had negative educational experiences in the past or has low self-confidence, they may be stuck at the beginning of the model and unable to move forward to participation.

Assuming a person moves from points (A) self-evaluation and (B) attitudes about education, they next interact with point (C), value of foals and expectations that participation participation will meet goals, and (D) life transitions. Point (C) value of goals and expectations that participation will achieve goals becomes a positive force when the individual believes that involvement in education will move them forward in life and help them reach their goals. These goals could include a better job, a higher paycheck, or any number

of factors. The individual's goals may also interact with point (D) life transitions. For example, if a person gets divorced, they may have a new goal of financially securing their future and providing for themselves or their children. In this example, divorce is a life transition that positively impacts the individual's motivation to meet their goal of making more money by pursuing educational opportunities. Conversely, a life transition could harm an individual's motivation, holding them back from pursuing educational opportunities.

Once a person progresses through points (A) self-evaluation, (B) attitudes about education, (C) value of goals and expectations that participation will meet goals, and (D) life transitions, they are highly motivated to participate and will most likely overcome barriers, point (E), by seeking out opportunities to overcome specific barriers (Cross, 1981). Point (F), information, interacts with point (E), barriers. In this stage, individuals actively search for information to help them overcome educational barriers. For example, if the cost is a barrier, the participant would identify scholarships, federal financial aid, and other funding opportunities (Cross, 1981). Point (F) information is a critical element in the model because, without it, a person may not identify information or opportunities and may be unable to move forward to point (G), participation (Cross, 1981). If, however, a person can identify information detailing opportunities to help them overcome barriers, they will progress to the final step in the model, point (G), participation (Cross, 1981).

Although it is not the first point in the model, most efforts to engage adults in learning opportunities begin with the attempt to eliminate barriers, point (E), and increase positive opportunities (Cross, 1981). Think College and TPSID grants are an example of this implementation. Both Think College and the TPSID grants were created to eliminate barriers to higher education for people with ID. However, unless information, point (F), detailing support

services, is available for students and their families, students with ID may not progress through point (E) barriers.

This study focused on points (E) barriers and (F) information; the last part on the COR model before participation can occur. The purpose of this document analysis qualitative research study was to explore the publicly available information provided by universities with Postsecondary Education Programs (PSP) that have Southern Association of College and Schools (SACS) accreditation and receive TPSID grant funding. Point (F) of the COR-model information, relates to this research study due to the emphasis of this inquiry on publicly available information. Point (F) is a critical piece of the COR model as it "provides the information that links motivated learners to appropriate opportunities" (Cross, 1981 p.127). Without access to information, students are unable to uncover opportunities, and the lack of information becomes a barrier to students with ID participating in PSPs. By mining publicly available information, the researcher determined if information regarding PSP support is available to students with ID and their families. As is defined by Cross (1981), lack of available information is a barrier to adult learning.

The sections, Types of Barriers to Adult Learning and Participation and Barriers for Students with Intellectual Disabilities in Chapter Two – Literature Review, further describe known barriers to adult participation and barriers to participation for students with ID. In addition to investigating the publicly available information regarding PSP support services and inclusivity, data collected for this study was analyzed based on other known barriers to participation for students with ID.

## Chain-of-Response Model as a Research Framework

The Chain-Of-Response Model has been used in other studies to assess adult learning and participation. This section contains a detailed synthesis of these studies and concludes with an explanation of how these studies relate to this inquiry.

The first study to be investigated (Okpara, 1993) does not involve a higher education framework, compared to the other studies identified in this section (Cooke, 1986; McPherson, 1999; Scott, 1989; Wendel, 1998; Willett, 1984). Okpara (1993) conducted a qualitative case study using Cross's COR model as the theoretical framework as a guide to understanding participation barriers. Okpara (1993) evaluated the participation of public housing residents in educational activities by interviewing 24 public-housing residents and surveying 27 public-housing residents. Cross's COR was used to structure the interview questions and survey questionnaire as well as to analyze the results (Okpara, 1993). Based on the results of the study, Okpara (1993) grouped the barriers cited by respondents as either situational barriers, institutional barriers, and internal barriers as reasons for non-participation (Okpara, 1993). The barrier categories in Okpara's (1993) study are consistent with the COR model and research on barriers (Cross, 1981). Okpara's investigation relates to this study in two areas. First, Okpara (1993) used the barriers element of the COR to understand why adults were not participating in an educational opportunity. Second, both this study and Okpara's (1993) study are qualitative studies conducted to better to understand barriers to adult participation in educational activities. Differences between Okpara's (1993) study and this inquiry include research methods -- this research inquiry is a document analysis and Okpara used interviews and a questionnaire.

Other studies that have utilized the COR as a guiding framework but, unlike Okpara (1993), involve higher education research include studies conducted by Wendel (1998), Scott

(1989), Cooke (1986), Willett (1984), and McPherson (1999). Two of these researchers investigated motivational factors and barriers for nurses pursuing additional education, training, or certifications (Scott, 1989; Wendel, 1998). Another two researchers, Willett (1984) and McPherson (1999), investigated non-traditional student participation in higher education. In contrast, Cooke (1986) studied faculty participation in professional development activities. Each of these studies will be further examined in this section.

The purpose of Wendel's (1998) study was to identify what internal motivators influence nurses to participate in the Associated Degree Registered Nurse Program following the successful completion of the Licensed Practical Nurse Program. Wendel (1998 p.9) used the COR model as a theoretical framework to guide the study based on the COR model's "board appeal and flexibility." Wendell (1998) used the COR Model to identify and explain why nurses choose or choose not to participate in the Associated Degree Registered Nurse Program. Scott (1989) also used the COR model as a conceptual framework to identify motivational factors and barriers. Scott (1989) investigated the different motivating factors, vocational personalities, barriers, and enabling factors between re-entry nurses and traditional-aged college students in the same nursing degree program.

Both Scott (1989) and Wendel (1998) used the COR model to develop their research tools and data collection methods. Scott (1989) distributed questionnaires, based on the COR model, to 46 re-entry nursing majors and 73 traditional college-age nursing majors. Following the questionnaire, Scott (1989) conducted interviews with 10 participants from each group. Similarly, Wendel (1998) administered questionnaires, based on the COR model, to participants, but unlike Scott (1989), Wendel (1998) did not conduct participant interviews. Wendel (1998 p.7) discovered that the following motivational themes emerged as

motivating factors for participation: “friends’ encouragement, significant others’ encouragement, perceived level of faculty expertise, work supervisors’ encouragement, and faculty respect for students’ existing knowledge and expertise.” Similarly, to Wendel (1998), Scott (1989), discovered that support of a significant other was the most influential motivating factor for re-entry nurses. While both Scott (1989) and Wendel (1998) used the COR model to guide their research studies with a higher education focus, these studies differ from the research conducted for this study. Similarly, to Okpara (1993), Wendel (1998) and Scott (1989) both used questionnaires to collect data from participants. A unifying difference between these studies, and this research inquiry involves data and participants. Data for this study consisted of publicly available documents, and there were no participants for this study.

Both Willett (1984) and McPherson (1999) conducted studies to investigate the participation of non-traditional students in higher education. Willett’s (1984) research centered on the involvement and attitude of adult students enrolled in a Capstone Concept program. In the Capstone Concept model, students complete two years of school at a community college and then complete the final two years in an external program – based on their community college area of study (Willett, 1984). McPherson (1999), however, investigated adult students participating in public 4-year higher education institutions. McPherson (1999) was not only interested in adult participation but specifically investigated full-time enrollment.

Willett (1984) conducted a quantitative study by distributing a questionnaire, based on the six elements of the COR model, to participants and evaluated the results using statistical analysis. Unlike Willett (1984), McPherson (1999) completed a qualitative study by conducting phone interviews with twenty-eight participants. The interviews were semi-structured and contained pre-written questions following the themes of the COR model (McPherson, 1999).

McPherson (1999) analyzed the data by identifying emergent themes from the interview transcriptions.

Results of McPherson's study (1999) indicated that adult students who chose to enroll enroll full time at the university made their decision based on two key factors. First, the participants indicated that they had a realization of how a college degree could improve their life opportunities, and second, they had gone through a significant life transition. Willett (1984) identified several key factors to indicate participation and attitude. These factors include a strong interest in continuing education, participants overcoming a negative high school experience, overcoming self-directed work at home, solving financial concerns, and obtaining support from family (Willett, 1984). Both Willett (1984) and McPherson (1999) successfully identified motivating factors for participation in continuing education using the COR model to guide their research and data collection methods.

Cooke (1986), similarly to all of the other researchers previously discussed, used the COR model to guide their research study. However, unlike the other researchers, the purpose of Cooke's (1986) study was to test the validity and accuracy of the COR model as it relates to faculty participation in professional development activities. Cooke (1986) distributed a questionnaire to participants and conducted semi-structured interviews based on the COR model, as did Scott (1989) and Okpara (1993). Based on Cooke's (1986) results, faculty who participated in professional development activities progressed through the elements of the COR model. Comparatively, faculty who did not participate did not progress through the COR model variables (Cooke, 1986). Cooke (1986) concluded the study with the assertion that the COR model is a viable tool to investigate adult participation in educational opportunities.

Unlike the studies detailed above, this study did not use the COR model to inform data collection methods. This study used the COR model as a lens to better understand why adults do or do not participate in postsecondary education. Exploring other studies that have used the COR model as a theoretical framework validates the use of the COR model to guide this study. The studies listed above have demonstrated that Cross's COR model can be used to help identify barriers to participation and is an appropriate tool to explain why adults do or do not participate. As such, it is appropriate to assume that the elements in the COR model are valid and can be used as a foundation for this inquiry. The COR model identifies barriers and information as crucial elements of participation. These elements are the central focus of this study and provide the foundation for this inquiry. The information variable refers to the investigation of publicly available information. Similarly, the information variable informs the barrier variable; lack of appropriate information as a barrier to participation.

## Types of Barriers to Adult Learning and Participation

Barriers to participation in higher education and adult learning have been studied using several different research methods. The most common approach to explore barriers to participation is though qualitative individual interviews or questionnaires in which researchers ask participants why they are not participating in higher education (Cross, 1981). Another popular method is participant observation: watching how people behave rather than asking them why they behave a certain way (Cross, 1981). The final method is an experimental design where researchers develop a hypothesis regarding adult learning and participation and then test the theory through experimentation (Cross, 1981). Each of the research methods listed above have helped develop how researchers understand barriers to participation (Cross, 1981). Based on a thorough review of the research involving all three methods listed above, Cross (1981) argues that there are three types of barriers to participation: situational, institutional, and dispositional.

Situational barriers include obstacles that exist because of the individual's current life situation (Cross, 1981). Situational barriers could consist of full-time employment, parenthood, lack of money, or other responsibilities outside of education (Cross, 1981). Situational barriers affect the 25-45-year-old age group more than institutional or dispositional barriers (Cross, 1981). The cost of tuition and the lack of time are the most significant situational barriers to adult education, surpassing all other barriers by a large margin (Cross, 1981). Cross (1981) notes that people with time to attend school typically lack the financial freedom to pay for their education. Conversely, those who have the money to pay for education lack the time. This observation is not surprising since people who are employed full time have more financial freedom than those who are employed part-time.

Cross (1981) acknowledges that cost can be a difficult barrier to measure. For example, when surveying adults regarding educational barriers, respondents may be unaware of the actual cost of higher education and simply assume that it is unaffordable for them (Cross, 1981). Additionally, one's ability to pay for something does not always align with one's willingness to pay (Cross, 1981). A respondent unwilling to pay for the cost of higher education may indicate cost as a barrier on a survey even though they have the financial means to afford higher education (Cross, 1981). In addition to a willingness to pay, Cross (1981) also mentions that citing cost as a reason not to participate is a socially acceptable reason compared to lacking the motivation to participate. By citing cost as a barrier to education instead of admitting school is boring, or there is no value in it, a person can protect their reputation or ward off any questions that may make them uncomfortable.

Dispositional barriers are a result of a person's attitude or self-perception regarding learning or one's aptitude as a learner (Cross, 1981). For example, elderly people often believe they are too old to learn, and people from a poor educational background often lack the interest to learn or lack the confidence to pursue additional learning opportunities (Cross, 1981). Dispositional barriers are the least likely of the three barriers to be cited by individuals as a barrier to their education (Cross, 1981). Cross (1981) argues that this is based on social desirability, citing that it is more acceptable to list another barrier to participation, such as lack of time than to say that one is too busy, lacks interest, is too old, or lacks the ability to participate. This is evident in several studies where adults are asked why their peers do not participate in adult learning (Cross, 1981). In these studies, a higher percentage of respondents report that their peers do not participate due to dispositional barriers; however, when asked about their lack of participation, they more often report either a situational or institutional barrier (Cross, 1981).

Institutional barriers are procedures or policies put in place by a university or learning institution that discourage adult participation (Cross, 1981). Examples of institutional barriers could include extensive paperwork, general education course requirements outside of the individual's interest or intended program of study, and full-time student fees for part-time enrollment (Cross, 1981). Institutional barriers are the second leading barrier to adult learning, after situational barriers, and are typically present in institutions designed to meet the needs of full-time students such as colleges and universities (Cross, 1981). Cross (1981) has identified five categories of institutional barriers: scheduling; location or transportation; non-interesting, practical, or relevant courses; and lack of information regarding programs or processes. Although eliminating institutional barriers is an ongoing issue as culture, needs, and social pressures continue to change, many institutions have taken steps to eliminate traditional institutional barriers (Cross, 1981). For example, most universities offer evening classes for working adults, and students are often allowed to waive general education courses if they pass a competency test (Cross, 1981).

This study investigated the institutional barrier identified by Cross (1981): lack of information regarding programs of processes. The purpose of this document analysis qualitative research study was to explore the publicly available information provided by universities with Postsecondary Education Programs (PSP) that have Southern Association of College and Schools (SACS) accreditation and receive TPSID grant funding. By investigating the publicly available information regarding PSPs, the results of this research inquiry indicate if the barrier, lack of information, is present.

## Barriers for Students with ID in Higher Education

Barriers to learning exist throughout both the K12 and higher education systems. This section begins with an example of a common barrier that exists for students with disabilities during the transition from K12 to higher education. Following this example, this section will detail state-specific initiatives developed within the state of Florida to eliminate barriers for students with ID in higher education. It is important to note that although other efforts, similar to those in Florida, exist in other states, only the Florida initiatives will be discussed in this section and serve as examples of policy changes implemented to eliminate barriers. After the Florida initiatives are identified, this section concludes with a review of the literature regarding barriers to higher education for students with ID.

Specific barriers for students with disabilities exist in both the K12 and higher education systems and often manifest when a student transitions from K12 to higher education (Wisbey & Kalivonda, 2011). These barriers can be classified as institutional, dispositional, or situational. One of the most prevalent barriers in the transition is the shift in policies between the K12 and higher education system. For example, in K12 education, teachers and administrators are responsible for identifying the type of aid and accommodations that students with ID should receive within the education system (Wisbey & Kalivonda, 2011). In higher education, it is up to the individual student to request accommodations and seek out resources to help them with their education and transition (Wisbey & Kalivonda, 2011). This shift in responsibility is a significant factor to consider during the transition for many students (Wisbey & Kalivonda, 2011) and is classified as an institutional barrier.

Although barriers exist, similar to the example above, policymakers and educators have made many significant changes to decrease the number of institutional and situational barriers

that exist for students with disabilities within higher education since 2008. Examples of these changes include the HEOA of 2008, the implementation of TPSID grants, and changes in policy at the state level. The HEOA and TPSID grants decrease both institutional barriers and situational barriers by increasing the number of PSPs in higher education for students with ID as well as increasing sources for student funding. To illustrate examples of changes that have been implemented at the state level to decrease barriers for students with ID in higher education, policies implemented in the state of Florida will be discussed.

Senate Bill 672 made several changes to Florida legislation, creating opportunities for students with ID to participate in higher education (Gaetz, 2016). For example, the establishment of the Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities (FCSUA) was established through the implementation of the Florida Postsecondary Comprehensive Transition Program Act (Gaetz, 2016). The purpose of this act was to increase opportunities for students with ID including but not limited to: independent living, employment opportunities, an inclusive experience within colleges and universities, and the opportunity to earn a certificate or participate in a non-degree seeking program (Gaetz, 2016). By establishing the FCUSA, lawmakers in Florida eliminated barriers to access to higher education for students with ID.

The FCSUA, located at the University of Central Florida in Orlando, was established in 2016 ((Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities, 2019). The center was created to provide financial support to both students with ID and postsecondary institutional programs. Eligible students with ID receive a $7,000 scholarship annually to assist with costs associated with postsecondary education (Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities, 2019). Students who receive these scholarships must be currently enrolled in Florida comprehensive transition programs (Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities, 2019). Colleges and

universities are encouraged to apply for enhancement or startup funding for PSPs for both current and new initiatives. These policies help eliminate cost barriers for both individual students and institutions.

The Florida Consortium on Inclusive Higher Education (FCIHE) is similar to the FCSUA as it was designed to improve college access and programs for students with ID (Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities, 2019). The most significant difference between the two initiatives is the funding source. The state of Florida funds FCSUA through the Florida Postsecondary Comprehensive Transition Program Act, and the federal government funds FCIHE through the TPSID grant program (Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities, 2019; Florida Consortium on Inclusive Higher Education, 2019).

FCIHE was created in 2008 after the state of Florida was awarded a TPSID grant from the Federal government as a result of the HEOA (Florida Consortium on Inclusive Higher Education, 2019). The mission of the FCIHE is as follows: "The Florida Consortium on Inclusive Higher Education (FCIHE) is charged with increasing access to and engagement in college coursework and college life (clubs, organizations, and campus activities) culminating in a chosen career path and competitive employment for individuals with an intellectual disability," (Florida Consortium on Inclusive Higher Education, 2019). This mission is carried out through a partnership between The University of Central Florida, where FCIHE is located, the University of South Florida St. Petersburg, Florida International University (Miami), and Florida State College of Jacksonville (Florida Consortium on Inclusive Higher Education, 2019).

The FCIHE has three main objectives to assist students with ID, their families, and colleges and universities (Florida Consortium on Inclusive Higher Education, 2019). The first

objective is to increase and improve the inclusive PSPs for students with ID across the state of Florida (Florida Consortium on Inclusive Higher Education, 2019). The second objective involves collaboration. The FCIHE is committed to assisting with the collaborative efforts of universities across the state to create best practices, standards, and curriculum alignment for students in PSPs (Florida Consortium on Inclusive Higher Education, 2019). The third objective is research (Florida Consortium on Inclusive Higher Education, 2019). The FCIHE plans to increase the amount of research conducted regarding students with ID through conferences, training, and peer-reviewed articles (Florida Consortium on Inclusive Higher Education, 2019). This research will continue to inform improvements and changes to PSPs.

Although many changes, as illustrated above, have been implemented to eliminate barriers for students with ID in postsecondary education, limited research has been conducted since the implementation of the HEOA and TPSID grants to determine if these barriers have been alleviated. Of the studies that have been conducted, several barriers that exist within postsecondary program implementation and student participation have been identified by researchers. These barriers include preconceived attitudes regarding students with ID (Causton-Theoharis, Ashby, & DeClouette, 2009; Mock & Love, 2012; Neubert & Redd, 2008; Neubert, Moon, & Grigal, 2004; Stodden & Whelley, 2004; Thoma, 2013), financial aid ( Neubert & Redd, 2008; Neubert et al., 2004; Stodden & Whelley, 2004) lack of peer support ( Neubert et al., 2004; Neubert & Redd, 2008; Stodden & Whelley, 2004) limited course options (Causton-Theoharis et al., 2009; Mock & Love, 2012; Neubert et al., 2004), funding (Mock & Love, 2012; Plotner & Marshall, 2015; Thoma, 2013), and university buy-in (Plotner & Marshall, 2015).

During investigative studies, researchers have identified a lack of support (Plotner & Marshall, 2015) and preconceived attitudes regarding students with disabilities (Causton-Theoharis et al., 2009; Mock & Love, 2012; Neubert et al., 2004; Neubert & Redd, 2008; Plotner & Marshall, 2015; Stodden & Whelley, 2004) as barriers to program implementation. One study cited faculty members refusing to allow students with ID the opportunity to audit their upper-level course due to the perceived limited ability of students with ID (Causton-Theoharis et al., 2009) while other studies identified the need for campus-wide buy-in when implementing a postsecondary education program (Plotner & Marshall, 2015; Thoma, 2013). Thoma (2013) identified the need for buy-in across campus to assist with streamlining the admission process, access to courses, and identifying student status during program implementation. Without faculty support or campus buy-in, program implementation will either be extremely difficult or unsuccessful.

Financial support is one of the most significant identified barriers to program implementation and student participation. These areas of financial support include financial aid, (Mock & Love, 2012; Neubert et al., 2004; Neubert & Redd, 2008; Stodden & Whelley, 2004) and lack of program funding (Mock & Love, 2012; Plotner & Marshall, 2015; Thoma, 2013). As previously mentioned, before the HEOA in 2008, students with ID were not eligible for federal student loans and grants. Although students with ID have access to federal financial aid, it has continued to emerge in the research as a dominant barrier to participation. In addition to student aid, the lack of funding for program implementation has been identified as a barrier to program development, which affects student participation. If there is limited funding for program development, there are limited spaces for students to participate.

In addition to financial aid and negative attitudes, the lack of peer support for students with ID has also been identified as a barrier to success and participation (Neubert et al., 2004; Neubert & Redd, 2008; Stodden & Whelley, 2004). Many postsecondary education programs include a peer mentor component to provide each student with ID a peer support network (Causton-Theoharis et al., 2009). While peer support and social inclusion are necessary aspects of campus involvement, Clausten-Theoaharis et al. (2009) reported that many of the peer mentor friendships ended when peer mentor responsibilities were over. Additionally, Clausten-Theoaharis et al. (2009) reported that using paraprofessionals to support students on campus had a negative effect on the student's social involvement. Results indicated that students did not need a paraprofessional with the student at all times and that students preferred more freedom while on campus (Causton-Theoharis et al., 2009).

Limited course options were the final barrier identified during a review of the literature (Causton-Theoharis et al., 2009; Mock & Love, 2012; Neubert et al., 2004). The research indicates that program administrators were often able to gain faculty approval for students with ID to participate in general education courses; however, they found it challenging to get support for students to audit upper-level courses (Causton-Theoharis et al., 2009). In their study, Causton-Theoharis et al., (2009) cited program administrators' frustration at having to request permission from faculty for students to audit courses.

Barriers to adult learning and participation in postsecondary education for students with ID have emerged in research studies for several decades. While it is evident, based on legislation and program implementation, that lawmakers and program administrators are working towards eliminating institutional and situational barriers, there is still more research needed to determine if barriers to program implementation and student participation are being eliminated. It is

necessary to mention that change in the legislation will not impact dispositional barriers to participation. A student with ID's level of self-determination affects their ability to make decisions, be assertive, advocate for themselves, and positively experience postsecondary education. If a student has low self-determination, they are less likely to be successful in higher education, thus experiencing a dispositional barrier. However, if the student has a high level of self-determination, they are more likely to overcome dispositional barriers and positively engage in the collegiate environment. The elimination of dispositional barriers falls on the individuals themselves as well as parents and K12 administrators, not on law and policy.

## Program Classification

With the increase in the number of postsecondary options available for students with ID, the need for a classification system to identify types of programs was identified by several researchers. Hart, Mele-McCarthy, Pasternack, Zimbrich, and Parker (2004) were the first among Many researchers to identify three classification categories. These categories were established after Hart et al. (2004) completed a national survey involving twenty-five postsecondary education programs for people with ID. The results of the survey indicated that postsecondary education programs fell into one of three categories: substantially separate, mixed, or inclusive (Hart et al., 2004). Of the programs surveyed, four were identified as substantially separate, thirteen were mixed programs, and eight were inclusive (Hart et al., 2004).

Substantially separate programs have traditionally been referred to as life skills or transition programs and have existed since the 1970s (Hart et al., 2004). Many of these programs were implemented by nonprofit organizations or by parents of children with ID who were invested in helping people with ID interact with the community (Neubert & Moon, 2006). Most

separate programs, especially those that were created before 2004, were implemented without guidelines or program evaluation data (Neubert & Moon, 2006). Think College has since provided guidelines for program evaluation. Students who participate in substantially separate programs do not have regular interaction with students who are members of the general student body (Hart et al., 2004). Students in these programs typically do not have the option to take mainstream college courses, and the curriculum is primarily based on life-skills, employment training, and community engagement (Hart et al., 2004; Neubert & Moon, 2006; Neubert & Redd, 2008). Substantially separate programs can take place either on or off-campus (Hart et al., 2004). Programs that are provided off-campus are typically located at community centers and serve groups of five to ten students (Neubert & Redd, 2008).

Mixed programs are located on college campuses where students have semi-regular interaction with the general student body in both the classroom (Neubert & Moon, 2006) and in shared social spaces such as the cafeteria and recreation center (Hart et al., 2004). Mixed programs offer students the opportunity to take typical college courses as well as courses focused on life-skills, employment training (Hart et al., 2004), interagency links, parental involvement, functional academics, and self-determination (Neubert & Redd, 2008). According to Neubert and Redd (2008), mixed programs typically serve five to twenty students and are located on both college campuses and in community centers. Neubert and Moon (2006) identified five challenges for mixed programs. These challenges include the need for transportation for students to and from school, flexible teacher schedules, access to classroom and office spaces for aids at the collegiate sites, written policies for processes such as disciplinary actions, how to conduct individual improvement plan meetings, and more inclusive opportunities for students on campus (Neubert & Moon, 2006).

Inclusive/individual support models offer student-centered services to students with ID (Hart et al., 2004) based on person-centered planning or the individual student's goals (Neubert & Redd, 2008). Inclusive programs offer student access to traditional college courses (Hart et al., 2004) with no segregated course instruction (Neubert & Redd, 2008). In these programs, students are provided coaches or case managers, assistive technology, and other resources focused on individual support (Hart et al., 2004; Neubert & Redd, 2008). These resources ensure access to traditional college courses, internships, and degree-seeking programs (Hart et al., 2004). Neubert and Redd (2008) note that while each model for postsecondary education relies heavily on partnership and collaboration, the inclusive model relies on collaboration and shared resources more than the separate or mixed model.

Separate, mixed, and inclusive models all offer students different educational experiences and serve students with varying levels of cognition. Inclusive models, however, are the preferred postsecondary education model for many programs on college campuses. Stipulations of the TPSID grant require inclusive practices, and the Think College standards are based on inclusive program components. Inclusive programs are becoming more popular as more funding for inclusive programs becomes available. Data collected for this research inquiry was analyzed based on the program criteria listed above. After the analysis was complete, PSPs were categorized as either separate, mixed, or inclusive.

## Section Three: Current Research Summary and Critique

After a review of the research surrounding the participation of students with intellectual disabilities in postsecondary education, three emergent themes have been identified. Although the purpose of this document analysis qualitative research study was to explore the publicly

available information provided by universities with Postsecondary Education Programs (PSP) that have Southern Association of College and Schools (SACS) accreditation and receive TPSID grant funding, it is essential to explore emergent research surrounding the overall topic of the participation of students with ID in higher education. By exploring other research areas surrounding the overall topic of this study, the researcher aims to provide breadth and understanding of the topic as it relates to higher education as a field of study. In this section, the three emergent themes, life outcomes, social inclusion, and transition rates, will be investigated.

## Life Outcomes

The first emergent theme explored in this section is the life outcomes theme. Research analyzing the life outcomes of students with ID who participate in postsecondary education can provide valuable insight into the benefits of creating and maintaining programs to support students with ID at the collegiate level. Butler, Sheppard-Jones, Whaley, Harrison, and Osness (2016) studied the life outcomes of students with ID both enrolled in PSPs in the state of Kentucky and those not enrolled. The results measured by Butler et al. (2016) include health, medications, employment, and relationships. The National Core Indications Adult Consumer Survey was distributed to eighteen college students with ID. The results of the survey were compared to the results of people with ID across the state, not enrolled in PSP. Based on the comparison, the results indicated that students enrolled in PSPs have more positive outcomes in the areas of health, psychotropic medication use, and employment (Butler et al., 2016). Although mostly positive, students with ID enrolled in PSPs reported being 5% more lonely than individuals with ID not in a PSP (Butler et al., 2016). Butler et al. (2016) argued that this could be an indication that even though students with ID are invited to participate in higher

education, full inclusivity may not be taking place. Although this study demonstrated that students with ID who have attended college have better life outcomes, this study could be expanded by using qualitative research methods and individual interviews to further investigate the impact attending college has on the life outcomes of students with ID.

Life outcome research helps to identify whether or not PSP support for students with ID is worth the time, money, and resources put forth by universities and administration. This argument, however, can be countered by the theory of democratization of higher education. According to Blessinger and Anchan (2015), "democratic theory of higher education maintains that the ultimate purpose of higher education is to promote personal agency through the development of freedom and responsibility" (pg. 209). The concept of personal agency refers to the belief that access to equal and equitable learning opportunities for postsecondary education should be available to all people who want to attend a college or university (Blessinger & Anchan, 2015). Therefore, according to the theory of democratization, the life outcomes of students with ID post-college is irrelevant because they should have access to college regardless of ability. This belief is consistent within the PSP community. Overall, the PSP community asserts that access to PSP is a human right, including access (Jones, Boyle, May, Prohn, Updike, & Wheeler, 2015; Kelty & Prohn, 2014) within the classroom and the campus environment (Jones et al., 2015; Kelty & Prohn, 2014). Although many higher education practitioners believe in the democratization of higher education, performance-based funding is often used to determine federal and state funding for public institutions. Therefore, although according to democratization theory, access to PSPs is a human right regardless of ability, life outcomes and performance measurements should remain a research priority within the field to support a continued interest in the advancement of PSPs supporting students with ID.

## Social Inclusion

The second theme expands upon the social inclusion of students with ID enrolled in PSP. Developing a sense of belonging and finding a community is essential to the success of first-year college students regardless of ability. Prohn (2014) investigated the social inclusion of students with ID at Western Carolina University through participatory data collection using photovoice (Prohn, 2014). Participants were asked to photograph experiences that were meaningful to them and then describe the pictures to the researcher (Prohn, 2014). These discussions established the context for semi-structured interviews and provided an opportunity for students to take ownership of their social experience by defining their social inclusion. Participatory action research has been used effectively with students with ID not only to understand and gather data detailing their collegiate experience but also to help students create meaning from their own experiences (Paiewonsky, 2011). This method is consistent with how students with ID learn. Research has indicated that students with ID understand and express themselves more easily through photos compared to using words. Based on this evidence, it is appropriate that Prohn (2014) used these methods of data collection when investigating the social inclusion of students on campus.

Using grounded theory, Prohn (2014) developed a theory of social inclusion based on his interpretation of the data. Based on Prohn's (2014) social inclusion theory, social control is crucial in creating opportunities for sustainable social inclusion in the collegiate environment (Prohn, 2014). Students must feel like they are in control of their environment and social experiences to feel included in the campus community. Social inclusion entails not only feeling involved on campus but includes belonging, attribution of worth, and context (Prohn, 2014). Prohn (2014) suggests that instead of providing social

schedules, opportunities for social inclusion, and peer supports for students with ID, PSPs should put more emphasis and time into helping students with ID build skills needed to develop friendships and relationships (Prohn, 2014). Prohn (2014) argues that by teaching these skills, students can learn to be "architects of their own social experiences (p. 193)."

Similarly, Prohn, Leake & Stodden (2014) explain that most accessibility offices offer physical support to students with disabilities but fail to help students socially integrate into the campus culture. Although the idea of assisting students in developing interpersonal skills is good in theory, it may be impossible to adequately teach interpersonal skills and appropriate relationships without a peer support network built into the PSP support model. Based on this recommendation, it would be suitable for PSPs to facilitate peer mentor relationships at the beginning of a student's collegiate career with the intention of tapering off the relationship once the student has had the opportunity to create relationships outside of the mentor/mentee paradigm.

## Transition Rates

The third and final theme to be explored is the rate at which students with ID transition into the collegiate environment. Hendrickson, Busard, Rogers, and Scheidecker (2013) studied the transition rates of students with ID at the University of Iowa in the TPSID funded, UREACH program. Hendrickson et al. (2013) used the RYFF Scales of Psychological Wellbeing and the Openness to Diversity/Challenge Scale to compare the results of students without ID at the University of Iowa, to students with ID in the UREACH program. Based on the assessment of the data, researchers concluded that there was evidence supporting the notion that students with ID were transitioning into college at the same rate as students without ID. Supporting this argument, Hendrickson, Therrien, Weeden, Pascarella, and Hosp (2015) conducted a similar study by comparing the results from the Webash National Study of Liberal Arts Education longitudinal study to students with ID in the UREACH program. Hendrickson et al. (2015) concluded that students with ID in the UREACH program had similar transitional experiences as students without ID. More research is needed on the transition of students with ID into PSP. By Researching the transition, potential barriers to success and participation could be identified.

## Summary

This chapter began with an overview of the history of disability rights within the United States and how the disability rights movement ultimately led to changes in higher education policy to support the inclusion of students with intellectual disabilities (ID). Following the disability history and policy timeline detailing how students with ID are being included in PSP, the Chain-of-Response (COR) model developed by K. Patricia Cross (1981) was introduced. Studies that utilized the COR model as a theoretical framework were then identified and critiqued based on how they relate to this study. Following the COR model section, the PSP classification model developed by Hart et al. (2004) was explained in detail, concluding with an explanation of how the classification system was applied to the results of this study. Finally, Chapter Two concluded with a summary of the body of research that has been conducted surrounding the inclusion of students with ID in higher education. Each section of Chapter Two included background information to explain further the scope of higher education and the inclusion of students with ID as it relates to this study.

# CHAPTER THREE - METHODOLODY

## Introduction

This chapter defines the methodology for this study. The purpose of this document analysis qualitative research study was to explore the publicly available information provided by universities with Postsecondary Education Programs (PSP) that have Southern Association of College and Schools (SACS) accreditation and receive TPSID grant funding. PSPs were developed to increase higher education accessibility for students with intellectual disabilities. Although most PSPs were established after 2008, prior research exists that identifies program standards for inclusivity, a program classification system, and barriers to participation for students with ID.

Think College researchers, Grigal et al. (2012) developed the standards, quality indicators, and benchmarks, providing criteria for inclusive PSPs. Similarly, a program classification system was designed to categorize PSPs as either separate, mixed, or inclusive (Hart et al., 2004). Additionally, multiple researchers have identified common barriers to participation for students with ID (Causton-Theoharis et al., 2009; Mock & Love, 2012; Neubert et al., 2004; Neubert & Redd, 2008; Plotner & Marshall, 2015; Stodden & Whelley, 2004).

The prior research, as identified above, was used to guide the methodology of this research study. In this chapter, the researcher will identify the problem statement and research questions, as defined in this research study. Next, the researcher will provide a rationale for selecting document analysis as the research method for this. After document analysis has been defended as the primary methodology guiding this inquiry, document analysis will be expanded upon as it relates to this inquiry. Following the exploration of document analysis, this section

includes the research design as well as a definition of the setting, population, and sample that was investigated. Finally, this chapter concludes with an explanation of the data collection and data analysis techniques utilized for this study, followed by the limitations and delimitations of this inquiry.

## Problem Statement

The problem addressed in this dissertation was the availability of public information regarding postsecondary education programs at select universities. The availability of information detailing the level of inclusion of a college of university's PSP is unknown. Despite the preexisting research on PSPs and students with ID described in Chapter Two –, no research has been conducted to explore the information that is available to students with ID and their parents when selecting a PSP. Although PSPs were created to increase accessibility, it is unknown what information regarding PSPs is accessible to students with ID and their families. By exploring publicly available information, the researcher was able to identify what information was accessible. According to Cross (1981), lack of available information is a barrier to adult participation in higher education. If an adult is motivated to participate, but cannot access information regarding support services, they may be deterred from participation (Cross, 1981).

## Research Questions

This study has three research questions. The research questions are as follows:

Research Question 1 (RQ1): Do post-secondary education programs that receive TPSID funding with SACS accreditation incorporate Think College standards, quality indicators, and benchmarks (Grigal, et al., 2012) for inclusive higher education to provide support to students with ID based on publicly available information?

Research Question 2 (RQ2): How are post-secondary education programs that receive TPSID funding with SACS accreditation categorized to align with program classification models as identified by Hart et al (2004) as separate, mixed, or inclusive based on publicly available information?

Research Question 3 (RQ3): Is the institutional barrier, lack of information, present es evidenced the lack of publicly available information detailing the Think College standards, quality indicators, and benchmarks for inclusive higher education (Grigal, et al., 2012)?

## Research Method

The Research Method section begins with a rationale for selecting document analysis as the primary methodology for this research inquiry. Following the methodology rationale, document analysis will be defined as a methodology as it relates to research inquiry within a qualitative paradigm. Finally, this section concludes with the classification of different types of documents used in this research inquiry

## Rationale

This research inquiry employed a qualitative research approach known as document analysis. Document analysis is typically used as a secondary research method to enhance or triangulate other forms of data, such as interviews or observations (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998; Salmons, 2016). Despite the frequent use of document analysis as a secondary data collection method, document analysis served as the primary method for this research study because it is the most appropriate method based on the purpose of this research study and the research questions. There are four justifications for electing to use document analysis methods as the primary method for this research study. These justifications and the rationale are expanded upon in this section.

First, Cross (1981) indicated that access to information is a barrier to adult participation in postsecondary education. If an adult does not have access to information about their PSP, they are less likely to participate. This study was framed using the information variable of the COR model as a barrier to participation. The purpose of this document analysis qualitative research study was to explore the publicly available information provided by universities with Postsecondary Education Programs (PSP) that have Southern Association of College and Schools (SACS) accreditation and receive TPSID grant funding. The primary focus of the research study was the availability of public information. As such, conducting a document analysis of publicly available information was the most appropriate methodology for this inquiry.

Second, access to data is a variable all researchers must consider prior to conducting research. It would not be appropriate to embark on a research investigation if no data are available. The documents needed to analyze PSPs for this research study were readily available

and accessible to the researcher. Access to public documents and unobtrusive data is publicly available, free, stable, and easily accessible (Hatch, 2002; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Third, in addition to availability, documents were am appropriate form of primary data for this inquiry because "documents are powerful indicators of the value systems operating within institutions," (Hatch, 2002 p. 117). According to Hatch (2002), institutions create documents to generate a written record of the activity taking place at the institution. Therefore, to investigate PSPs, it was appropriate to examine documents generated by higher education institutions as they serve as value indicators (Hatch, 2002).

Fourth and finally, this inquiry concentrated on students with ID and their inclusion in higher education via PSPs. Other forms of qualitative research methods such as interviews and observations are not realistic when working with students with ID. Access to students with ID for interviews and observations is extremely limited because students with ID are considered a protected population. A plethora of paperwork, waivers, and an internal review board investigation would need to take place to have permission to interact with students with ID. Based on the timeline for this research, adequate time for these processes to be followed did not exist. Additionally, parents of students with ID sometimes speak on their child's behalf, which would not provide an accurate representation of the student's experience.

In summation, document analysis was an appropriate methodology based on the purpose of this research inquiry- investigating publicly available information, as evidenced by the nature of documents being readily available to the researcher, the historical record that is created when a document is produced, and finally, based on the unavailability of the target population – students with ID.

## Defining Document Analysis

Document analysis or content analysis can be defined as, "an unobtrusive technique that allows researchers to analyze relatively unstructured data given the meanings, symbolic qualities, and expressive contents they have and of the communicative roles they play in the lives of data sources" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016 p. 49). Document analysis allows the researcher to derive meaning from written text and can be used the same way that interview of observation data is used (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Merriam and Tisdell (2016) argue that document data is similar to interview and observational research because a person wrote each document, thus recording their ideas and experiences.

There are many benefits to using document analysis as a research method, three of which will be expanded upon in this section. First, documents are easily accessible and often free (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Second, documents are stable, "the presence of the investigator does not alter what is being studied" (Merriam & Tisdell 2016, p. 182). Sable documents are nonreactive because they are not altered by the perceptions or attitudes of research participants (Hatch, 2002). Data stability leads to greater objectivity and is considered the most objective form of data when compared to other types of data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Third, and finally, collecting documents is an unobtrusive research method because it does not interfere with people's daily lives (Hatch, 2002). Not interfering with a person's routine is essential when taking the three ethical considerations of qualitative research into account. The ethical values of qualitative research include: minimizing harm, respecting the participant's rights, and protecting the identity of the participants or community being studied (Paulus, Dempster, & Lester, 2014). By not altering a person's routine, the harm is minimized.

## Classification of Documents

Before beginning the research process, it is necessary to define and identify the types of documents that will be used for a research inquiry (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). This section identifies the types of documents that were used for this research inquiry. First, the difference between records and documents will be identified (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). Records are prepared for official use, such as reports and wedding certificates, whereas documents are created for personal use and are a type of document (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). Documents are written, visual, or digital material (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) and can be either public or private (Creswell, 2014). Merriam and Tisdell (2016) define record documents as “official, ongoing records of a society's activities," p.164. These activities can include actuarial records, association manuals, program documents, government documents, and mass media documents (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). For this study, the researcher analyzed public record documents available online created by higher education institutions. These types of documents are considered extant data (Salmons, 2016).

Extant data is a form of electronic data and is available to anyone to read, review, copy, or download (Salmons, 2016). It is typically accessible through libraries, databases, websites, or archives (Salmons, 2016). The researcher typically observers, reads or takes notes on extant data, but the data itself is created independently from the research and is not prompted by the researcher (Salmons, 2016). In extant data collection, the researcher does not have direct contact with participants (Salmons, 2016). Data observed for this dissertation was asynchronous - meaning the data has existed for a period of time and is not being created in real-time during observation. As such, data created by users on social media or in a public chat room will not be used (Salmons, 2016). Benefits of extant data include the extensive amounts of available

material as well as the public availability of government, agency, and company reports (Salmons, 2016). Extant data was collected based on the protocol established in the Data Collection section of this chapter.

## Research Design

In this section, the researcher will define the relationship between the chain-of-response model, the Think College standards, quality indicators, and benchmarks, the classification of PSPs, and barriers to participation as it relates to the methodological design and research questions for this inquiry.

The COR model (Cross, 1981) illustrates the variables that exist in adult learning. These variables include self-evaluation, attitudes, the importance of goals, life transitions, opportunities and barriers, information, and participation (Cross, 1981). This model will be used as a guiding conceptual framework for this study as the model relates to access to information and barriers to participation.

Research related to the participation of students with ID has led to the development of the Think College standards, quality indicators, and benchmarks (Grigal et al., 2012). PSPs that receive TPSID funding are expected to implement these standards to best serve students with ID and create inclusive PSP models. The researcher used the Think College standards, quality indicators, and benchmarks, as outlined in the Inclusive Higher Education Assessment developed by Grigal et al. (2012), to the documents collected from the institutions selected for this inquiry to determine the inclusivity of each PSP.

In addition to the Think College standards, quality indicators, and benchmarks, a program classification system was developed to categorize PSPs as either separate, mixed, or inclusive

(Hart et al., 2004). For this study, the researcher analyzed documents collected from the institutions selected for this inquiry to classify the PSPs as either separate, mixed, or inclusive as they align with the models developed by Hart et al. (2004).

In addition to the Think College standards, quality indicators, and benchmarks, as well as the program classification system developed by Hart et al. (2004), research has been conducted identifying barriers to participation for students with ID, as noted in greater detail in Chapter Two Literature Review. For this study, the researcher analyzed documents collected from the institutions selected for this inquiry to identify if the barrier, lack of information, exists as evidenced by the absence of the Think College standards, quality Indicator, and benchmarks for inclusive higher education.

Using the COR model as a framework for this study, the Think College standards, quality indicators, and benchmarks and the program classification system were used to guide the methodology of this study. This section will expand upon how these constructs were used in this inquiry as they relate the research questions.

RQ1 used the Think College standards as a guide to analyze publicly available documents produced by PSPs. Based on the analysis, the researcher determined if PSPs were implementing the Think College standards, quality indicators, and benchmarks. The Think College standards, quality indicators, and benchmarks were designed to eliminate barriers, improve PSP participation, and create inclusive PSP models. The researcher identified if the implementation of the Think College standards, quality indicators, and benchmarks was taking place based on public information. A detailed plan for data collection and data analysis can be found in the Data Collection and Analysis sections of this chapter.

To answer RQ2, the researcher analyzed data collected for RQ1. After the analysis, the researcher categorized PSPs into one of three categories: separate, mixed, or inclusive based on the program classification criteria (Hart et al., 2004).

The Think College standards, quality indicators, and benchmarks were created to eliminate barriers to participation. RQ3 will use the known barrier, lack of information, as a framework. RQ3 was analyzed based on the absence of the Think College standards. Finally, after data was collected and analyzed for RQ1, RQ2, and RQ3, the researcher determined if information detailing the inclusivity of PSPs is publicly available. A detailed plan for data collection and data analysis can be found in the Data Collection and Analysis sections of this chapter.

## Setting

The setting for this inquiry will be defined in this section. Qualitative researchers aim to understand an experience or phenomenon through many different methods, including reviewing data sources derived from documents or archives. The setting for this study was online qualitative research known was qualitative e-research (Salmons, 2016). Therefore, all data collected for this study was collected online.

## Population

The population for this study included all colleges or universities in the United States that offer a postsecondary educational opportunity for students with ID. There are approximately 247 colleges and universities that meet these criteria (Institute for Community Inclusion, 2019).

Documents related to this population comprise of all documents including but not limited to reports, multimedia materials, message boards, webpages, and user-created data such as blogs or social media posts or groups that have been created surrounding the subject of PSP for students with ID. These materials could include those created by businesses, government bodies, institutions, families, constituents, or students with ID.

## Sampling

Sampling can be defined as, "the systematic process for determining who or what can serve the purpose of the study (Salmons, 2016 p. 103)" This would include how specific programs and institutions were selected to participate in the study as well as criteria for selected documents. Purposive sampling is selecting a sample intentionally based on the needs of the study (Salmons, 2016).

For this study, institutions with PSPs that received TPSID funding from the 2015-2020 grant cycle with accreditation from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) Commission on Colleges were selected for the sample. This criteria was established to narrow the population to a manageable sample size and includes eight institutions. Each of these institutions meets the criteria of having SACS accreditation and received a 2015-2020 TPSID grant.

Along with institutional criteria, the documents collected for the data analysis must also meet specific criteria. Materials and documents collected for this study were publicly available online. In addition to public availability, the materials used for this study were created by one of the institutions within the sample mentioned above or from Think College. Media derived

from blog posts, social media posts, messages boards, or other user-generated data were not used for this study. Only materials from HEIs and Think College will be considered data.

## Data Collection

The Data Collection section contains a definition of the data collection methods and identifies the tools used during data collection. Prior to identifying the data collection methodology, this section will first identify document analysis as the only method of extant data collection employed for this inquiry. Following document identification, the types of materials collected for this document analysis study will be defined. This section concludes, defining the types of data to be collected in conjunction with the tools that were used during data collection.

There are two types of extant data collection, materials analysis and unobtrusive observation (Salmons, 2016). Unobtrusive observation was not be used for this study; all data collected was document materials consisting of written text as well as visual media.

There are three types of materials in extant data collection: historical materials, contemporary materials, and emergent materials. Contemporary materials are defined as documents that were created for online consumption and electronic access (Salmons, 2016). All materials used for this study were contemporary. Historical materials are materials that were created pre-internet (Salmons, 2016). PSPs have emerged since the internet was created; therefore, historical documents regarding PSPs are not likely to exist and were not used for this study. Examples of emergent materials include blog posts, discussion forums, and message boards (Salmons, 2016). Emergent material is created in real-time and was not used for this study. Similar documents were used to compare the HEIs; see Table 3 for details

regarding data collection methods and the alignment of each collection method to the corresponding research question.

Table 3

Research questions aligned with data collection methods

| Research Question(s) | Data Collection Methods | Source of data |
|---|---|---|
| RQ1: How do post-secondary education programs that receive TPSID funding with SACS accreditation incorporate Think College standards, quality indicators, and benchmarks for inclusive higher education (Grigal et al., 2012) to provide support to students with ID based on publicly available information? | Document analysis | Institutional Website |
| RQ2: How are post-secondary education programs that receive TPSID funding with SACS accreditation categorized to align with program classification models as identified by Hart et al. (2004) as separate, mixed, or inclusive based on publicly available information? | Document analysis | Institutional Website |
| RQ3: Is the institutional barrier, lack of information, present es evidenced the lack of publicly available information detailing the Think College standards, quality indicators, and benchmarks for inclusive higher education (Grigal et al., 2012)? | Document analysis | Institutional Website |

Creswell (2014) notes that qualitative researchers collect data by "examining documents, observing behavior, or interviewing participants" (p. 185). Merriam and Tisdell (2016) state that qualitative research should use an instrument that can both derive meaning and identify underlying issues. As such, people are the best instrument for qualitative research because they can identify issues and glean meaning from the data (Creswell, 2014). When practicing document analysis, the researcher serves as the primary instrument. In this study, the researcher

was the primary research instrument. Table 4 identifies the data collection tools developed by the researcher that were used to guide the collection method.

During data collection for this study, the researcher used APPENDIX A and APPENDIX B to guide the data collection methods for RQ1, RQ2, and RQ3. Using APPENDIX, A, the researcher searched the HEI's websites for the documents listed in APPENDIX A. The researcher used APPENDIX A to note whether or not the document was available for each HEI. If the document was available, the researcher saved the document for further analysis on an external hard drive, filing the documents from each institution in individual electronic folders. The researcher used APPENDIX B to guide the data collection from each HEI's website and then indicated the document's availability on APPENDIX B. Similar to how the researcher utilized APPENDIX A, if the document was available, the researcher saved the document for further analysis on an external hard drive, filing the documents from each institution in individual electronic folders. APPENDIX C contains the Think College standards, quality indicators, and benchmarks and will be used by the researcher to guide the data collection for RQ1 and RQ3. The researcher searched the HEI's websites to identify documents informing the prompts in APPENDIX C. If the documents were available, the researcher saved the documents on an external hard drive, filing the documents from each institution in individual electronic folders.

Table 4

Research questions aligned with data collection methods and data collection tools

| Research Question(s) | Data Collection Methods | Source of data | Data Collection Tool(s) |
|---|---|---|---|
| RQ1: How do post-secondary education programs that receive TPSID funding with SACS accreditation incorporate Think College standards, quality indicators, and benchmarks for inclusive higher education (Grigal et al., 2012) to provide support to students with ID based on publicly available information? | Document analysis | Institutional Website | APPENDIX A – Document Collection Guide<br><br>APPENDIX B – Website Data Collection Guide<br><br>APPENDIX C - Think College Standards and Quality indicators Analysis Guide |
| RQ2: How are post-secondary education programs that receive TPSID funding with SACS accreditation categorized to align with program classification models as identified by Hart et al. (2004) as separate, mixed, or inclusive based on publicly available information? | Document analysis | Institutional Website | APPENDIX A – Document Collection Guide<br><br>APPENDIX B – Website Data Collection Guide |
| RQ3: Is the institutional barrier, lack of information, present es evidenced the lack of publicly available information detailing the Think College standards, quality indicators, and benchmarks for inclusive higher education (Grigal et al., 2012)? | Document analysis | Institutional Website | APPENDIX A – Document Collection Guide<br><br>APPENDIX B – Website Data Collection Guide |

## Analysis

In this section, the researcher will identify the analysis methods that were used to analyze the documents collected for this study. Once documents were collected, the researcher stored them on an external hard drive and organized them in electronic folders for analysis based

on institution and document type. Once all the documents were categorized, the researcher analyzed the documents based on the analysis plan specified in this section. First, the researcher will define data analysis. Next, content analysis will be identified as the primary analysis approach for this study. This section concludes by identifying the analysis techniques that were used in relation to each research question for this study.

Data analysis involves segmenting the data collected and then putting it back together based on emergent themes to create meaning (Creswell, 2014). Data analysis occurs during both the data collection process and during the writing of the findings section of a research study (Creswell, 2014). For example, a researcher may be taking notes or creating connections between pieces of data in their research journal during the data collection process and then further analyze the data when writing the discussion section of the research article (Creswell, 2014). It is essential to identify how the data will be analyzed in the proposal section of a research project (Creswell, 2014).

For this inquiry, content analysis was used as the primary analysis approach. Content analysis is a popular qualitative analysis technique and is widely used in many qualitative studies (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). The specific content analysis approach selected by researchers varies based on the researcher's interest and the problem presented by the study (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Weber, 1990). Content analysis was chosen for this study because it provides the framework to identify the meaning of text data in both print and electronic form (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). This research analyzed electronic text data; therefore, content analysis was an appropriate analysis technique

Additionally, when conducting a content analysis study, the researcher considers both the content of language as well as the contextual meaning of the text data (Hsieh & Shannon,

2005). By focusing on both language as well as the contextual meaning of the data, the researcher for this study was able to analyze the data thoroughly. Content analysis can be defined as, "a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns," (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1278). Based on this definition, a system for analysis was developed for this study based on a coding process which will be expanded upon.

Research questions one, two, and three were analyzed using a directed content analysis approach. Directed content analysis uses an existing theory or prior research regarding a phenomenon to analyze the data (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Directed content analysis is a structured type of content analysis when compared to conventional content analysis (Hickey & Kipping, 1996) and seeks to expand or validate prior research or theory (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). The first step in directed content analysis is to identify the key variables to be used in the coding system (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Potter & Levine-Donnerstein, 1999).

The key variables used to analyze RQ1 and RQ3 are the Think College standards, Quality indicators, and benchmarks for inclusive higher education developed by Grigal, Hart, and Weir (2012). An analysis code has been developed using the Think College standards, quality indicators, and benchmarks and can be found in APPENDIX D for RQ1 and APPENDIX F for RQ3. Similarly, to RQ1 and RQ3, an analysis code has been developed to investigate RQ2. This code was developed using the principles identified by Hart et al. (2004), to categorize PSPs as either separated, mixed, or inclusive. The analysis code developed for RQ2 is found in APPENDIX E.

Table 5

Research questions aligned with data collection methods, data collection tools, and data analysis codes.

| Research Question(s) | Data Collection Methods | Source of data | Data Collection Tool(s) | Data Analysis Code(s) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| RQ1: How do post-secondary education programs that receive TPSID funding with SACS accreditation incorporate Think College standards, quality indicators, and benchmarks for inclusive higher education (Grigal et al., 2012) to provide support to students with ID based on publicly available information? | Document analysis | Institutional Website | APPENDIX A – Document Collection Guide<br>APPENDIX B – Website Data Collection Guide<br>APPENDIX C - Think College Standards and Quality indicators Analysis Guide | APPENDIX D- Research Question 1 Analysis Plan |
| RQ2: How are post-secondary education programs that receive TPSID funding with SACS accreditation categorized to align with program classification models as identified by Hart et al. (2004) as separate, mixed, or inclusive based on publicly available information? | Document analysis | Institutional Website | APPENDIX A – Document Collection Guide<br>APPENDIX B – Website Data Collection Guide | APPENDIX E – Research Question 2 Analysis Plan |
| RQ3: Is the institutional barrier, lack of information, present es evidenced the lack of publicly available information detailing the Think College standards, quality indicators, and benchmarks for inclusive higher education (Grigal et al., 2012)? | Document analysis | Institutional Website | APPENDIX A – Document Collection Plan<br>APPENDIX B – Website Data Collection Plan | APPENDIX F – Research Question 3 Analysis Plan |

## Limitations

There are limitations regarding document analysis as a qualitative method, extant data as a source of data, and content analysis as an analysis technique. In this section, the researcher first addresses the limitations associated with document analysis as a form of qualitative research. Next, the limitations of extant data, followed by the limitations of content analysis, will be defined.

In qualitative document analysis methods, documents collected for research purposes may be intentionally or unintentionally incomplete (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Salmons, 2016). Incomplete documents can be attributed to materials on the internet that are available for public consumption but were void of financial records or other information that should shed a negative light on an organization (Salmons, 2016). This is an example of intentionally incomplete data. In other instances, the data could be incomplete based on the goals of the researcher (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Regardless of the intention of completeness, not having access to all relevant data may make it difficult for the researcher to understand and interpret the full picture (Salmons, 2016).

In extant or document material analysis, it is necessary to consider the creator's intent when developing the document (Salmons, 2016). Many documents are created for organizational purposes, not for research. Therefore, documents often contain positive biased information that demonstrates organizational successes and omits challenges or failures (Salmons, 2016). This is known as biased data and could be a limitation for this study

(Salmons, 2016). Taking note of how the document is organized and how the rhetoric of the text attempts to persuade the reader is a way to discover bias text (Rapley, 2008).

Additionally, when collecting extant data, the researcher is unable to ask questions to generate a greater understanding of motivations, back story, and relationships of the content creator or user (Salmons, 2016). This may inhibit the analysis of the data. The inability to ask clarification questions could skew the interpretation of the data or lead to incomplete data.

While extant data was the primary data collected for this study, extant materials are often used to enhance or complement other types of data, not serve as primary materials (Hodder, 1994; Salmons, 2016). By combining extant data with other types of data, researchers can provide support or alternative explanations for trends discovered in the data (Salmons, 2016). Using extant data as the primary data collected for this study is a limitation. However, it should be noted that using other forms of data are not appropriate for this research inquiry because the primary focus of this study was to analyze data that is publicly available.

## Delimitations

The first delimitation for this study involved data collection. For this study the researcher retrieved data from publicly available documents online. Additionally, programs to be analyzed were chosen purposively. Data only consisted of documents collected from SACS accredited institutions that are recipients of TPSID grants during the 2015-2020 grant cycle. There were no participants in this inquiry; this study only consists of electronic data collection and document analysis.

## Summary

This study implemented a qualitative method using document analysis to collect data. Once documents were collected, they were analyzed using a directed content analysis approach. The purpose of this document analysis qualitative research study was to explore the publicly available information provided by universities with Postsecondary Education Programs (PSP) that have Southern Association of College and Schools (SACS) accreditation and receive TPSID grant funding. Chapter Four presents the results of the methodology defined in this chapter.

# CHAPTER FOUR – PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

## Overview

Chapter Four presents the data analysis of this research study examined through the results of the document analysis using directed content analysis. This chapter includes three sections, section one, Data Analysis of Research Question One, followed by section two, Data Analysis of Research Question Two, concluding with section three, Data Analysis of Research Question Three.

The first section, Data Analysis of Research Question One, represents the results of the data analysis for Research Question 1 (RQ1). This section examines RQ1 using the Think College standards, quality indicators, and benchmarks for inclusive higher education developed by Grigal, Hart, and Weir (2012), as variables, as outlined in APPENDIX D.

The second section of this chapter, Data Analysis of Research Question Two, represents the results of the data analysis for Research Question Two (RQ2). The variables used in the directed content analysis to analyze RQ2 were the characteristics of the program classification models identified as separate, mixed, or inclusive developed by Hart and colleagues (2004) as outlined in APPENDIX E.

The third section of this chapter, Data Analysis of Research Question Three, represents the results of the data analysis for Research Question Three (RQ3). The variables used in the directed content analysis to analyze RQ3 were the Think College standards, quality indicators, and benchmarks for inclusive higher education developed by Grigal, Hart, and Weir (2012) as outlined in APPENDIX F. Chapter Four concludes with a summary of the results presented in sections one, two, and three of this chapter.

## Section One: Data Analysis of Research Question One

This section represents the results of the data analysis for Research Question 1 (RQ1). Research Question 1 (RQ1) queries, do post-secondary education programs that receive TPSID funding with SACS accreditation incorporate Think College standards, quality indicators, and benchmarks for inclusive higher education (Grigal et al., 2012) to provide support to students with ID based on publicly available information? RQ1 was examined through the results of the document analysis using directed content analysis. The key variables used in the directed content analysis approach to analyze RQ1 were the Think College standards, quality indicators, and benchmarks for inclusive higher education developed by Grigal, Hart, and Weir (2012) as outlined in APPENDIX D.

This section presents the results for RQ1 segmented by each of the Think College standards. First, Standard 1: Academic access is analyzed following by Standard 2: Career development, then Standard 3: Campus membership, followed by Standard 4: Self-Determination, then Standard 5: Alignment with college systems and practice, concluding with the final three standards, Standard 6: Coordination and collaboration, Standard:7 Sustainability, and Standard 8: Ongoing evaluation. Under each standard are quality indicators and benchmarks. The results in this section indicate the number and percentage of benchmarks present at each Higher Education Institution (HEI).

### Standard 1: Academic Access

There are sixteen benchmarks under Standard 1: Academic access as displayed in Table 6. These benchmarks are further organized by quality indicators in the left column. The right column indicates which HEIs presented each benchmark based on the directed content analysis.

Data indicated that all eight HEIs selected for this research study met the criteria for four of the sixteen benchmarks under Standard 1: Academic access. These four benchmarks include 1.1B-Auditing college courses attended by students without ID, 1.1D-Access to existing courses, 1.1F-Courses related to personal, academic, or career goals, and 1.2A Policies regarding placement tests, ability, and prerequisites that negatively impact college course participation. Zero data indicated that any of the HEIs selected for this study meet the criteria for benchmarks 1.1A-Enrollment in non-credit courses attended by students without ID and 1.2D-Access and instruction to assistive technology.

Table 6

Quality indicators and Benchmarks for Standard 1: Academic Access

| Quality Indicator | Present in HEI |
|---|---|
| Quality Indicator 1.1 Provide access to a wide array of college course types that are attended by students without disabilities. | |
| 1.1A Enrollment in non-credit courses attended by students without ID | |
| 1.1B Auditing college courses attended by students without ID. | All of the HEIs (A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H) |
| 1.1C Enrollment in credit-bearing courses attended by students without ID when aligned with the student's plan. | HEI-A; HEI-B; HEI-C; HEI-E; HEI-F HEI-G; HEI-H |
| 1.1D Access to existing courses | All of the HEIs (A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H) |
| 1.1E Course access is not restricted to a pre-determined list | HEI-C HEI-D HEI-G; HEI-H |
| 1.1F Courses related to personal, academic, or career goals. | All of the HEIs (A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H) |
| 1.1G Collection of objective evaluation data on course participation | HEI-C HEI-D HEI-G |
| Quality Indicator 1.2 Address issues that may impact college course participation, including: | |
| 1.2A Policies regarding placement tests, ability, and prerequisites that negatively impact college course participation. | All of the HEIs (A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H) |
| 1.2B Access and instruction to use public or personal transportation. | HEI-A; HEI-B; HEI-C HEI-D HEI-G; HEI-H |
| 1.2C Access to college disability services. | HEI-C; HEI-E; HEI-F HEI-G; HEI-H |
| 1.2D Access and instruction to assistive technology | |
| 1.2E Access to educational coaches who receive training. | HEI-A; HEI-B HEI-D; HEI-E; HEI-F HEI-G; HEI-H |
| 1.2F Access to peer support. | HEI-A; HEI-B; HEI-C; HEI-E; HEI-F HEI-G; HEI-H |
| 1.2G Faculty training on universal design. | HEI-H |
| Quality Indicator 1.3: Provide students with the skills to access ongoing adult learning opportunities, including: | |
| 1.3A Knowledge of the adult learning opportunities available in the community. | HEI-D; HEI-E; HEI-F HEI-G; HEI-H |
| 1.3B Knowledge of resources to fund adult learning opportunities. | HEI-E; HEI-F HEI-G; HEI-H |

Table 7 and Figure 1 display the number and percentage of benchmarks confirmed during the directed content analysis for each HEI. HEI-G and HEI-H had the highest number of confirmed benchmarks, thirteen out of the possible sixteen compared to HEI-B with the lowest number of benchmarks, seven out of the possible sixteen. Over 50% of the benchmarks for Standard 1: Academic access emerged in six out of the eight HEIs selected for this study.

Table 7

Benchmarks present for each Higher Education Institution for Standard 1: Academic Access

| Standard 1: Academic Access Benchmarks Confirmed | HEI-A | HEI-B | HEI-C | HEI-D | HEI-E | HEI-F | HEI-G | HEI-H |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Number (out of 16) | 8 | 7 | 10 | 11 | 10 | 10 | 13 | 13 |
| Percentage | 50% | 44% | 63% | 69% | 63% | 63% | 81% | 81% |

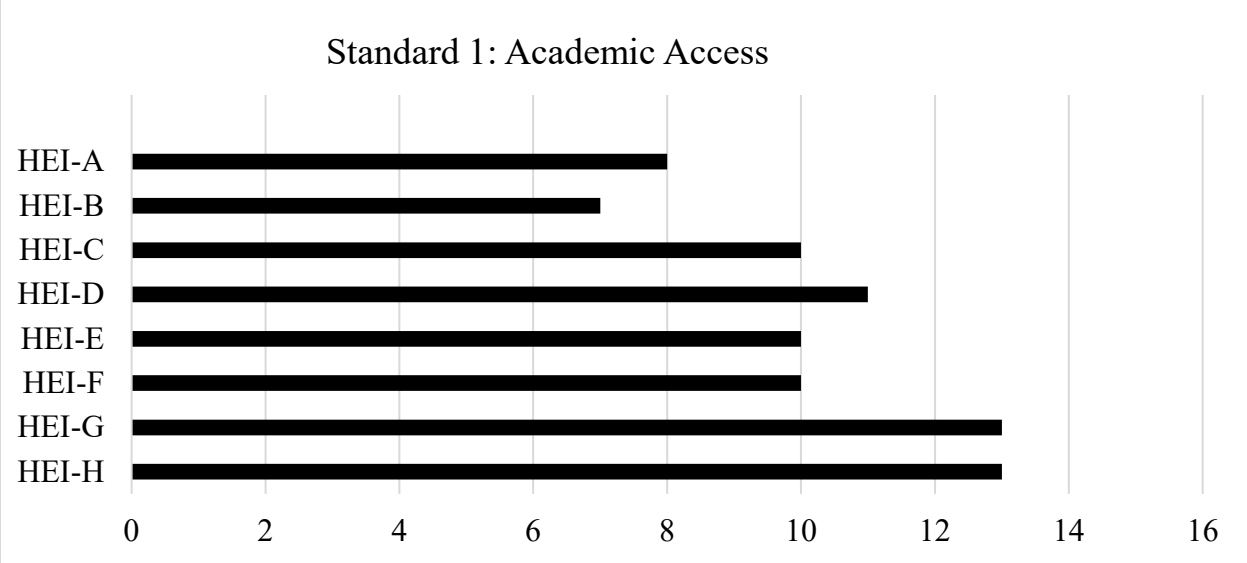


Figure 1 Benchmarks present for each Higher Education Institution for Standard 1: Academic Access

Standard 2: Career Development

There are seven benchmarks under Standard 2: Career development as displayed in Table 8. These benchmarks are further organized by quality indicators in the left column. The right column indicates which HEIs presented each benchmark based on the directed content analysis. Data indicated that all eight HEIs selected for this study met the criteria one of the seven benchmarks, 2.1C- Participation in internships or work-based training with people without disabilities, under Standard 2: Career development.

Table 8

Quality indicators and Benchmarks for Standard 2: Career development

| Quality Indicator 2.1: Provide students with the supports and experiences necessary to seek and sustain competitive employment including: | Present in HEI |
|---|---|
| 2.1A Implement person-centered planning to identify career goals. | HEI-A; HEI-B; HEI-C; HEI-D; HEI-F; HEI-G; HEI-H |
| 2.1B Access to job coaches who receive ongoing training. | HEI-A HEI-D; HEI-E; HEI-G |
| 2.1C Participation in internships or work-based training with people without disabilities. | All of the HEIs (A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H) |
| 2.1D Opportunity to participate in service learning | HEI-H |
| 2.1E Participation in paid work experiences related to career interest | HEI-D; HEI-G; HEI-H |
| 2.1F Connection with community and adult service provides to sustain employment. | HEI-C HEI-D; HEI-E; HEI-F; HEI-G; HEI-H |
| 2.1G Collection of objective evaluation data on student employment | HEI-C |

Table 9 and Figure 2 display the number and percentage of benchmarks confirmed during the directed content analysis for each HEI. HEI-D the highest number of confirmed benchmarks, seven out of the possible seven, compared to HEI-A and HEI-B with the lowest number of benchmarks, two out of the possible seven. Four of the HEIs selected for this study, HEI-C, HEI-

D, HEI-G, and HEI-F had over 50% of the benchmarks for Standard 2: Career development, while the other four HEIs, HEI-A, HEI-B, HEI-C, and HEI-F, were under 40%.

Table 9

Benchmarks present for each Higher Education Institution for Standard 2: Career development

| Standard 2: Career Development Benchmarks Confirmed | HEI-A | HEI-B | HEI-C | HEI-D | HEI-E | HEI-F | HEI-G | HEI-H |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Number (out of 7) | 2 | 2 | 4 | 7 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 5 |
| Percentage | 29% | 29% | 57% | 100% | 43% | 43% | 71% | 71% |

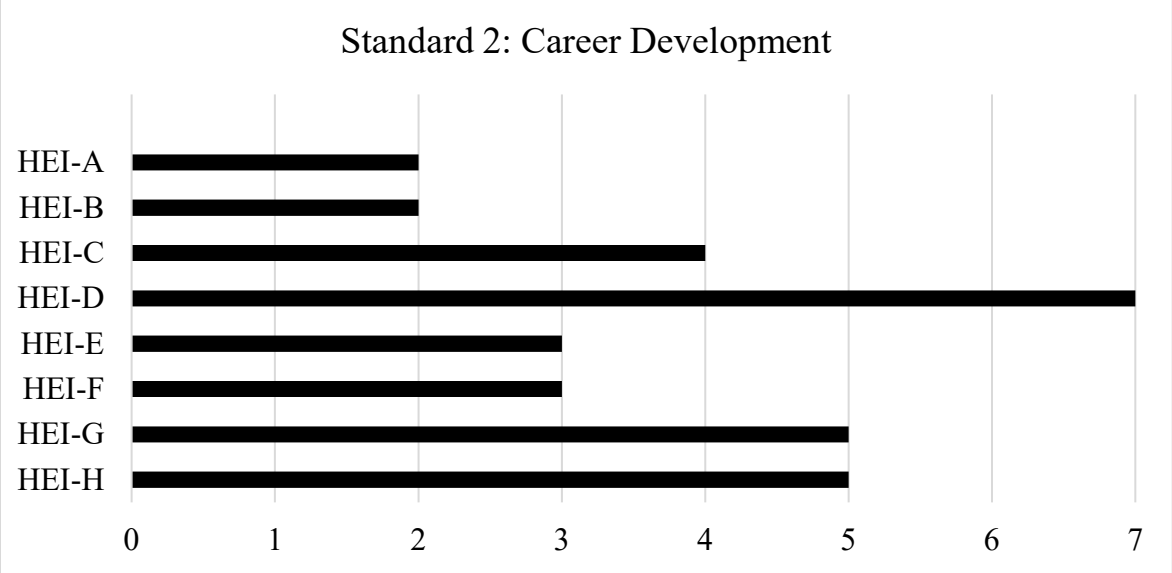


Figure 2 Benchmarks present for each Higher Education Institution for Standard 2: Career development

## Standard 3: Campus Membership

There are four benchmarks under Standard 3: Campus membership as displayed in Table 10. These benchmarks are further organized by quality indicators in the left column. The right column indicates which HEIs presented each benchmark based on the directed content analysis. Data indicated that all eight HEIs selected for this study met the criteria one of the four benchmarks, 3.1A- Campus programs, under Standard 3: Campus membership.

Table 10

Quality indicators and Benchmarks for Standard 3: Campus membership

| Quality Indicator 3.1: Provide access to and support for participation in existing social organizations, facilities, and technology, including: | Present in HEI |
|---|---|
| 3.1A Campus programs | All of the HEIs (A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H) |
| 3.1B Residence life facilities & activities and off campus options | HEI-B; HEI-C; HEI-D; HEI-E; HEI-H |
| 3.1C Technology and social communication | HEI-C; HEI-D; HEI-E; HEI-F; HEI-G; HEI-H |
| 3.1D Social activities facilities by students without disabilities | HEI-A; HEI-B; HEI-C; HEI-E; HEI-F; HEI-G; HEI-H |

Table 11 and Figure 3 display the number and percentage of benchmarks confirmed during the directed content analysis for each HEI. Evidence emerged in the data confirming each HEI selected for this study implemented at minimum, three of the four benchmarks. All four of the benchmarks were present in the analysis for HEI-C, HEI-E, and HEI-H.

Table 11

Benchmarks present for each Higher Education Institution for Standard 3: Camus membership

| Standard 3: Campus Membership Benchmarks Confirmed | HEI-A | HEI-B | HEI-C | HEI-D | HEI-E | HEI-F | HEI-G | HEI-H |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Number (out of 4) | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 4 |
| Percentage | 75% | 75% | 100% | 75% | 100% | 75% | 75% | 100% |

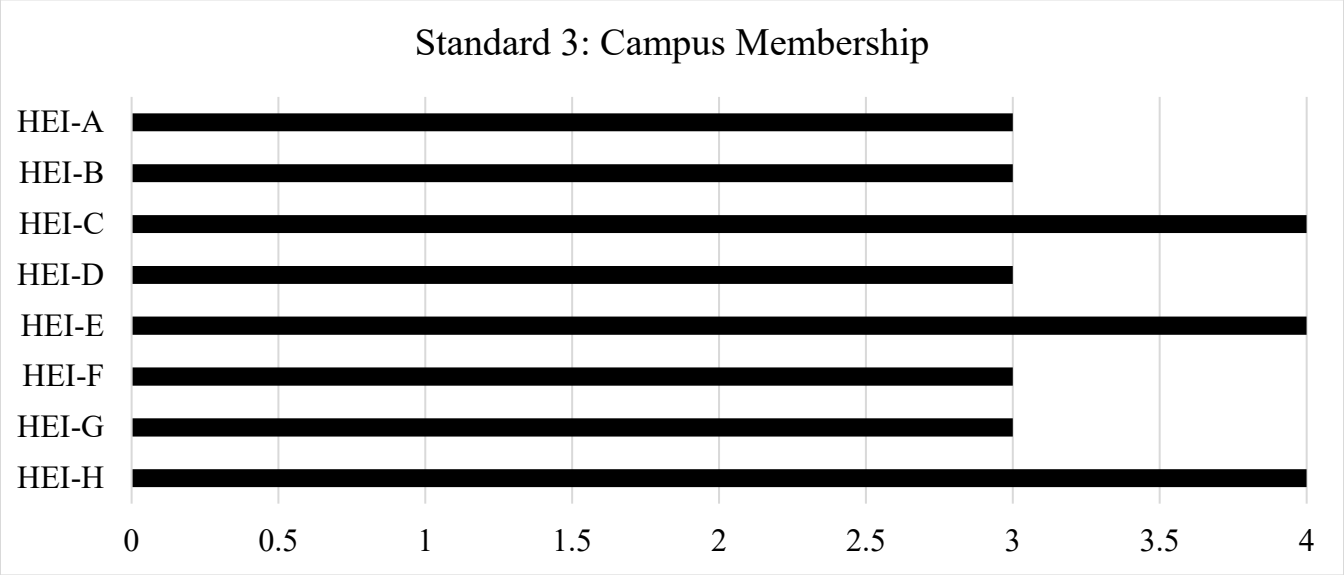


Figure 3 Benchmarks present for each Higher Education Institution for Standard 3: Campus membership

## Standard 4: Self-Determination

There are fifteen benchmarks under Standard 4: Self-Determination as displayed in Table 12. These benchmarks are further organized by quality indicators in the left column. The right column indicates which HEIs presented each benchmark based on the directed content analysis. Data indicated that all eight HEIs selected for this study met the criteria one of the fifteen benchmarks, 4.1A- Reflect student interest and desires, under Standard 4: Self-Determination. Zero data indicated that any of the HEIs selected for this study meet the criteria for benchmark 4.3A -Clearly defined roles and responsibilities for parents and students.

Table 12

Quality indicators and benchmarks for Standard 4: Self-Determination

| Quality Indicator | Present in HEI |
|---|---|
| Quality Indicator 4.1: Ensure student involvement in and control of the establishment of personal goals that: | |
| 4.1A Reflect student interests and desires | All of the HEIs (A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H) |
| 4.1 B Are reviewed regularly and modified as needed based on the student's preferences | HEI-A; HEI-B; HEI-C; HEI-G; HEI-H |
| 4.1C Address accommodations and technology needs. | HEI-A; HEI-C; HEI-E; HEI-G; HEI-H |
| 4.1D Lead to outcomes desired by the student | HEI-B; HEI-C; HEI-D; HEI-E; HEI-F; HEI-G; HEI-H |
| 4.1E Reflect family input when desired by the student. | HEI-C; HEI-F; HEI-G |
| Quality Indicator 4.2: Ensure the development and promotion of the self-determination skills of students with intellectual disabilities as evidenced by students: | |
| 4.2A: Monitoring their own progress toward their personal goals. | HEI-C; HEI-G; HEI-H |
| 4.2B: Directing their choice of courses, activities, and employment experiences. | HEI-A; HEI-B; HEI-C; HEI-D; HEI-F; HEI-G; HEI-H |
| 4.2C: Being involved in course registration, accommodation requests, and payment of tuition. | HEI-B; HEI-C; HEI-H |
| 4.2D: Being involved in all aspects of employment, such as creating a resume, setting up job interviews, etc. | HEI-C; HEI-E |
| 4.2E: Interacting directly with faculty and employers including the articulation of accommodations | HEI-C; HEI-D; HEI-G; HEI-H |
| 4.2F: Managing personal schedules | HEI-C; HEI-D |
| Quality Indicator 4.3: Have a stated process for family involvement that reflects: | |
| 4.3A: Clearly defined roles and responsibilities for parents and students. | |
| 4.3B: A process for the provision of information to parents. | HEI-A; HEI-F; HEI-G |
| 4.3C: Student control over how parents are involved with their experience. | HEI-A; HEI-F |
| 4.3D: Adherence to the guidelines set forth by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). | HEI-A; HEI-B |

Table 13 and Figure 4 display the number and percentage of benchmarks confirmed during the directed content analysis for each HEI. Evidence emerged in the data confirming three of the HEIs, HEI-C, HEI-G, and HEI-H presented over 50% of the benchmarks for Standard 4: Self-Determination. HEI-E presented the lowest number of benchmarks, confirming four out of the fifteen available benchmarks.

Table 13

Benchmarks present for each Higher Education Institution for Standard 4: Self-Determination

| Standard 4: Self-Determination Benchmarks Confirmed | HEI-A | HEI-B | HEI-C | HEI-D | HEI-E | HEI-F | HEI-G | HEI-H |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Number (out of 15) | 6 | 5 | 11 | 5 | 4 | 6 | 9 | 8 |
| Percentage | 40% | 33% | 73% | 33% | 27% | 40% | 60% | 53% |

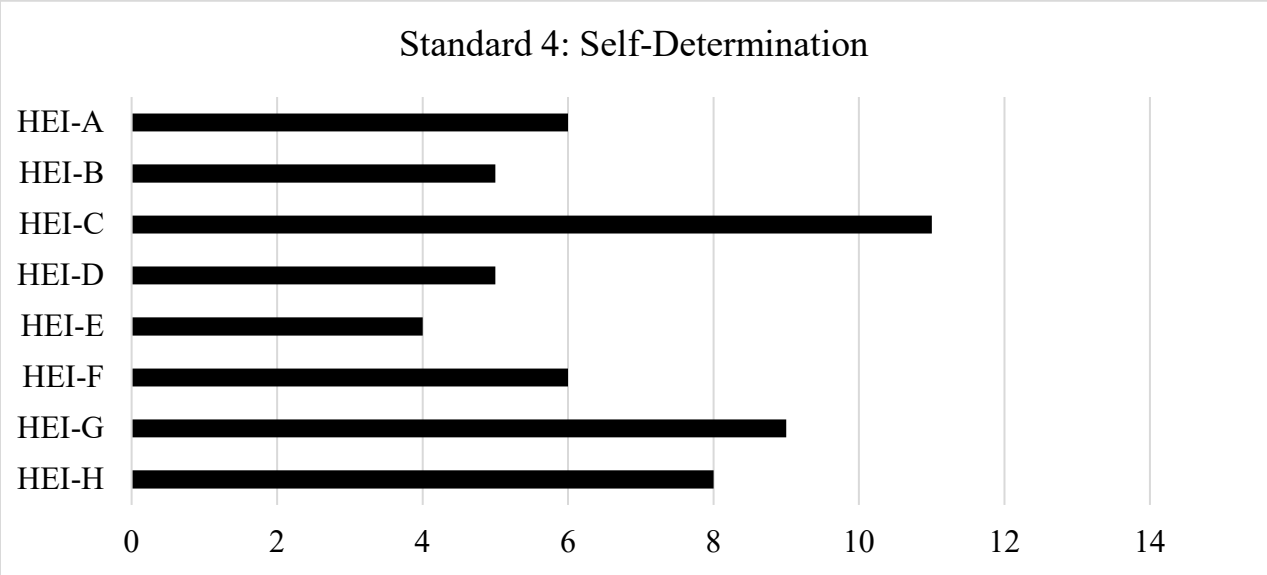


Figure 4 Benchmarks present for each Higher Education Institution for Standard 4: Self-Determination

## Standard 5: Alignment with College Systems and Practices

There are twenty-one benchmarks under Standard 5: Alignment with college systems and practices as displayed in Table 14. These benchmarks are further organized by quality indicators in the left column. The right column indicates which HEIs presented each benchmark based on the directed content analysis. Data indicated that all eight HEIs selected for this study met the criteria two of the twenty-one benchmarks, 5.1A-Outcomes established by the program for achievement of an educational credential are measurable and 5.1C- Courses and internships are related to achieving and maintaining gainful employment. Zero data indicated that any of the HEIs selected for this study meet the criteria for benchmark 5.5D-Observation of college vacations and holidays, not local education agencies, and 5.5E: Recognition of students with intellectual disabilities as a representative population in the IHE's diversity plan.

Table 14

Quality indicators and Benchmarks for Standard 5: Alignment with college systems and practices

| Quality Indicator | Present in HEI |
|---|---|
| Quality Indicator 5.1: As required in the HEOA, identify outcomes or offer an educational credential (e.g., degree or certificate) established by the institution for students enrolled in the program, including assurance that: | |
| 5.1A: Outcomes established by the program for achievement of an educational credential are measurable. | All of the HEIs (A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H) |
| 5.1B: Program outcomes are publicly available (e.g., brochure, website, program application) | HEI-A; HEI-C; HEI-G |
| 5.1C: Courses and internships are related to achieving and maintaining gainful employment | All of the HEIs (A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H) |
| 5.1D: Outcomes/credentials established by the program also address engagement in college community life | HEI-A; HEI-B; HEI-C; HEI-F; HEI-G; HEI-H |
| Quality Indicator 5.2: Provide access to academic advising that: | |
| 5.2A: Uses person-centered planning in the development of a student's course of study. | HEI-A; HEI-B; HEI-C; HEI-D; HEI-F; HEI-G; HEI-H |
| 5.2B: Reflects the institution's policy for determining whether a student enrolled in the program is making satisfactory academic progress. | HEI-D; HEI-G |
| 5.2C: Is aligned with the educational credential established by the institution for students enrolled in the program. | HEI-A; HEI-B; HEI-E; HEI-F; HEI-G |
| Quality Indicator 5.3: Provide access to college campus resources, including: | |
| 5.3A: Admissions, registration, and orientation | HEI-F; HEI-G; HEI-H |
| 5.3B: College identification cards. | HEI-A; HEI-F; HEI-H |
| 5.3C: Health and counseling centers, athletic center, information technology, career services, dining services, Greek system, clubs, student organizations, student government, etc. | HEI-A; HEI-C; HEI-D; HEI-E; HEI-F; HEI-G; HEI-H; HEI-H |
| 5.3D: Co-curricular activities including practicum and learning communities | HEI-A; HEI-B; HEI-C; HEI-D; HEI-E ; HEI-F; HEI-H |

| Quality Indicator | Present in HEI |
|---|---|
| 5.3E: Support for participating in existing on- and off-campus university-owned or university-affiliated housing | HEI-B; HEI-C; HEI-D; HEI-G; HEI-H |
| 5.3F: Orientation, training, and resources for parents of incoming students | HEI-F; HEI-G |
| 5.3G: Campus shuttle buses to different campuses and the community | HEI-H |
| Quality Indicator 5.4: Collaborate with faculty and staff, including: | |
| 5.4A: Accessing existing professional development initiatives on campus | HEI-D; HEI-G; HEI-H |
| 5.4B: Offering expertise of the program staff and students to faculty, other college personnel, and students through trainings, course presentations, etc. | HEI-C; ; HEI-E; HEI-G; HEI-H |
| Quality Indicator 5.5: Adhere to the college's schedules, policies and procedures, public relations, and communications as evidenced by: | |
| 5.5A: Review of the college's code of conduct with students. | HEI-B |
| 5.5B: Participation of students in courses and/or social events. | HEI-A; HEI-B; HEI-C; HEI-D; HEI-F; HEI-G; HEI-H |
| 5.5C: Participation of students in graduation exercises and experiences. | HEI-E; HEI-G; HEI-H |
| 5.5D: Observation of college vacations and holidays, not local education agencies | |
| 5.5E: Recognition of students with intellectual disabilities as a representative population in the IHE's diversity plan | |

Table 15 and Figure 5 display the number and percentage of benchmarks confirmed during the directed content analysis for each HEI. Evidence emerged in the data confirming three of the HEIs, HEI-F, HEI-G, and HEI-H presented over 50% of the benchmarks for Standard 5: Alignment with College Systems and Practices. HEI-B presented the lowest number of benchmarks, confirming seven out of the twenty-one available benchmarks.

Table 15

Benchmarks present for each Higher Education Institution for Standard 5: Alignment with college systems and practices

| Standard 5: Alignment with College Systems and Practices Benchmarks Confirmed | HEI-A | HEI-B | HEI-C | HEI-D | HEI-E | HEI-F | HEI-G | HEI-H |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Number (out of 21) | 9 | 7 | 10 | 10 | 8 | 11 | 15 | 15 |
| Percentage | 43% | 33% | 48% | 48% | 38% | 51% | 71% | 71% |

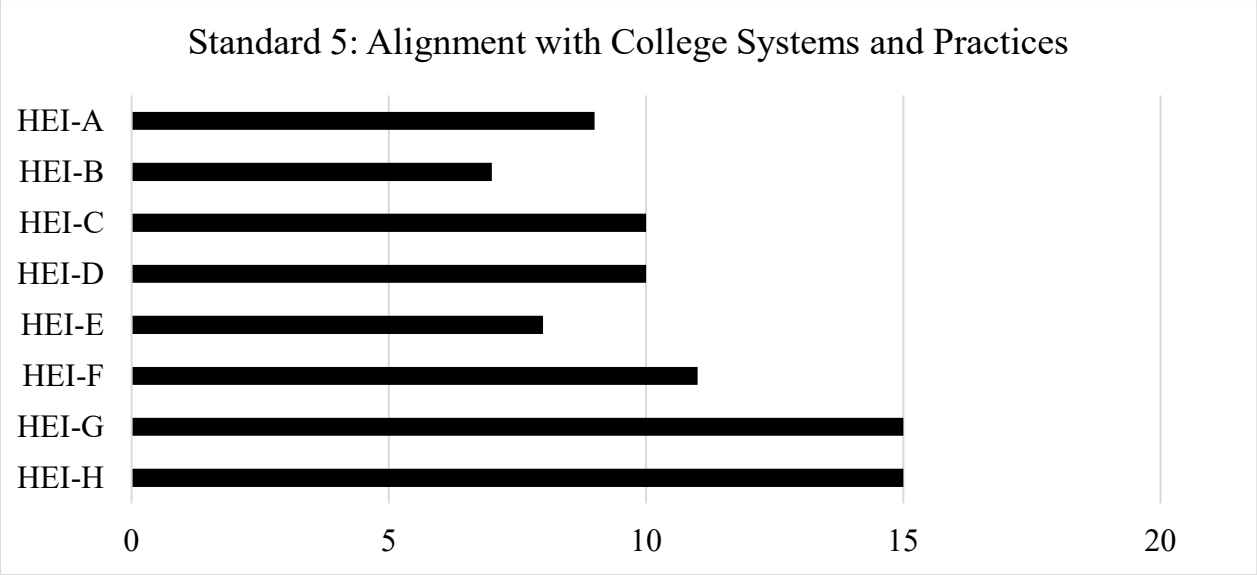


Figure 5 Benchmarks present for each Higher Education Institution for Standard 5: Alignment with college systems and practices

## Standard 6: Coordination and Collaboration

There are nine benchmarks under Standard 6: Coordination and collaboration as displayed in Table 16. These benchmarks are further organized by quality indicators in the left column. The right column indicates which HEIs presented each benchmark based on the directed content analysis. Data indicated that six of the eight HEIs met the criteria for benchmark 6.2B-Conducting person-centered planning and ensuring that the results of those meetings are infused into the students' daily activities. Conversely, data also indicated that none of the HEIs met the criteria for benchmark 6.1C-Program staff being aware of the governance and administrative structures of the college or university that may impact the program.

Table 16

Quality indicators and Benchmarks for Standard 6: Coordination and collaboration

| Quality Indicator | Present in HEI |
|---|---|
| Quality Indicator 6.1: Establish connections and relationships with key college/university departments, as evidenced by: | |
| 6.1A: Students with ID effectively using campus resources | HEI-C; HEI-D; HEI-E; HEI-G; HEI-H |
| 6.1B: Program staff effectively using college infrastructure. | HEI-C; HEI-G; HEI-H |
| 6.1C: Program staff being aware of the governance and administrative structures of the college or university that may impact the program. | |
| 6.1D: Program staff participating in faculty/staff governance or committees | HEI-G; HEI-H |
| Quality Indicator 6.2: Have a designated person to coordinate program-specific services of the comprehensive postsecondary education program, including: | |
| 6.2A: Scheduling and implementing interagency team meetings | HEI-G |
| 6.2B: Conducting person-centered planning and ensuring that the results of those meetings are infused into the students' daily activities. | HEI-A; HEI-B; HEI-C; HEI-F; HEI-G; HEI-H |
| 6.2C: Ensuring that data collection and program evaluation activities occur. | HEI-C; HEI-D |
| 6.2D: Providing outreach to families. | HEI-C; HEI-F; HEI-G |
| 6.2E: Providing training and supervision for educational coaches, job coaches, and job developers. | HEI-G; HEI-H |

Table 15 and Figure 6 display the number and percentage of benchmarks confirmed during the directed content analysis for each HEI. Evidence emerged in the data confirming two of the HEIs, HEI-G, and HEI-H presented over 50% of the benchmarks for Standard 6: Coordination and collaboration. Four of the HEIs, HEI-A, HEI-B, HEI-D, and HEI-E presented the lowest number of benchmarks, confirming one out of the nine available benchmarks.

Table 17

Benchmarks present for each Higher Education Institution for Standard 6: Coordination and collaboration

| Standard 6: Coordination and Collaboration Benchmarks Confirmed | HEI-A | HEI-B | HEI-C | HEI-D | HEI-E | HEI-F | HEI-G | HEI-H |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Number (out of 9) | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 7 | 5 |
| Percentage | 11% | 11% | 22% | 11% | 11% | 22% | 77% | 55% |

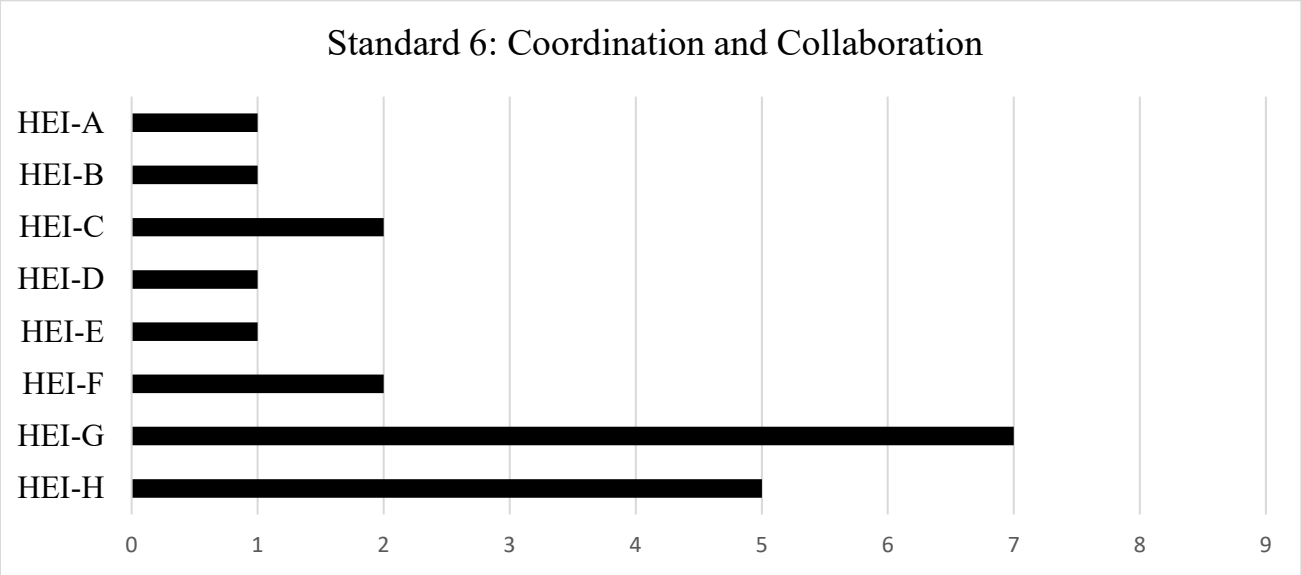


Figure 6 Benchmarks present for each Higher Education Institution for Standard 6: Coordination and Collaboration

## Standard 7: Sustainability

There are eight benchmarks under Standard 7: Sustainability as displayed in Table 18. These benchmarks are further organized by quality indicators in the left column. The right column indicates which HEIs presented each benchmark based on the directed content analysis. Data indicated that six of the eight HEIs met the criteria for benchmarks 7.1C-Providing information to students on sources of funds for tuition and other costs and 7.1D-Using state. funds, IDEA funds, developmental services agency funds, family funds, private funds, and federal grant funds to provide core funding for the program.

Table 18

Quality indicators and Benchmarks for Standard 7: Sustainability

| Quality Indicator | Present in HEIs |
|---|---|
| Quality Indicator 7.1: Use diverse sources of funding, including: | |
| 7.1A: Maintaining a relationship to the campus financial aid office. | HEI-G; HEI-H |
| 7.1B: Ensuring that eligible students and families apply for financial aid. | HEI-C |
| 7.1C: Providing information to students on sources of funds for tuition and other costs. | HEI-A; HEI-C; HEI-D; HEI-E; HEI-G; HEI-H |
| 7.1D: Using state funds, IDEA funds, developmental services agency funds, family funds, private funds, and federal grant funds to provide core funding for the program. | HEI-A; HEI-B; HEI-C; HEI-E; HEI-G; HEI-H |
| Quality Indicator 7.2: Have a planning and advisory team which: | |
| 7.2A: Includes representatives from the college, including administrators, disability services, and faculty. | HEI-A; HEI-G; HEI-H |
| 7.2B: Supports collaboration between the college and the program and with outside entities | HEI-G; HEI-H |
| 7.2C: Addresses program policies and practices (costs, access, partnerships) and student outcomes (data review) to ensure sustainability | HEI-G; HEI-H |
| 7.2D: Communicates regularly | HEI-G; HEI-H |

Table 19 and Figure 7 display the number and percentage of benchmarks confirmed during the directed content analysis for each HEI. Evidence emerged in the data confirming HEI-G as the only HEI that presented over 50% of the benchmarks for Standard 7: Sustainability. Four of the HEIs, HEI-A, HEI-B, HEI-D, and HEI-F presented the lowest number of benchmarks, confirming one our zero out of the eight available benchmarks.

Table 19

Benchmarks present for each Higher Education Institution for Standard 7: Sustainability

| Standard 7: Sustainability Benchmarks Confirmed | HEI-A | HEI-B | HEI-C | HEI-D | HEI-E | HEI-F | HEI-G | HEI-H |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Number (out of 8) | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 7 | 4 |
| Percentage | 13% | 15% | 25% | 13% | 25% | 0 | 88% | 50% |

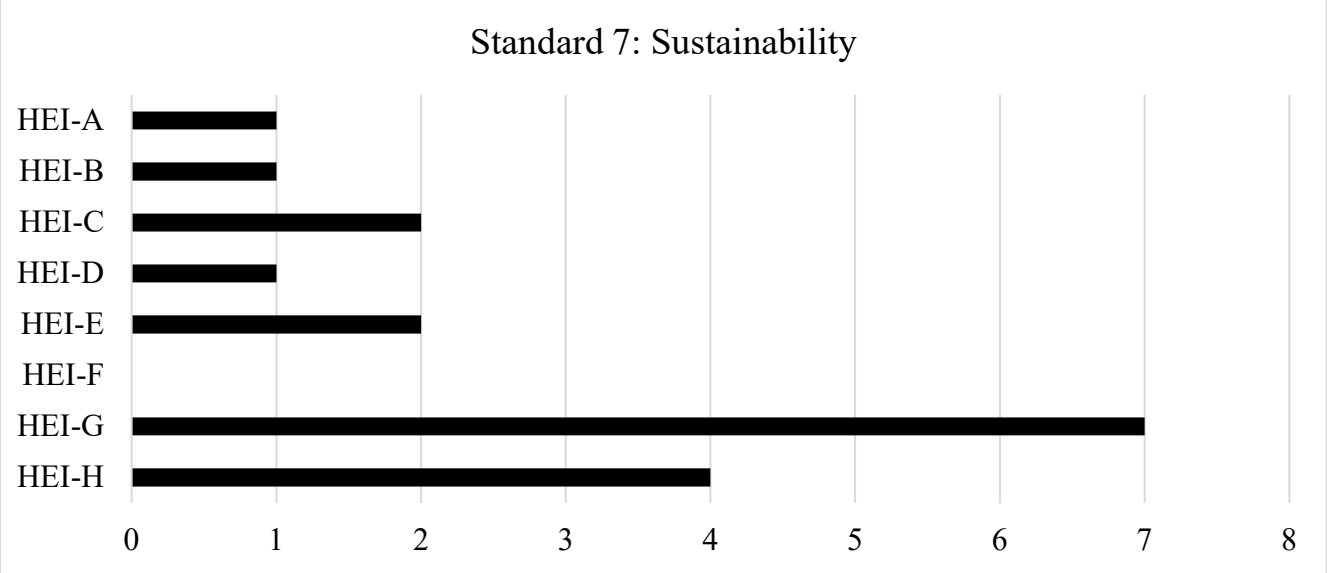


Figure 7 Benchmarks present for each Higher Education Institution for Standard7: Sustainability

## Standard 8: Ongoing Evaluation

There are six benchmarks under Standard 8: Ongoing evaluation as displayed in Table 20. These benchmarks are further organized by quality indicators in the left column. The right column indicates which HEIs presented each benchmark based on the directed content analysis. Data indicated that six of the eight HEIs did not meet the criteria for any of the benchmarks in Standard 8: Ongoing evaluation. HEI-D and HEI-G each met the criteria for benchmark 8.1D: Collection of student follow-up data.

Table 20

Quality indicators and Benchmarks for Standard 8: Ongoing evaluation

| Quality Indicator | Present in HEIs |
|---|---|
| Quality Indicator 8.1: Conduct evaluation of services and outcomes on a regular basis, including: | |
| 8.1A: Collection of data from key stakeholders, such as students with and without disabilities, parents, faculty, disability services, and other college staff | |
| 8.1B: Collection of student satisfaction data. | HEI-D |
| 8.1C: Collection of student exit data | HEI-D |
| 8.1D: Collection of student follow-up data. | HEI-D; HEI-G |
| 8.1E: Review of all data compiled by the advisory team and other stakeholders. | |
| 8.1F: Implementation of program changes as a result of data review | |

Table 21 and Figure 8 display the number and percentage of benchmarks confirmed during the directed content analysis for each HEI. Evidence emerged in the data confirming HEI-D as the only HEI that presented over 50% of the benchmarks for Standard 8: Ongoing evaluation. Six of the of the HEIs, HEI-A, HEI-B, HEI-C, HEI-E, HEI-F, and HEI-H presented the zero of the six available benchmarks.

Table 21

Benchmarks present for each Higher Education Institution for Standard 8: Ongoing Evaluation

| Standard 8: Ongoing Evaluation Benchmarks Confirmed | HEI-A | HEI-B | HEI-C | HEI-D | HEI-E | HEI-F | HEI-G | HEI-H |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Number (out of 6) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Percentage | 0 | 0 | 0 | 50% | 0 | 0 | 16% | 0 |


Figure 8 Benchmarks present for each Higher Education Institution for Standard 8: Ongoing Evaluation

## Section Two: Data Analysis of Research Question Two

This section represents the results of the data analysis for Research Question 2 (RQ2). RQ2 queries, how are post-secondary education programs that receive TPSID funding with SACS accreditation categorized to align with program classification models as identified by Hart et al. (2004) as separate, mixed, or inclusive based on publicly available information? RQ2 was examined using the results of the document analysis using directed content analysis. The variables used in the directed content analysis to analyze RQ2 were the characteristics of the

program classification models identified as separate, mixed, or inclusive developed by Hart et al. (2004) as outlined in APPENDIX E.

This section first presents the characteristics of separate, mixed, and inclusive programs and displays the HEIs that met the criteria for each characteristic based on the directed content analysis. Next, this section exhibits the number and percentage of program characteristics present for each program model, separate, mixed, and inclusive.

## Characteristics of Separate, Mixed, and Inclusive Programs by HEI

Table 22 displays the characteristics of separate programs and presents the HEIs that met the criteria for each characteristic. Table 23 displays the characteristics of mixed Programs and presents the HEIs that met the criteria for each characteristic. Table 24 displays the characteristics of inclusive Programs and presents the HEIs that met the criteria for each characteristic.

Data indicated that HEI-A and HEI-C met one of the criteria for separate programs. HEI-A and HEI-C serve five to ten students, a characteristic of separate programs. All the HEIs selected for this study met criteria for three of the mixed program characteristics as indicate by the data. These characteristics include: shared social spaces with mainstream students, traditional course options, and life-skills course options. Comparatively, data emerged indicating each of the HEIs selected for this study met the criteria for two of the program characteristics for inclusive programs. These characteristics include traditional course options and students are provided: coaches, advisors, or resources based on independent and individual support.

Table 22

HEIs that present separate program characteristics

| Separate Program Characteristics | HEI With Characteristic |
|---|---|
| No interaction with mainstream students | |
| No "mainstream interaction" option | |
| Curriculum basis: life skills, employment training, community engagement | |
| Serve 5-10 Students | HEI-A; HEI-C |

Table 23

HEIs that present mixed program characteristics

| Mixed Program Characteristics | HEI With Characteristic |
|---|---|
| Semi-regular interaction with mainstream students | |
| Shared social spaces with mainstream students | All of the HEIs (A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H) |
| Traditional course options | All of the HEIs (A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H) |
| Life-skills course options | All of the HEIs (A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H) |
| Serve 5-20 students | HEI-A; HEI-C; HEI-F; HEI-H |

Table 24

HEIs that present inclusive program characteristics

| Inclusive Program Characteristics | HEI With Characteristic |
|---|---|
| Curriculum is based on person-centered-planning | HEI-A; HEI-B; HEI-D; HEI-F; HEI-G; HEI-H |
| Traditional course options | All of the HEIs (A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H) |
| No segregation from mainstream students | |
| Students are provided: coaches, advisors, or resources based on independent and individual support | All of the HEIs (A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H) |

The Number and Percentage of Program Characteristics by HEI

Table 25 displays the number of program characteristics for each program model, separate, mixed, and inclusive, for each HEI as indicated by the directed content analysis. None of the HEIs selected for this study presented all the program characteristics for both separate or mixed programs. Data indicated that both HEI-A and HEI-C each present one of the separate program characteristics. No other HEIs in this study presented separate program characteristics. All the HEIs in this study presented both mixed and inclusive program characteristics.

Table 25

Number of program characteristics by HEI

| | | Number of Program Characteristics | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Program Type | Number of Total Characteristics | HEI-A | HEI-B | HEI-C | HEI-D | HEI-E | HEI-F | HEI-G | HEI-H |
| Separate | 4 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Mixed | 5 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 |
| Inclusive | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 3 |

Table 26 displays the percentage of program characteristics for each HEI by program model, separate, mixed, and inclusive, as indicated during the directed content analysis. Four of the HEI's selected for this study presented a higher percentage of mixed program characteristics than inclusive program characteristics. These HEIs include HEI-A, HEI-C, HEI-E, and HEI-H. Conversely, the other four HEIs in this study presented a higher percentage of inclusive program characteristics. These HEIs include HEI-B, HEI-D, HEI-F, and HEI-G. HEI-F is the only HEI that met 100% of the criteria for inclusive programs.

Table 26

Percentage of program characteristics by HEI

| | Percentage of Program Characteristics | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Program Type | HEI-A | HEI-B | HEI-C | HEI-D | HEI-E | HEI-F | HEI-G | HEI-H |
| Separate | 25% | 0 | 25% | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Mixed | 80% | 60% | 80% | 60% | 80% | 80% | 60% | 80% |
| Inclusive | 75% | 75% | 75% | 75% | 50% | 100% | 75% | 75% |

## Section Three: Data Analysis of Research Question Three

This section represents the results of the data analysis for Research Question 3 (RQ3). RQ3 queries, is the institutional barrier, lack of information, present as evidenced the lack of publicly available information detailing the Think College standards, quality indicators, and benchmarks for inclusive higher education (Grigal et al., 2012)? RQ3 was examined using the results of the document analysis using directed content analysis. The variables used in the directed content analysis to analyze RQ3 were the Think College standards, quality indicators, and benchmarks for inclusive higher education developed by Grigal, Hart, and Weir (2012) as outlined in APPENDIX F.

This section begins by presenting the number of Think College benchmarks, organized by standard, that emerged during the directed content analysis for each HEI selected for this study. Next, the percentage of benchmarks, organized by standard, that emerged during the directed content analysis for each HEI selected for this study will be presented. Finally, this section concludes with the representation of the total number and percentage of benchmarks confirmed during the directed content analysis in each HEI selected for this study.

Number and Percentage of Benchmarks Confirmed for HEIs by Standard

Table 27 displays the number of benchmarks that were confirmed during the directed content analysis for each HEI based on the Think College standards. Table 28 displays the percentage of benchmarks that emerged in the data for each HEI based on the Think College standards. Standard 3: Career development is the only standard identified during the directed content analysis that confirmed at least 50% of the benchmarks for each HEI selected for this study. Conversely, HEI-D and HEI-G were the only HEIs that presented any of the benchmarks in Standard 8: Ongoing evaluation during the directed content analysis.

Table 27

Number of benchmarks in HEIs by Standard

| Standard | Name | Number of Total Benchmarks | HEI-A | HEI-B | HEI-C | HEI-D | HEI-E | HEI-F | HEI-G | HEI-H |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Academic Access | 16 | 8 | 7 | 11 | 11 | 10 | 10 | 13 | 13 |
| 2 | Career Development | 7 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 7 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 5 |
| 3 | Campus Membership | 4 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 4 |
| 4 | Self-Determination | 15 | 6 | 5 | 11 | 5 | 4 | 6 | 9 | 8 |
| 5 | Alignment w. College Systems and Practices | 21 | 9 | 7 | 10 | 10 | 8 | 11 | 15 | 15 |
| 6 | Coordination and Collaboration | 9 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 7 | 5 |
| 7 | Sustainability | 8 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 7 | 4 |
| 8 | Ongoing Evaluation | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |

Table 28

Percentage of benchmarks in HEIs by Standard

| Standard | Name | HEI-A | HEI-B | HEI-C | HEI-D | HEI-E | HEI-F | HEI-G | HEI-H |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Academic Access | 50% | 44% | 69% | 69% | 63% | 63% | 81% | 81% |
| 2 | Career Development | 29% | 29% | 57% | 100% | 43% | 43% | 71% | 71% |
| 3 | Campus Membership | 75% | 75% | 100% | 75% | 100% | 75% | 75% | 100% |
| 4 | Self-Determination | 40% | 33% | 73% | 33% | 27% | 40% | 60% | 53% |
| 5 | Alignment w. College Systems and Practices | 43% | 33% | 48% | 48% | 38% | 52% | 71% | 71% |
| 6 | Coordination and Collaboration | 11% | 11% | 22% | 11% | 11% | 22% | 77% | 55% |
| 7 | Sustainability | 13% | 13% | 25% | 13% | 25% | 0 | 88% | 50% |
| 8 | Ongoing Evaluation | 0 | 0 | 0 | 50% | 0 | 0 | 16% | 0 |

Total Number and Percentage of Benchmarks Confirmed for HEIs

Table 29 displays the number and percentage of benchmarks identified during the directed content analysis for each HEI selected for this study. Based on the directed content analysis, 31% of the benchmarks were confirmed for HEI-B with a total of twenty-six benchmarks, making it the HEI with the lowest percentage and number of benchmarks. Conversely, based on the directed content analysis, HEI-G had the largest number, sixty, and percentage, 70%, of benchmarks compared to the other HEIs selected for this study. The directed content analysis indicated that three of the eight HEIs selected for this study meet the criteria for over 50% of the benchmarks. HEI-G with 70%, HEI-H with 63%, and HEI-C with 51%. Figures

9 and 10 display a visual representation of the comparison of the HEIs in this study based on number of benchmarks and percentage of benchmarks identified for each HEI during the directed content analysis.

Table 29

Number and Percentage of Benchmarks

| HEI | How many (of the 86) Benchmarks are present? | Percentage of Benchmarks |
|---|---|---|
| HEI - A | 30 | 36% |
| HEI - B | 26 | 31% |
| HEI - C | 44 | 51% |
| HEI - D | 38 | 44% |
| HEI - E | 32 | 37% |
| HEI - F | 35 | 41% |
| HEI – G | 60 | 70% |
| HEI – H | 54 | 63% |

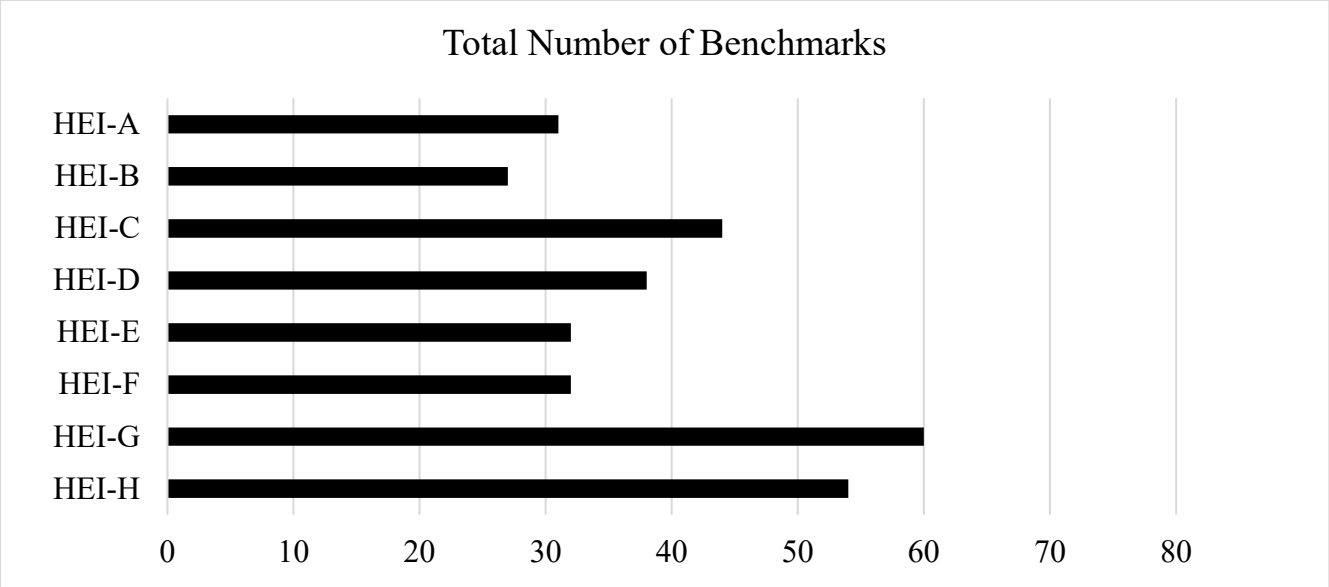


Figure 9 Number of Benchmarks by HEI

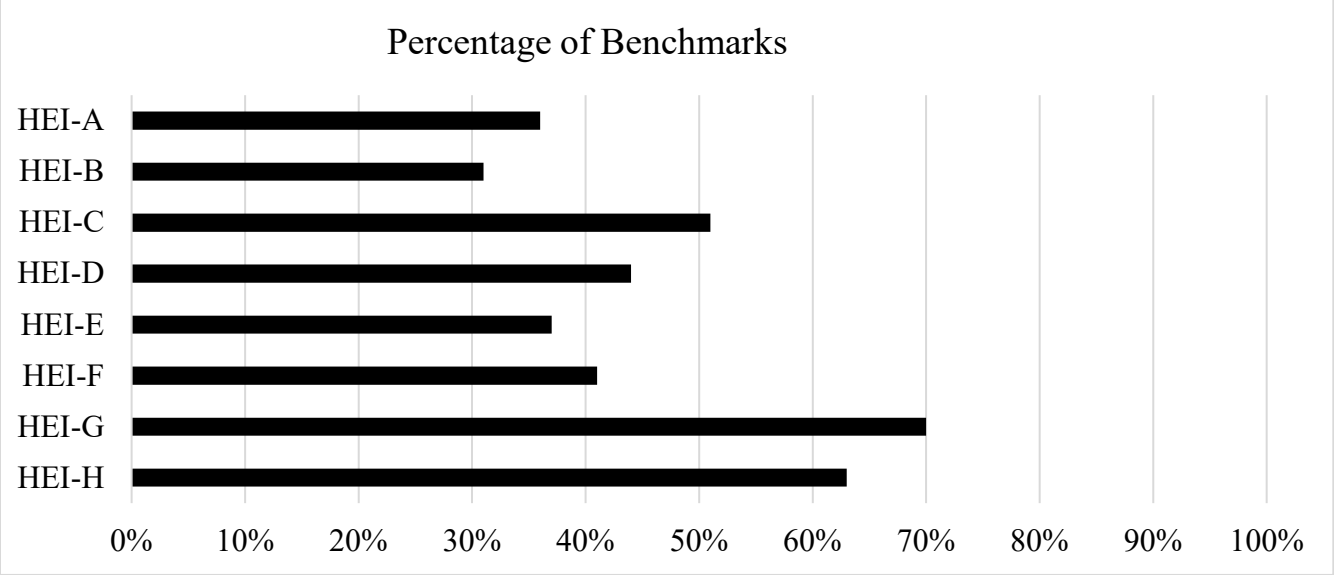


Figure 10 Percentage of Benchmarks by HEI

## Summary

This Chapter began with and overview of the presentation of data. Following the overview, the data analysis for Research Questions 1, 2, and 3 were presented in three separate sections. Section One, the analysis for RQ1, indicated the results of the directed content analysis using the Think College standards, quality indicators, and benchmarks as variables.

The results represented in Section One identified that all eight HEIs selected for this study met the criteria for four of the sixteen benchmarks under Standard 1: Academic access, one of the seven benchmarks under Standard 2: Career development, one of the four criteria under Standard 3: Campus membership, one of the fifteen benchmarks understand Standard 4: Self-Determination, and two of the twenty-one benchmarks for Standard 5: Alignment with college systems and practices. The directed content analysis indicated that none of the benchmarks in Standard 6: Coordination and collaboration, Standard 7: Sustainability, and Standard 8: Ongoing evaluation, were present in all the HEIs selected for this study.

The results represented in Section Two identified four of the HEIs selected for this study as inclusive program models and the other four HEIs selected for this study as mixed program models according to program classification criteria developed by Hart et al. (2004).

The results represented in Section Three indicated that three of the HEIs selected for this study provide publicly available data indicating each of the three HEIs present 50% or more of the Think College standards, quality indicators, and benchmarks for inclusive higher education. Five of the HEIs selected for this study presented below 50% of the Think College standards, quality indicators, and benchmarks for inclusive higher education.

# CHAPTER FIVE – DISCUSSION

## Introduction

Chapter Five – Discussion is the final chapter of this dissertation. This chapter begins with a summary of the study, followed by a discussion of the findings.

The discussion of the findings is section is organized by the three separate sections. Each of these sections focus on the research questions for this study, beginning with Research Question One, followed by Research Question Two, concluding with Research Question Three. Implications for practice based on the results of this study follow the discussion of the findings. The chapter concludes with recommendations for future research and a conclusion of the chapter.

## Summary of the Study

The purpose of this document analysis qualitative research study was to explore the publicly available information provided by universities with Postsecondary Education Programs (PSP) that have Southern Association of College and Schools (SACS) accreditation and receive TPSID grant funding. This study investigated PSPs by exploring publicly available information defining the level of inclusion of students with ID from select colleges or universities, classifying PSPs as either separate, mixed, or inclusive, and identifying if the barrier, lack of information, is present, as they relate to publicly available information. The problem addressed in this study was the availability of public information, for students with intellectual disabilities and their families, regarding postsecondary education programs at select universities.

Using the adult learning framework, andragogy, and the conceptual framework, the Chain-of-Response model to guide and frame the research inquiry, the researcher conducted a qualitative research methodology, document analysis. Following the document collection, the researcher used a directed content analysis approach to analyze the data. After completing the data analysis, the researcher presented the results of this study organized by research question. Following a presentation of the results, the researcher presented a discussion of the findings, implications for practitioners, and recommendations for future research in this chapter.

## Discussion of the Findings

The purpose of this document analysis qualitative research study was to explore the publicly available information provided by universities with Postsecondary Education Programs (PSP) that have Southern Association of College and Schools (SACS) accreditation and receive TPSID grant funding. This research study investigated PSPs by; exploring publicly available information defining support services available to students with ID from select colleges or universities, classifying PSPs as either separate, mixed, or inclusive, and identifying if the barrier, lack of information, is present for students with ID as they relate to publicly available information.

This section includes a discussion of the findings for this study as they relate to the purpose of this inquiry. This section is presented in three segments, beginning with a discussion of the findings for Research Question One, followed by a discussion of the findings for Research Question Two, concluding with a discussion of the findings for Research Question Three.

## Research Question One

This section presents a discussion of the results for Research Question 1 (RQ1). R1 quarries, do postsecondary education programs that receive TPSID funding with SACS accreditation incorporate Think College standards, quality indicators, and benchmarks for inclusive higher education to provide support to students with ID based on publicly available information? This section is organized in eight sections as defined by the eight Think College Standards: Academic access, career development, campus membership, self-determination, alignment with college systems and practices, coordination and collaboration, sustainability, and ongoing evaluation. Each section begins by defining the standard and demonstrating how the conceptual framework and literature relate to the results of this study.

### Standard 1: Academic Access.

Standard 1: Academic access, directs HEIs to provide opportunities for students to acquire skills as well as provide access learning opportunities (Institute for Community Inclusion, 2019). By incorporating this standard, colleges and universities ensure students with ID have access to a variety of college courses. These courses should include the enrollment of students with and without ID. The results of this inquiry indicated that seven out of the eight HEIs selected for this study implement at least half of the benchmarks associated with the academic access standard, based on publicly available information. Additionally, all the HEIs chosen for this study presented two program characteristics that are consistent with two historical inclusive-program practices. These characteristics include the enrollment of students with ID in courses with their peers without ID and policies regarding admission to PSP regardless of standardized admission criteria.

According to their websites, each HEI offers students with ID the opportunity to take courses alongside their peers without ID. These courses relate to each student's individual personal, academic, and career goals. As reviewed in Chapter Two: Literature Review, the inclusion of students with ID in mainstream classrooms, learning alongside their peers without ID, is not a new inclusive-program model. In the 1960s, before the Rehabilitation Act was passed, parents of students with ID argued that it was developmentally crucial for children with disabilities to have the opportunity to interact with and learn alongside other children without disabilities. Further, after the Education for All Handicapped Children's Act was passed in 1975, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court issued the opinion that students with disabilities should be placed into mainstream classrooms and not separated from their peers (Keogh, 2007).

In addition to the inclusive of students with ID in mainstream curriculum, each HEI has policies, according to the PSP application materials and admission requirements posted on their websites. These policies state program admissions criteria, removing the enrollment requirements of standardized placement tests, ability, and pre-requisites – all policies that have historically negatively impacted the participation of students with ID in HEIs as evidenced by the Higher Education Opportunities Act (HEOA). The HEOA in 2008 altered the financial aid criteria, removing standardized admissions criteria as an aid requirement for students seeking federal financial aid. As discussed in Chapter Two: Literature Review, before the HEOA (2008), students with ID could audit college classes at a university. Still, they had to pay for tuition privately because they were not enrolled as degree-seeking students. After the HEOA of 2008, students enrolled in PSP were eligible to receive federal financial aid, regardless of degree-seeking status (Lee, 2009; Madaus et al., 2012). As detailed in the admissions criteria

or PSP application, each HEI in this study admits students to the PSP regardless of the student's ability or placement test score.

By offering courses to students with ID the opportunity to enroll in mainstream courses and by defining admission criteria, the HEIs selected for this study have made an effort to remove barriers to participation in postsecondary education for students with ID, as evidenced by the discussion above.

Although the HEI course offerings are inclusive, as they relate to the historical policy detailed above, each HEI selected for this study indicated on their website that they enroll students with ID in a life-skills or college transition course. These life-skills courses are not available to students without ID. According to the Think College standards for inclusivity, this is a non-inclusive practice because students with ID are separated from their peers without ID in the life-skills course. Further research in the field is needed to determine why HEIs are implementing a life-skills curriculum - separating students with ID from their peers, when it is a well-documented non-inclusive practice.

In addition to course segregation, detailed above, data emerged in the academic access standard that presented evidence that the barrier, lack of course options, is present. Limited course options are a barrier to participation (Causton-Theoharis et al., 2009; Mock & Love, 2012; Neubert et al., 2004), as identified during a review of the literature in Chapter Two: Literature Review. As noted in Chapter Two: Literature Review, program administrators were often able to gain faculty approval for students with ID to participate in general education courses; however, they found it challenging to get support for students to audit upper-level classes (Causton-Theoharis et al., 2009).

Half of the HEIs selected for this study allow students with ID to audit any course at the institution - an inclusive practice. In contrast, the other half of the HEIs developed a pre-determined course list posted on their website. Students with ID are invited to select course from this list. A pre-determined course list is a non-inclusive practice as indicated by the Think College standards, quality indicators, and benchmarks. A pre-determined course list could be an indication of a lack of university buy-in, a barrier to the inclusion of students with ID in higher education (Causton-Theoharis et al., 2009; Plotner & Marshall, 2015; Thoma, 2013). Thoma (2013) identified the need for buy-in across campus to assist with streamlining the admission process, access to courses, and identifying student status during program implementation. Without faculty support or campus buy-in, program implementation will either be extremely difficult or unsuccessful. Further research is needed in this area to determine why four of the HEIs selected for this study have a pre-determined course list.

The results for Standard 1: Academic access, indicated that seven of the eight HEIs selected for this study presented evidence on their website supporting 50% or more of the benchmarks for academic access. This could indicate these HEIs have made significant progress towards implementing policies to remove barriers to participation as they relate to admissions policies and the inclusion of students with ID in mainstream curriculum. However, more research is needed to determine why PSPs are implementing life-skills courses as well as why some HEIs are electing to use a pre-determined course list. Both strategies, implementing life-skills courses and a limited course list, have been identified as non-inclusive practices and are identified as barriers to inclusion and participation.

Standard 2: Career Development.

The second Standard is career development. This standard directs universities to provide career-focused support and internship experiences for students, helping them learn the necessary skills required to obtain and sustain employment (Institute for Community Inclusion, 2019). The career development standard directly relates to andragogy, the conceptual framework used to guide this study in two ways.

First, assumption four of Knowles' (1980) six assumptions of adult learners, as discussed in Chapter Two: Literature Review, contends that adults view time as is associates to their learning as immediate rather than futuristic (Knowles, 1980), that is to say, what they learn now is immediately applicable to their current lives. Career development is directly related to the lives of students with ID participating in PSP. One of the goals of participation in higher education for students with ID is to learn the necessary skills required to obtain and sustain employment upon completion of the program (Institute for Community Inclusion, 2019). Therefore, Standard 2: Career development aligns with the adult learning theory, andragogy.

According to the results of this inquiry, all the HEIs selected for this study require students to participate in internships or work-based training, based on information posted on the PSP websites. Although participating in an internship or work-skills program is a requirement at each institution, only half of the HEIs publicly stated that they provide students access to job coaches. Additionally, six out of the eight HEIs indicated on their websites that they connect students with community and adult learning services to assist with sustainable employment. Further research is needed to determine the scope of the support students can expect to receive regarding internships and job placement assistance. Although not all, more than half of the HEIs selected for this study documented types of career-focused support for students with ID.

Second, based on the six assumptions of adult learners as discussed in Chapter Two: Literature Review, Knowles (1980), identified a program-planning model developed by both the student and the instructor based on the student's desire to learn (Falasca, 2011; Merriam et al., 1999). This model is similar to Person-Centered Planning (PCP), a model of learning often used for students with ID. In the PCP model, a group of facilitators works with each individual to develop a learning plan based on the individual's desire to learn and their future goals. Implementing a Person-Centered Planning to identify a student's career goals is one of the benchmarks in Standard 2: Career development. The results of this inquiry indicated six of the eight HEIs selected for this study publicly stated that they initiate Person-Centered Planning to identify each student's career goals, aligning with Knowles (1980) program-planning model as a characteristic of andragogy. As such, six of the eight HEIs align with the conceptual framework for this study, as indicated by the results of Standard 2: Career development regarding person-centered planning.

The results for Standard 2: Career development, indicated that half of HEIs selected for this study presented evidence on their website supporting 50% or more of the benchmarks for career development. There is not enough publicly available evidence supported by the results to indicate that the other half of the HEIs selected for this study are implementing more than 50% of Standard 2: Career development. More research is needed to determine the extent to which these HEIs are implementing this standard to determine how students receive career planning support.

Standard 3: Campus Membership.

Campus membership, the third standard, states that students should have both access and support to participate in pre-existing social clubs, organizations, and opportunities on campus, including access to facilities and technology (Institute for Community Inclusion, 2019). Campus membership directly relates to andragogy, the conceptual framework used to guide this study. As adult learners, students participate in both informal and formal learning by participating in Communities of Practice, as defined by Lave and Wenger (1991) in Chapter Two: Literature Review. Communities of Practice are groups of people with different skills who work together to identify and solve problems (Merriam et al., 1999). In this inquiry, a Community of Practice is a higher education institution. Therefore, when students with ID are participating in the campus culture and environment at their HEI, they are active members of their Community of Practice.

In addition to campus membership relating to the conceptual framework of this study, it also refers to the current literature surrounding the inclusion of students with ID in PSP. As identified in Chapter Two: Literature Review, lack of peer support relates to the inclusion on campuses within social organizations and has been identified as a barrier to participation (Neubert et al., 2004; Neubert & Redd, 2008; Stodden & Whelley, 2004). To improve campus membership, Clausten-Theoaharis et al. (2009) reported that HEIs had used paraprofessionals to support students on campus. Using paraprofessionals, however, had a negative effect on the student's social involvement (Causton-Theoharis et al., 2009). The results of their study indicated that students did not need a paraprofessional with the student at all times and that students preferred more freedom while on campus (Causton-Theoharis et al., 2009). Supporting this claim, Prohn's (2014) social inclusion theory indicated that social control is crucial

in creating opportunities for sustainable social inclusion in the collegiate environment (Prohn, 2014). Students must feel like they are in control of their environment and social experiences to feel included in the campus community. The research conducted by Clausten-Theoaharis et al. (2009) and Prohn (2016), supports the implementation of Standard 3: Campus membership.

The results of this inquiry indicated that each HEI selected for this study presented evidence on their websites, indicating an inclusive campus environment for students with ID. Each HEI publicly stated that students have access to and are supported in participating in existing social organizations, including campus programs. Seven of the eight HEIs reported on their website that students are invited to participate in social activities facilitated by students without disabilities. These results indicate that each of the HEIs selected for this study promote the involvement of students with ID in campus life as it relates to the Community of Practice characteristic of andragogy. Further research is needed to determine if the HEI that did not indicate on their website that students are invited to participate in social activities facilitated by students without disabilities discourages campus membership, or if it is encouraged, but not stated publicly.

In addition to social inclusion, access to housing facilities is a benchmark under Standard 3: Campus membership. Five of the HEIs selected for this study indicated on their websites that on-campus housing is available for students with ID. Similar to the course options in Standard 1: Academic access, lack of housing options at three of the HEIs may be an indication of lack of university buy-in. As discussed in Chapter Two: Literature Review, lack of university buy-in is a barrier to the inclusion of students within higher education (Causton-Theoharis et al., 2009; Plotner & Marshall, 2015; Thoma, 2013). Without buy-in from Housing and Residence Life

Staff, housing for students with ID may be difficult to secure. Further research is needed to determine why these HEIs do not offer and on-campus housing option.

The results for Standard 3: Campus membership, indicated that each HEI selected for this study present evidence on their website supporting 75% or more of the benchmarks for campus membership. The results of this inquiry suggest that each the HEIs selected for this study implement Standard 3: Campus membership. This could indicate that the HEIs selected for this study have made policy improvements to eliminate the barrier, inclusion on campuses within social organizations. However, more research is needed to determine if the barrier, lack of campus buy-in, is present.

Standard 4: Self-Determination.

Standard 4: Self-Determination relates to the two internal factors of participation in adult learning, as identified by the Chain-of-Response Model (COR) developed by Cross (1981), the framework selected to guide this study. The internal factors of the COR Model include self-evaluation and attitude (Salomonson et al., 2001). In addition to relating to the COR Model, Standard 4: Self-Determination directly relates to dispositional barriers, as discussed in Chapter Two: Literature Review. Dispositional barriers are a result of a person's attitude or self-perception regarding learning or one's aptitude as a learner (Cross, 1981). If a student has low self-determination, they are less likely to be successful in higher education, thus experiencing a dispositional barrier. However, if the student has a high level of self-determination, they are more likely to overcome dispositional barriers and positively engage in the collegiate environment.

Standard 4: Self-Determination directs universities to encourage the involvement of students in identifying their own personal and professional goals while providing support to help reach their goals (Institute for Community Inclusion, 2019). Standard 4 encourages universities to develop policies and infrastructure to ensure the implementation of three areas of self-determination. These areas include the student's involvement and control over their goals, the promotion of the development of student's self-determination skills, and a process for parental involvement. The results of this inquiry will be discussed next concerning these three categories.

The results of this inquiry indicated that each HEI selected for this study presented evidence on their websites stating that students are involved in setting their own goals as they relate to their own interests and desires. Involvement with goal setting refers directly to the self-evaluation variable in the COR Model. These results provide evidence to support the claim that each of the HEIs selected for this inquiry are supporting student's internal motivations for participation as defined by the COR Model, resulting in the removal of dispositional barriers as defined by the literature in Chapter Two: Literature Review.

The results of this inquiry indicated that each HEI selected for this study provided at least one indication of evidence on their website supporting the promotion of self-determination development. Seven of the eight HEIs in this inquiry demonstrated evidence that program administrators help students direct their choice of courses, activities, and employment experiences. Four of the HEIs provided evidence to suggest that students interact directly with faculty and employers to articulate their accommodation requests. Although evidence emerged in the results indicating that each HEI supports a portion of self-determination development, further research is needed to determine the extent of this support.

In contrast to the support of the development of self-determination skills detailed above, only four of the HEIs presented evidence defining a process for parent involvement. Similarly, only two of the institutions presented evidence indicating a policy detailing the student's control over their parent's participation in their education. Additionally, none of the HEIs demonstrated information on their website, clearly defining parental and student roles. Although not noted in the literature as a barrier to participation, the lack of information available detailing parental involvement is something to note. Further research is needed to determine the impact of parental involvement or lack of parental involvement in the lives of students with ID participating in PSP.

The results for Standard 4:Self-Determination, indicated that only three of the HEIs selected for this study present evidence on their website supporting 50% or more of the benchmarks for self-determination. There is not enough publicly available evidence supported by the results to indicate that five of the HEIs selected for this study are implementing Standard 4: Self-Determination. More research is needed to determine the extent to which these HEIs are implementing this standard. These results provide evidence to support the claim that each of the HEIs selected for this inquiry are supporting student's internal motivations for participation as defined by the COR Model, resulting in the removal of dispositional barriers as defined by the literature in Chapter Two: Literature Review. However, the lack of overwhelming evidence supporting the self-determination standard could indicate that dispositional barriers continue to exist. More research is needed to determine if the policies identified in this inquiry influence the removal or support of dispositional barriers.

Standard 5: Alignment with College Systems and Practices.

The fifth standard, alignment with college systems and practices, ensures that students are following the same university protocol and processes that students without ID are expected to follow (Institute for Community Inclusion, 2019). Alignment includes course advising, student conduct, community living standards, and campus resources (Institute for Community Inclusion, 2019). This standard includes the HEOA requirement that PSPs that receive TPSID funding identify program outcomes or provide a credential to students upon completion of the PSP.

Standard 5: Alignment with college systems and practices, relates to the barrier identified in Chapter Two: Literature Review, university buy-in (Plotner & Marshall, 2015) which is a type of institutional barrier. Thoma (2013) identified the need for buy-in across campus to assist with streamlining the admission process, access to courses, and identifying student status during program implementation. Without faculty support or campus buy-in, program implementation will either be extremely difficult or unsuccessful. This type of barrier to participation is an example of an institutional barrier, as defined in Chapter Two: Literature Review. Institutional barriers are procedures or policies put in place by a university or learning institution that discourage adult participation (Cross, 1981). Arguably, the lack of policy or procedural alignment is an institutional barrier.

Results of this inquiry indicated that all of the HEIs selected for this study presented at a minimum one piece of evidence on their websites supporting the alignment of college systems and practices, however, none of the HEIs met all of the requirements for Standard 5: Alignment with college systems and practices. As required by the HEOA, all the HEIs presented evidence on their websites, demonstrating that each student, at the completion of the program, would receive a credential. Additionally, each HEI presented evidence on their

website, supporting the benchmark: courses, and internships are related to achieving and maintaining gainful employment.

As evidenced by the results of this inquiry, none of the HEIs selected for this study presented evidence supporting a comprehensive alignment with campus systems and policies, which could lead to barriers to participation. Although all the HEIs presented evidence of an earned credential at the end of the PSP, only three of the HEIs selected for this study presented evidence supporting 50% of more of the benchmarks under Standard 5: Alignment with College Systems and Practices. Further research is needed to fully understand the extent to which the HEIs selected for this study align with university systems. The results of this inquiry provided minimal data supporting this standard.

Standard 6: Coordinator and Collaboration.

The sixth standard, coordination, and collaboration is similar to the fifth standard because it involves creating and maintaining relationships with on-campus constituents and partners (Institute for Community Inclusion, 2019). The coordination and collaboration standard emphasizes the importance of buy-in and collaboration between PSP administrators and campus partners. Similar to standard five, standard six relates to the barrier identified in Chapter Two: Literature Review, university buy-in (Plotner & Marshall, 2015) as it relates to institutional. Thoma (2013) identified the need for buy-in across campus to assist with streamlining the admission process, access to courses, and identifying student status during program implementation. Without faculty support or campus buy-in, program implementation will either be extremely difficult or unsuccessful. The distinction

between standard five and standard six is the difference between personnel and systems. Standard five relies on university alignment through campus systems, while standard six emphasizes the importance of the collaboration between university faculty and staff. Standard six includes benchmarks based on relationships between faculty and staff.

The results of this inquiry suggest that the HEIs selected for this study do not incorporate most of the benchmarks in standard six. Although each HEI chosen for this study presented evidence supporting the initiation of at least one of the benchmarks in standard six, only two of the HEIs showed evidence on their websites indicating evidence supporting 50% or more of the benchmarks under standard six. None of the HEIs presented evidence supporting the benchmark: program staff being aware of the governance and administrative structures of the college or university that may impact the program. The criteria of this benchmark, "program staff, being aware," is difficult to measure without interviewing program staff to measure "awareness." The data collected for this study was collected only from publicly available sources. A staff member's "awareness" is a variable not easily measured based on publicly available documents.

As evidenced in this example, further research is needed to determine the extent to which the HEIs selected for this study are implementing the benchmarks in standard six. The results for standard six indicated that only two of the HEIs chosen for this study present evidence on their website supporting 50% or more of the benchmarks for coordination and collaboration. In contrast, the other six HEIs presented evidence supporting no more than 22% of the benchmarks for standard six. There is not enough publicly available evidence supported by the results to indicate that six HEIs selected for this study are implementing Standard 6:

Coordination and collaboration. As such, this could be an indication that the barrier, lack of campus buy-in.

More research is needed to determine the extent to which these HEIs are implementing this standard. Publicly available documents do not provide enough evidence to support that more than two of the HEIs selected for this study are implementing this standard. The results of this in quiry provided minimal data supporting this standard.

Standard 7: Sustainability.

The seventh standard, sustainability, emphasizes the importance of planning and providing a diverse source of funding for the program (Institute for Community Inclusion, 2019). The sustainability standard ensures the longevity of the program to maintain the PSP overtime. Financial support and funding, as well as implementing a planning and advisory team, are two of the quality indicators for standard seven. Financial support and funding relate to the literature and conceptual framework selected to guide this study in three areas.

First, funding has been identified as one of the most significant barriers to the inclusion of students with ID in higher education, as detailed in Chapter Two: Literature Review. As previously mentioned, before the HEOA in 2008, students with ID were not eligible for federal student loans and grants. Although presently, students with ID have access to federal financial aid, it has continued to emerge in the research as a dominant barrier to participation (Mock & Love, 2012). In addition to student aid, the lack of funding for program implementation has been identified as a barrier to program development, which affects student participation (Mock & Love, 2012; Plotner & Marshall, 2015; Thoma, 2013).

Second, lack of financial stability is cited as a situational barrier to adult learning. As noted in Chapter Two: Literature Review, situational barriers include obstacles that exist because of the individual's current life situation (Cross, 1981). Situational barriers could consist of full-time employment, parenthood, lack of money, or other responsibilities outside of education (Cross, 1981). Situational barriers relate to adult learners as they are defined by andragogy, the conceptual framework guiding this study.

Third and finally, financial support for students with ID and PSPs was identified as a barrier to participation in Section One: Historical Law and Policy section of Chapter Two: Literature. The HEOA of 2008 increased funding opportunities for both students with ID, by altering federal financial aid eligibility criteria and implementing the TPSID grants.

The results of this inquiry demonstrated that six of the eight HEIs selected for this study presented evidence on their websites identifying diverse sources of financial aid and funding opportunities for students. Two of the HEIs chosen for this study had no financial aid or funding information for students with ID available on their website. Based on the results, there is evidence to support that more than six of the HEIs selected for this study are implementing this quality indicator. This could indicate that the barrier to financial stability and funding is alleviated, to an extent, at these six HEIs. Further research is needed to determine if this barrier has been lessened or abolished.

In addition to financial support, implementing a planning and advisory team is one of the quality indicators under Standard 7: Sustainability. Only three of the HEIs selected for this study presented evidence on their website supporting this quality indicator. Further research is needed to determine if the other five HEIs selected for this inquiry implement a planning and

advisory team. Publicly available documents do not provide enough evidence to support that more than three of the HEIs chosen for this study are applying this quality indicator.

The results for Standard 7: Sustainability, indicated that only two of the HEIs selected for this study presented evidence on their website supporting 50% or more of the benchmarks for sustainability. Further, one of the HEIs did not present any evidence supporting this standard, and three of the HEIs presented evidence supporting the criteria of only one of the benchmarks. There is not enough publicly available evidence supported by the results to indicate that six of the HEIs selected for this study are implementing Standard 7: Sustainability. More research is needed to determine the extent to which these HEIs are implementing this standard. The results of this inquiry provided minimal data supporting this standard.

Standard 8: Ongoing Evaluation.

The eighth and final standard, ongoing evaluation, requires administrators to consistently assess and modify the PSP program to continue to make program improvements (Institute for Community Inclusion, 2019). Standard 8: Ongoing evaluation, relates to institutional barriers as defined in Chapter Two: Literature Review. Institutional barriers are procedures or policies put in place by a university or learning institution that discourage adult participation (Cross, 1981). Arguably, lack of policies can also be a barrier to participation. In this instance, the lack of policies regarding the ongoing evaluation of PSPs has emerged from the results of this inquiry.

The results of this inquiry suggest that only two of the HEIs selected for this study presented evidence supporting the ongoing evaluation of the PSP program. There is not enough publicly available evidence supported by the results to indicate that the HEIs selected for this study are implementing Standard 8: Ongoing evaluation. More research is needed to determine if

these HEIs are implementing this standard. The results of this inquiry indicate that an institutional barrier is present, as evidenced by the lack of policy to maintain an ongoing evaluation of the PSP. The results of this inquiry provided minimal data supporting this standard.

Research Question One Conclusion

This section presented a discussion of the results for Research Question 1 (RQ1): Do postsecondary education programs that receive TPSID funding with SACS accreditation incorporate Think College standards, quality indicators, and benchmarks for inclusive higher education to provide support to students with ID based on publicly available information? Based on the results of this study, the answer to RQ1 is yes, to an extent.

Publicly available data supported evidence that a majority, over half, of the HEIs selected for this study presented evidence supporting at least 50% of the benchmarks for two of the eight standards, Standard 1: Academic access and Standard 3: Campus membership. In contrast, there was not enough evidence to support the notion that more than half of the HEIs selected for this study implemented at least 50% of the benchmarks for five of the remaining six standards. There was insufficient evidence indicating that standards four, five, six, seven, and eight were incorporated by more than half of the HEIs selected for this study. Standard 2: Career development was the only standard that presented evidence suggesting a split between the HEIs chosen for this study. Half of the HEIs presented evidence supporting over 50% of the benchmarks for standard two, while the other half of HEIs presented insufficient evidence.

Additionally, the evidence, or lack of evidence, supporting the Think College standards may serve as an indication of barriers present at each HEI. The results of standards three, five, and six presented evidence supporting the existence of the barrier, lack of university buy-in. Similarly,

evidence emerged supporting the existence of both institutional barriers (standard eight) and dispositional barriers (standard seven). Lack of financial stability and program funding are two additional barriers identified in the discussion of the results of standard seven. Finally, the results of standard one indicated that the barriers, limited course options and peer-segregation, may also be present. More research is needed to determine if these barriers are present at the HEIs selected for this inquiry.

In contrast, the results of this inquiry indicated that barriers to participation may have been removed or eliminated based on publicly identified policies in standard's one and three. Standard one presented evidence of the removal of standardized admission criteria. This could indicate that the barrier, lack of funding, has been alleviated. Standard one also presented evidence supporting the inclusion of students in mainstream classrooms, a practice which indicates inclusion. Finally, standard three results indicated that the barrier, inclusion on campuses within social organizations, has been eliminated or alleviated.

In conclusion, there is publicly available information providing evidence to support RQ1. Postsecondary education programs that receive TPSID funding with SACS accreditation do incorporate Think College standards, quality indicators, and benchmarks for inclusive higher education; however, five of the eight institutions selected for this study lack information supporting more than 50% of the benchmarks. The results of RQ1 also indicated both the existence and removal of barriers to participation. More information detailing the barrier, lack of information, based on each HEI, is presented in the discussion of Research Question Three following the discussion of Research Question Two in this chapter.

## Research Question Two

This section presents a discussion of the results for Research Question 2 (RQ2). R2 quarries, how are postsecondary education programs that receive TPSID funding with SACS accreditation categorized to align with program classification models as identified by Hart et al. (2004) as separate, mixed, or inclusive based on publicly available information. This section is organized in three sections formed on the three models, separate, mixed, or inclusive. Each section begins by introducing the program model and demonstrating how the conceptual framework and literature relate to the results of this study.

### Separate Programs.

Separate programs have four characteristics that distinguish them from mixed and inclusive programs. Each of the HEIs selected for this study are recipients of the TPSID grant. As discussed in Chapter Two: Literature Review, the goal of TPSID funding it to create inclusive postsecondary experiences for students with ID. As such, it would be surprising if PSPs investigated in this inquiry possessed any separate program characteristics.

Based on the results of this inquiry, HEI-A and HEI-C meet the criteria for one of the separate program characteristics. Both institutions serve between five to ten students in the PSP. Although this characteristic is identified in Chapter Two: Literature Review as a characteristic of separate programs, there is no research indicating the relationship between the level of inclusion of a PSP and the number of enrolled students. The other attributes of separate programs include non-inclusive policies such as no interaction with mainstream students, no mainstream interaction option, and a life-skills curriculum.

Researchers Hart et al. (2004) did not rank the characteristics of separate programs on inclusivity-influence; however, more research is needed to determine if the number of students in a PSP leads to less inclusion. Except for HEI-A and HEI-C, none of the HEIs selected for this inquiry presented separate program characteristics. As such, none of the HEIs can be categorized as separate programs based on publicly available information.

Mixed Programs.

Mixed programs have five characteristics. Each of the HEIs investigated in this study presented evidence on their websites, indicating that the PSP incorporates three of the five mixed program characteristics. These characteristics include shared social spaces with mainstream students, traditional course options, and life-skills course options. HEI-A, HEI-C, HEI-F, and HEI-H each identified that the institution serves between five and twenty students in the PSP, another characteristic of mixed programs. As noted above, further research is needed to determine if the number of students in a PSP directly impacts the level of inclusivity.

Four of the HEIs selected for this inquiry presented a higher percentage of mixed program characteristics on the websites than separate or inclusive characteristics. These HEIs include HEI-A, HEI-C, HEI-E, and HEI-H. This is surprising considering each of the HEIs selected for this inquiry receive TPSID funding and should present inclusive characteristics. It should be noted, however, that the results of this inquiry include only publicly available information. Therefore, these HEIs may practice inclusion, but based on the information on their websites, they present more mixed program characteristics than inclusive qualities.

Inclusive Programs.

There are four characteristics of inclusive programs. Each of the HEIs selected for this inquiry presented evidence supporting the implementation of two inclusive program characteristics. These characteristics include traditional course options, and students are provided: coaches, advisors, or resources based on independent and individual support. Six of the eight HEIs presented evidence supporting the inclusion of person-centered planning, as discussed in the Discussion of the Findings: Research Question One section of this chapter. Person-centered planning, a characteristic of inclusive programs as identified by Hart et al. (2004), is also a benchmark of Think College's standards, quality indicators, and benchmarks for inclusive higher education, along with traditional course options and providing individual student support.

Four of the HEIs investigated in this study present more inclusive program characteristics than mixed or separate characteristics. These HEIs include HEI-B, HEI-D, HEI-F, and HEI-G. None of the HEIs selected for this inquiry presented evidence incorporating the inclusive program characteristic, no segregation from mainstream students. As discussed in the Discussion of the Findings: Research Question One section of this dissertation, each of the HEIs selected for this inquiry enroll PSP students in a life-skills or transition course, effectively separating the students with ID from their peers with ID. More research is needed to determine why HEIs are implementing a life-skills/transition course when this has been identified in the research, as discussed in Chapter Two: Literature Review, as a non-inclusive practice.

Research Question Two Conclusion.

This section presented a discussion of the results for Research Question 2 (RQ2): How are post-secondary education programs that receive TPSID funding with SACS accreditation

categorized to align with program classification models as identified by Hart et al. (2004) as separate, mixed, or inclusive based on publicly available information? This section categorized the HEIs investigated in this study as separate, mixed, or inclusive. HEI-A, HEI-C, HEI-E, and HEI-H are categorized as mixed programs based on the information publicly provided on the institutional website. The other four HEIs selected for this inquiry, HEI-B. HEI-D, HEI-F, and HEI-G are categorized as inclusive programs based on the information publicly provided on the institutional website. As noted previously, each HEI selected for this study is a recipient of the TPSID grant. As such, all the PSPs investigated should incorporate inclusive practices. Based on publicly available information, only half of the HEIs investigated present inclusive program characteristics. More research is needed to determine if the HEIs are implementing more inclusive practices that are not noted publicly.

## Research Question Three

This section presents a discussion of the results for Research Question 3 (RQ3). R3 quarries, do postsecondary education programs that receive TPSID funding with SACS accreditation incorporate Think College standards, quality indicators, and benchmarks for inclusive higher education to provide support to students with ID based on publicly available information? This section is organized in eight sections, one section for each HEI investigated in this inquiry. The extent to which each HEI presented evidence supporting the Think College standards, quality indicators and benchmarks for best practices will be discussed followed by an analysis of the barrier to participation, lack of information, for each HEI. This section concludes with a summary of the discussion of the results for Research Question 3,  is the institutional barrier, lack of information, present as evidenced by the lack of publicly available information

detailing the Think College standards, quality indicators, and benchmarks for inclusive higher education?

HEI-A Discussion.

During the investigation of HEI-A, evidence was uncovered supporting thirty of the eighty-six benchmarks for inclusive higher education. As such, HEI-A presented evidence supporting 36% of the benchmarks. The results of the analysis of HEI-A indicated the implementation of over 50% of the benchmarks for Standard 1: Academic access and Standard 3: Campus membership. This information provides evidence that HEI-A is providing information on their website, detailing the support students can expect to receive in the areas of Academic Access and Campus Membership.

In contrast, less than 20% of information was available detailing the implementation of Standard 6: Coordination and collaboration, Standard 7: Sustainability, and Standard 8: Ongoing evaluation. More information is needed detailing how HEI-A supports these standards. As such, the results of this inquiry indicate that HEI-A does not provide sufficient information relating to how the Think College standards, quality indicators, and benchmarks for inclusive higher education are implemented. Therefore, based on the results of this inquiry, the barrier to participation, lack of information, as described in Chapter Two: Literature Review, is present in HEI-A.

HEI-B Discussion.

During the investigation of HEI-B, the results presented evidence supporting twenty-six of the eighty-six benchmarks for inclusive higher education. As such, the analysis of HEI-B presented evidence supporting 31% of the benchmarks. Compared to the other HEIs selected for

this study, HEI-B exhibited the least amount of information supporting the implementation of the Think College standards, quality indicators, and benchmarks for inclusive higher education. HEI-B presented evidence supporting the implementation of 75% of the benchmarks for Standard 3: Campus membership and 44% of the benchmarks for Standard 2: Academic access. This information provides evidence that HEI-B is providing some information on their website detailing the support students can expect to receive regarding campus membership.

In contrast, HEI-B presented evidence supporting 33% or less of the benchmarks for the remaining six standards. More information is needed detailing how HEI-B supports the remaining six standards. As such, the results of this inquiry indicate that HEI-B does not provide sufficient information detailing how the Think College standards, quality indicators, and benchmarks for inclusive higher education are implemented. Therefore, based on the results of this inquiry, the barrier to participation, lack of information, as described in Chapter Two: Literature Review, is present in HEI-B.

HEI-C Discussion.

During the investigation of HEI-C, the results presented evidence supporting forty-four of the eighty-six benchmarks for inclusive higher education. As such, HEI-C presented evidence supporting 51% of the benchmarks. HEI-C is one of three HEIs detailing over 50% of the benchmarks for inclusive higher education. HEI-C presented information on the institution's website confirming over 50% of the benchmarks for four of the standards, Standard 1: Academic access, Standard 2: Career development, Standard 3: Campus membership, and Standard 4: Self-determination. The results indicated that HEI-C supports all the benchmarks under Standard 3: Campus membership. These results suggest that HEI-C is effectively providing information

on their website detailing the campus life and social experience students can expect to receive while participating in the PSP. In contrast, HEI-C failed to specify adequate information confirming the implementation of standards five, six, seven, and eight.

More information is needed, detailing how HEI-C supports standards five, six, seven, and eight. Despite the need for more information regarding these standards, HEI-C presented evidence supporting over 51% of the benchmarks. As such, HEI-C provides just over half of the necessary information to determine if HEI-C is incorporating the standards, quality indicators, and benchmarks. HEI-C, in comparison to the other HEIs selected for this study, ranked third by providing the third-most amount of information detailing the benchmarks for inclusive higher education. Despite ranking 3rd for the most substantial amount of data, HEI-C is still missing 49% of the necessary information to clearly understand how the PSP is incorporating the Think College standards, quality indicators, and benchmarks. As such, based on the results of this inquiry, the barrier to participation, lack of information, as described in Chapter Two: Literature Review, is present in HEI-C.

HEI-D Discussion.

During the investigation of HEI-D, the results indicated that HEI-D incorporates thirty-eight of the eighty-six benchmarks for inclusive higher education. As such, HEI-D presented evidence supporting 44% of the benchmarks. HEI-D presented evidence incorporating a minimum of 50% or more of the benchmarks for Standard 1: Academic access, Standard 2: Career development, Standard 3: Campus membership, Standard 8: Ongoing evaluation. In comparison to the other HEIs selected for this study, HEI-D presented the highest percentage of benchmarks for both Standard 2: Career development, incorporating all of the benchmarks under

Standard 2, and Standard 8: Ongoing evaluation, integrating 50% of the benchmarks under Standard 8. This is notable because HEI-D only presented evidence supporting 44% of the Think College benchmarks, effectively placing HEI-D fourth out of eight in the line-up for the most significant percentage of benchmarks. It is interesting that despite its low percentage of benchmarks, it performed higher than the other HEIs in this study for two different standards.

These results indicate that HEI-D is providing some information on their website, detailing the support for career development students can expect while participating in the PSP. However, more information is needed describing how HEI-D supports all the standards except for Standard 2: Career development. As such, the results of this inquiry indicate that HEI-D does not provide sufficient information detailing how the Think College standards, quality indicators, and benchmarks for inclusive higher education are implemented. Therefore, based on the results of this inquiry, the barrier to participation, lack of information, as described in Chapter Two: Literature Review, is present in HEI-D.

HEI-E Discussion.

During the investigation of HEI-E, the results indicated that HEI-E incorporates thirty-two of the eighty-six benchmarks for inclusive higher education. As such, HEI-E presented evidence supporting 37% of the benchmarks. Data emerged during the investigation of HEI-E supporting over 50% of the benchmarks for two standards, Standard 1: Academic access and Standard 3: Campus membership. Despite its low overall benchmark percentage, data indicated that HEI-E incorporated 100% of the benchmarks for campus membership.

This is consistent with the results discussed in Section One of Chapter Five: Discussion. As noted in Section One of Chapter Five: Discussion, a majority of the HEIs incorporated 50%

of the benchmarks Standard 1: Academic access and Standard 3: Campus membership. These results indicate that HEI-E is providing adequate information on their website, detailing the campus life and social experience students can expect to receive while participating in the PSP. In contrast, HEI-E failed to present data supporting over 50% of the benchmarks for the remaining six standards: two, four, five, six, seven, and eight.

More information is needed detailing how HEI-E supports all the standards except for Standard 3: Campus membership. As such, the results of this inquiry indicate that HEI-E does not provide sufficient information detailing how the Think College standards, quality indicators, and benchmarks for inclusive higher education are implemented. Therefore, based on the results of this inquiry, the barrier to participation, lack of information, as described in Chapter Two: Literature Review, is present in HEI-E.

HEI-F Discussion.

During the investigation of HEI-F, the results indicated that HEI-F supports thirty-five of the eighty-six benchmarks for inclusive higher education. As such, HEI-F presented evidence supporting 41% of the benchmarks. HEI-F was the only institution selected for this study that did not offer any data supporting Standard 7: sustainability. When comparing the percentage of benchmarks for HEI-F amongst the standards, HEI-F presented the most evidence incorporating the benchmarks Standard 1: Academic access and Standard 3: Campus membership. Incorporating standards one and three are consistent with the findings discussed in the Research Question 1 section of Chapter Five: Discussion. This information provides evidence that HEI-F is providing information on their website, detailing the support students can expect to receive in the areas of academic access and campus membership.

More information is needed detailing how HEI-F incorporates each of the standards. As such, the results of this inquiry indicate that HEI-F does not provide sufficient information detailing how the Think College standards, quality indicators, and benchmarks for inclusive higher education are implemented. Therefore, based on the results of this inquiry, the barrier to participation, lack of information, as described in Chapter Two: Literature Review, is present in HEI-F.

HEI-G Discussion.

During the investigation of HEI-G, the results indicated that HEI-G incorporates sixty of the eighty-six benchmarks for inclusive higher education. As such, HEI-G presented evidence supporting 70% of the benchmarks. Compared to the other HEIs selected for this study, HEI-G exhibited the greatest amount of information supporting the implementation of the Think College standards, quality indicators, and benchmarks for inclusive higher education. In addition to incorporating the most significant number of benchmarks in comparison to the other HEIs selected for this inquiry, HEI-G out-performed the other HEIs in Standard 6: Coordination and collaboration and Standard 7: Sustainability. However, in contrast to some of the other the institutions selected for this study; HEI-G did not present evidence supporting the incorporation of 100% of the benchmarks for any of the eight standards.

As such, despite presenting evidence support 70% of the benchmarks, more research is needed to determine the extent to which HEI-G is incorporating the Think College standards, quality indicators, and benchmarks. Therefore, based on the results of this inquiry, the barrier to participation, lack of information, as described in Chapter Two: Literature Review, is present in HEI-G.

HEI-H Discussion.

During the investigation of HEI-H, data indicated that HEH-H incorporates fifty-four of the eighty-six benchmarks for inclusive higher education. As such, HEI-H presented evidence supporting 63% of the benchmarks. HEI-H incorporated the second-highest number of benchmarks, as evidenced by the information available on the institutional website, in comparison to the other HEIs selected for this inquiry. Fifty-percent or more of the benchmarks emerged in the data analysis for HEI-H in every standard except for Standard 8: Sustainability, in which HEI-H presented zero data supporting a sustainable plan for the PSP. Similar to HEI-C and HEI-E, HEI-H integrated all of the benchmarks in Standard 3: Campus Membership. As such, students have access to information detailing the campus-life experience they can expect to receive at HEI-H.

More information is needed detailing how HEI-H incorporates all the standards except for Standard 3: Campus Membership. As such, the results of this inquiry indicate that HEI-H does not provide sufficient information detailing how the Think College standards, quality indicators, and benchmarks for inclusive higher education are implemented. Therefore, based on the results of this inquiry, the barrier to participation, lack of information, as described in Chapter Two: Literature Review, is present in HEI-H.

Research Question Three Conclusion.

This section presented a discussion of the results for Research Question 3 (RQ3): Is the institutional barrier, lack of information, present es evidenced the lack of publicly available information detailing the Think College standards, quality indicators, and benchmarks for inclusive higher education? Based on the results of this study, the answer to RQ3 is yes, the

institutional barrier, lack of information, is present for all eight of the HEIs selected for this study.

In order of the most significant number of benchmarks to the smallest number of benchmarks, HEI-G had the most significant number of benchmarks, followed by HEI-H and HEI-C, the two other HEIs that incorporated 50% of more of the benchmarks. Following HEI-C, HEI-D and HEI-F integrated more than 40% of the benchmarks, concluding with HEI-E, HEI-A, and HEI-B, presenting evidence of no more than 37% of the benchmarks.

None of the HEIs investigated in this study presenting evidence supporting the incorporation of 100% of the benchmarks for inclusive higher education. As noted in the Research Question One, Chapter Five: Discussion section of this dissertation, all the HEIs consistently presented the most substantial amount of information detailing academic access and campus membership. Both of which were identified in Chapter Two: Literature review as areas within the university system that presented barriers to participation in higher education as indicated by university buy-in. It is encouraging that the results of this inquiry indicated that academic access and campus membership are areas that the HEIs are incorporating best practices for campus inclusion. These results may be an indication that program administrators are removing the campus buy-in institutional barrier as it relates to academic access and campus membership.

Although each HEI selected for this inquiry presented information regarding how the PSP is implementing the Think College standards, quality indicators, and benchmarks, a lack of information is still present, as evidenced by none of the HEIs presenting evidence supporting the incorporation of 100% of the benchmarks on their websites.

## Conclusion of the Discussion of the Findings

This section presented a discussion of the findings for this study, segmented by the research question. The purpose of this document analysis qualitative research study was to explore the publicly available information provided by universities with Postsecondary Education Programs (PSP) that have Southern Association of College and Schools (SACS) accreditation and receive TPSID grant funding. The discussions of the findings indicated that based on publicly available information, PSPs are providing minimal information on their websites detailing the level of program inclusivity. As such, the barrier to participation, lack of information is present. The following section, Implications for Practice for Practitioners, identifies suggestions for program administrators based on the results of this research study.

## Implications for Practice for Practitioners

This section presents implications for practice for practitioners, program administrators, and PSP staff members. Based on the results of this inquiry, there are three strategies practitioners may want to consider when implementing PSP initiatives at their respective institutions. These recommendations are further discussed in this section and include conducting an internal program analysis, a review of program webpages, and directing student and parent assessments.

Guided by the results of this study, the first recommendation for program administers includes an internal program assessment. The Think College standards, quality indicators, and benchmarks were designed for PSP practitioners to use to assess their programs for inclusivity.

By doing an internal assessment, program administrators will be able to identify the PSP programmatic strengths and weaknesses. Once program strengths and weaknesses are identified, program staff can make necessary changes to enhance or change programmatic policies to encourage inclusion.

After program administrators have completed an internal assessment, a programmatic webpage audit should take place. During the examination, program administrators should review each of their webpages related to the PSP. Program administrators should examine the webpages to identify areas of inaccuracy as well as evidence supporting the Think College standards, quality indicators, and benchmarks for inclusive higher education. Webpages should be updated regularly to ensure accurate and timely information is available to the public. During the data collection for this study, the researcher identified several inaccuracies between webpages associated with the same PSP. The researcher also discovered outdated information such as old application materials and outdated event calendars.

Practitioners should also take into consideration to the amount of information they chose to publish on their webpages. During the data collection stage of this research inquiry, the researcher observed that some of the HEIs had a minimal web presence compared to other institutions. HEI-B, for example, had twelve pages of data and presented the lowest inclusion rate. In contrast, HEI-D had fifty-two pages of data and presented information confirming the most substantial inclusion rate based on the Think College standards, quality indicators, and benchmarks.

In addition to the overall number of webpages and the amount of information distributed, practitioners should consider how much information they are publishing based on program area. For example, HEI-F had six pages detailing information recruiting students without ID to

volunteer for the peer-mentor program and resources for employers interested in hiring students with ID. In contrast, HEI-F only had four pages describing program details for prospective students with ID. Program administrators should consider the message they are sending by publishing more pages with information for employers and students without ID than pages detailing programmatic requirements, expectations, and expected experiences for students with ID. Since the PSP was designed to serve students with ID, could be argued that more information should exist recruiting students with ID to the PSP than information recruiting employers or peer mentors.

Finally, in addition to an internal program assessment and webpage audit, practitioners may consider administering a survey or conducting an informal interview with newly admitted students and their parents. During these assessment initiatives, program administrators should seek to understand the student and parent's online PSP search experience. The program administrator should look for strengths and weaknesses regarding the PSP's online presence and should solicit feedback from the population that most recently used their website: newly admitted students, and their parents. Program administrators should use this knowledge to update their webpages to enhance the online experience of students with ID and their families, ensuring the information published is accurate, timely, and appropriately identifies the inclusive areas within the program.

## Recommendations for Future Research

This section includes recommendations for future research. This section begins by identifying five proposals to extend the field of inclusive higher education and enhance the current literature surrounding the inclusion of students with intellectual disabilities in the

collegiate environment. Following recommendations to extend the field of study, this section concludes with three suggestions for future research to continue the investigation conducted for this study.

After analyzing the results of this research investigation, the researcher has identified four areas of future research to expand the literature on the inclusion of students with ID in higher education. The first research topic involves the relationship between the number of students enrolled in a PSP and the PSP's level of inclusion. As discussed in the Discussion of the Findings: Research Question Two section of this chapter, the number of students participating in a PSP is a characteristic of separate and mixed programs, but it is not a characteristic of inclusive programs. Researchers, Hart et al. (2004) do not identify the relationship between the number of students participating in a PSP and the impact of inclusion based on enrollment. Determining the relationship between student enrollment and inclusion could help program administrators make appropriate admissions decisions, enrolling the proper number of students to yield the desired level of inclusion.

The second, third, and fourth recommendations for future research enhance the literature regarding the inclusion of students with ID in PSPs relate to the Think College standards. As noted in the discussion of the findings for RQ1 and RQ2, the HEIs investigated in this study presented minimal information in three areas. These areas three areas of research include Standard 6: Coordination and collaboration, Standard 7: Sustainability, and Standard 8: Ongoing evaluation.

Both Standard 6: Coordination and collaboration, and Standard 7: Sustainability, the second and third recommended areas for future research, rely on campus buy-in and support for the PSP across campus. Without support from faculty, students,

staff, and administrators throughout the institution, the PSP administrators will not be able to implement the benchmarks identified in Standard 6: Coordination and collaboration and Standard 7: Sustainability. As discussed in Chapter Two: Literature Review of this dissertation, campus-buy has emerged in the literature as a barrier to program implementation for PSPs. As evidenced by the results of this study, PSPs are failing to provide information detailing standard six and standard seven, which may be an indication of a lack of campus buy-in. As such, campus buy-in regarding the implementation of PSPs must be explored. Program administrators must understand why campus buy-in a barrier is as well as identify ways to remove the barrier. Without the removal of this barrier, the full campus inclusion will not be achieved. As such, two future areas of research include sustainability and campus coordination and collaboration.

Similar to the discussion above detailing standard six and standard seven, the HEIs selected for this inquiry failed to present adequate information detailing the ongoing evaluation efforts, standard eight, of the PSPs. As such, Standard 8: Ongoing evaluation, is the fourth and final recommendations to extend the field of inclusive higher education and enhance the current literature surrounding the inclusion of students with intellectual disabilities in the collegiate environment. Not presenting information detailing Standard 8: Ongoing evaluation indicates that HEIs are not implementing program evaluation policies, or they are not publicly communicating their program evaluation efforts. More research is needed to determine why program administrators are not evaluating their programs or why they are not openly communicating their evaluation policies and results. Three of the benchmarks under Standard 8: Ongoing evaluation include student satisfaction, exit, and follow-up data. Program administrators must collect this assessment information and use the data to inform their program policies and practices. By

eliminating program evaluation efforts, program administrators are missing a vital opportunity for program improvement based on the student experience.

Fifth, and finally, the impact of parental involvement or lack of parental involvement in the lives of students with ID participating in PSP should be explored. The results of this study indicated that only two of the institutions presented evidence of a policy detailing the student's control over their parent's participation in their education. Additionally, none of the HEIs demonstrated information on their website, clearly defining parental and student roles. More research is needed surrounding the involvement of parents and families in the lives of students with ID participating in PSP. Research involving parental involvement could include inclusion and success rates of students in relation parental involvement or an investigation collecting information on parental involvement policies across multiple institutions.

There are three recommendations to extend the research inquiry investigated for this study. Each of the proposals includes investigating the PSPs beyond exploring publicly available data. As noted in the Discussion of the Findings section of this chapter, the data collected for this study only included publicly available information. Limiting the type of data to publicly available information was necessary based on the purpose of this study: to explore the publicly available information provided by universities with Postsecondary Education Programs (PSP) that have Southern Association of College and Schools (SACS) accreditation and receive TPSID grant funding.

As a result of this limitation, the researcher was unable to determine the extent to which PSPs incorporated the Think College standards, quality indicators, and benchmarks for inclusive higher education outside of publicly available information. To extend this study, the research recommends soliciting information from three groups of people, first program administrators,

second, students with intellectual disabilities who participate in the PSP, and lastly, parents of students with ID who participated in the PSP. By interviewing these groups of people, further research can determine the level of program inclusivity from the perspective of the three parties involved in the PSP experience. This data could be used to inform program administrators of varying strategies to enhance program experiences and amend policy that inhibits campus inclusion.

## Conclusions

This section concludes Chapter Five – Discussion. This chapter included a summary of the study, a discussion of the findings, implications for practitioners, and recommendations for future research. In concluding this chapter, the research questions presented in this study will be answered, followed by a summary of the implications for practitioners and recommendations for future research.

Based on the results of this study, the answer to RQ1, do postsecondary education programs that receive TPSID funding with SACS accreditation incorporate Think College standards, quality indicators, and benchmarks for inclusive higher education to provide support to students with ID based on publicly available information: is yes - to an extent. Publicly available data supported evidence that a majority, over half, of the HEIs selected for this study presented evidence supporting at least 50% of the benchmarks for two of the eight standards, Standard 1: Academic Access and Standard 3: Campus Membership. In contrast, there was not enough evidence to support the notion that more than half of the HEIs selected for this study implemented at least 50% of the benchmarks for five of the remaining six standards. Postsecondary education programs that receive TPSID funding with SACS

accreditation do incorporate Think College standards, quality indicators, and benchmarks for inclusive higher education; however, five of the eight institutions selected for this study lack information supporting more than 50% of the benchmarks.

To answer RQ2, how are postsecondary education programs that receive TPSID funding with SACS accreditation categorized to align with program classification models as identified by Hart et al. (2004) as separate, mixed, or inclusive based on publicly available information, the HEIs selected for this inquiry were categorized as separate, mixed, or inclusive. Half of the HEIs were categorized as mixed programs, and the other half of HEIs were categorized as inclusive. More research is needed to determine if the HEIs are implemented more inclusive practices than those that noted publicly.

Based on the results of this study, the answer to RQ3, do postsecondary education programs that receive TPSID funding with SACS accreditation incorporate Think College standards, quality indicators, and benchmarks for inclusive higher education to provide support to students with ID based on publicly available information, is yes; the institutional barrier, lack of information is present for all eight of the HEIs selected for this study. None of the HEIs investigated in this study presenting evidence supporting the incorporation of 100% of the benchmarks for inclusive higher education.

Three strategies for practitioners emerged based on the results of this study. These strategies include conducting an internal program analysis, a review of program webpages, and finally, student and parent assessments. Program administrators should consider implementing these strategies to enhance the experience of students with ID and their inclusion in higher education. Implementing these strategies could remove barriers to participation for students with ID.

Recommendations for future research include proposals to extend the field of study surrounding the inclusion of students with ID in higher education as well as suggestions to extend the inquiry in this study. To extend the field of study, research can be conducted to investigate the relationship between enrollment numbers and the level of inclusivity, campus buy-in for the implementation of PSPs, and the participation of parents in the lives of students with ID. To extend the research conducted for this study, data collected should transcend public information. Data should be obtained from students with ID, program administrators, and parents of students with ID. By interviewing these groups of people, further research can determine the level of program inclusivity from the perspective of the three parties involved in the PSP experience. This data could be used to inform program administrators of way to enhance program experiences and amend policy that inhibits campus inclusion.

This study addressed the problem, the availability of public information, for students with intellectual disabilities and their families, regarding postsecondary education programs at select universities. Further research is needed to enhance the inclusion of students with intellectual disabilities in higher education. More programs supporting students with ID are expected to emerge in higher education. This anticipated increase in programs for students with ID elevates the importance of adequately understanding and analyzing the inclusion of students with intellectual disabilities in higher education.

# APPENDIX A- DOCUMENT COLLECTION GUIDE

Table 30

Document Collection Plan

| **Document Content** | **Document type (**institutional webpage data, institutional report data, or government report data) | **HEI-A Document Available Y/N** | **HEI-B Document Available Y/N** | **HEI-C Document Available Y/N** | **HEI-D Document Available Y/N** | **HEI-E Document Available Y/N** | **HEI-F Document Available Y/N** | **HEI-G Document Available Y/N** | **HEI -1 Document Available Y/N** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| PSP Website | | | | | | | | | |
| PSP Mission Statement | | | | | | | | | |
| PSP Vision Statement | | | | | | | | | |
| Admission Criteria | | | | | | | | | |
| Application | | | | | | | | | |
| Housing | | | | | | | | | |
| Support Services | | | | | | | | | |
| FAQ's | | | | | | | | | |
| TPSID Annual Report | | | | | | | | | |
| Board of Governers Report | | | | | | | | | |
| PSP Annual Report | | | | | | | | | |
| Student Testimonies | | | | | | | | | |

| **Document Content** | **Document type** (institutional webpage data, institutional report data, or government report data) | **HEI-A Document Available Y/N** | **HEI-B Document Available Y/N** | **HEI-C Document Available Y/N** | **HEI-D Document Available Y/N** | **HEI-E Document Available Y/N** | **HEI-F Document Available Y/N** | **HEI-G Document Available Y/N** | **HEI -1 Document Available Y/N** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Parent Testimonies | | | | | | | | | |
| Welcome message | | | | | | | | | |

# APPENDIX B – WEBSITE DATA COLLECTION GUIDE

Table 31

Website Data Collection Guide

| | **HEI-A Document Available Y/N** | **HEI-B Document Available Y/N** | **HEI-C Document Available Y/N** | **HEI-D Document Available Y/N** | **HEI-E Document Available Y/N** | **HEI-F Document Available Y/N** | **HEI-G Document Available Y/N** | **HEI -1 Document Available Y/N** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mission | | | | | | | | |
| History | | | | | | | | |
| Testimonials | | | | | | | | |
| FAQs | | | | | | | | |
| Housing | | | | | | | | |
| Admission Criteria | | | | | | | | |
| Application | | | | | | | | |
| Staff Directory | | | | | | | | |
| TPSID Information | | | | | | | | |
| Financial aid | | | | | | | | |
| Scholarships | | | | | | | | |
| Support Services | | | | | | | | |
| Annual Report | | | | | | | | |
| Upcoming Events | | | | | | | | |
| Contact information | | | | | | | | |
| Student Code of Conduct | | | | | | | | |
| Curriculum | | | | | | | | |
| Student handbook | | | | | | | | |

# APPENDIX C – THINK COLLEGE STANDARDS QUALITY INDICATORS AND BENCHMARKS ANALYSIS GUIDE

Tables 30-37 were used to guide the analysis of Research Question 1. Tables 30-41 were developed using the Think College Standards, Quality indicators, and Benchmarks for inclusive higher education and the Inclusive Higher Education Assessment (Grigal, Hart, & Weir, 2012).

Table 32

Document Collection Guide, Standard 1

| | **Document type** (institutional webpage data, institutional report data, or government report data) | **HEI-A Document(s) Available Y/N** | **HEI-B Document(s) Available Y/N** | **HEI-C Document(s) Available Y/N** | **HEI-D Document(s) Available Y/N** | **HEI-E Document(s) Available Y/N** | **HEI-F Document(s) Available Y/N** | **HEI-G Document(s) Available Y/N** | **HEI-H Document(s) Available Y/N** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Quality Indicator 1.1 Provide access to a wide array of college course types that are attended by students without disabilities. | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.1A Enrollment in non-credit courses attended by students without ID | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.1B Auditing | | | | | | | | | |

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| college courses attended by students without ID. | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.1C Enrollment in credit-bearing courses attended by students without ID when aligned with the student's plan. | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.1D Access to existing courses | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.1E Course access is not restricted to a pre-determined list | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.1F Courses relate to | | | | | | | | | |

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| personal, academic, or career goals. | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.1G Collection of objective evaluation data on course participation | | | | | | | | | |
| Quality Indicator 1.2 Address issues that may impact college course participation, including: | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.2A Policies regarding placement tests, ability, and prerequisites that negatively impact college course participation. | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.2B Access and instruction to use | | | | | | | | | |

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| public or personal transportation. | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.2C Access to college disability services. | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.2D Access and instruction to assistive technology | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.2E Access to educational coaches who receive training. | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.2F Access to peer support. | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.2G Faculty training on universal design. | | | | | | | | | |
| Quality Indicator 1.3: Provide students with the skills to access ongoing adult learning opportunities, including: | | | | | | | | | |

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| 1.3A Knowledge of the adult learning opportunities available in the community. | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.3B Knowledge of resources to fund adult learning opportunities. | | | | | | | | | |

Table 33

Document Collection Guide, Standard 2

| | **Document type** (institutional webpage data, institutional report data, or government report data) | **HEI-A Document(s) Available Y/N** | **HEI-B Document(s) Available Y/N** | **HEI-C Document(s) Available Y/N** | **HEI-D Document(s) Available Y/N** | **HEI-E Document(s) Available Y/N** | **HEI-F Document(s) Available Y/N** | **HEI-G Document(s) Available Y/N** | **HEI-H Document(s) Available Y/N** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Quality Indicator 2.1: Provide students with the supports and experiences necessary to seek and sustain competitive employment including: | | | | | | | | | |
| 2.1A Implement person-centered planning to identify career goals. | | | | | | | | | |
| 2.1B Access to job coaches who | | | | | | | | | |

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| receive ongoing training. | | | | | | | | | |
| 2.1C Participation in internships or work-based training with people without disabilities. | | | | | | | | | |
| 2.1D Opportunity to participate in service learning | | | | | | | | | |
| 2.1E Participation in paid work experiences related to career interest | | | | | | | | | |
| 2.1F Connection with communit | | | | | | | | | |

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| y and adult service provides to sustain employment. | | | | | | | | | |
| 2.1G Collection of objective evaluation data on student employment | | | | | | | | | |

Table 34

Document Collection Guide, Standard 3

| | **Document type (**institutional webpage data, institutional report data, or government report data) | **HEI-A Document Available Y/N** | **HEI-B Document Available Y/N** | **HEI-C Document Available Y/N** | **HEI-D Document Available Y/N** | **HEI-E Document Available Y/N** | **HEI-F Document Available Y/N** | **HEI-G Document Available Y/N** | **HEI -H Document Available Y/N** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Quality Indicator 3.1: Provide access to and support for participation in existing social organizations, facilities, and technology, including: | | | | | | | | | |
| 3.1A Campus programs | | | | | | | | | |
| 3.1B Residence life facilities & activities and off campus options | | | | | | | | | |
| 3.1C Technology and social communication | | | | | | | | | |
| 3.1D Social activities facilities by | | | | | | | | | |

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| students without disabilities | | | | | | | | | |

Table 35

Document Collection Guide, Standard 4

| | **Document type** (institutional webpage data, institutional report data, or government report data) | **HEI-A Document Available Y/N** | **HEI-B Document Available Y/N** | **HEI-C Document Available Y/N** | **HEI-D Document Available Y/N** | **HEI-E Document Available Y/N** | **HEI-F Document Available Y/N** | **HEI-G Document Available Y/N** | **HEI -H Document Available Y/N** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Quality Indicator 4.1: Ensure student involvement in and control of the establishment of personal goals that: | | | | | | | | | |
| 4.1A Reflect student interests and desires | | | | | | | | | |
| 4.1 B Are reviewed regularly and modified as needed based on the student's preferences | | | | | | | | | |
| 4.1C Address accommodations and technology needs. | | | | | | | | | |

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| 4.1D Lead to outcomes desired by the student | | | | | | | | | |
| 4.1E Reflect family input when desired by the student. | | | | | | | | | |
| Quality Indicator 4.2: Ensure the development and promotion of the self-determination skills of students with intellectual disabilities as evidenced by students: | | | | | | | | | |
| 4.2A: Monitoring their own progress toward their personal goals. | | | | | | | | | |
| 4.2B: Directing their choice of courses, activities, and employment experiences. | | | | | | | | | |
| 4.2C: Being involved in course registration, accommodation requests, and payment of tuition. | | | | | | | | | |

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| 4.2D: Being involved in all aspects of employment, such as creating a resume, setting up job interviews, etc. | | | | | | | | | |
| 4.2E: Interacting directly with faculty and employers including the articulation of accommodations | | | | | | | | | |
| 4.2F: Managing personal schedules | | | | | | | | | |
| Quality Indicator 4.3: Have a stated process for family involvement that reflects: | | | | | | | | | |
| 4.3A: Clearly defined roles and responsibilities for parents and students. | | | | | | | | | |

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| 4.3B: A process for the provision of information to parents. | | | | | | | | | |
| 4.3C: Student control over how parents are involved with their experience. | | | | | | | | | |
| 4.3D: Adherence to the guidelines set forth by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). | | | | | | | | | |

Table 36

Document Collection Guide, Standard 5

| | **Document type (**institutional webpage data, institutional report data, or government report data) | **HEI-A Document Available Y/N** | **HEI-B Document Available Y/N** | **HEI-C Document Available Y/N** | **HEI-D Document Available Y/N** | **HEI-E Document Available Y/N** | **HEI-F Document Available Y/N** | **HEI-G Document Available Y/N** | **HEI -H Document Available Y/N** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Quality Indicator 5.1: As required in the HEOA, identify outcomes or offer an educational credential (e.g., degree or certificate) established by the institution for students enrolled in the program, including assurance that: | | | | | | | | | |
| 5.1A: Outcomes established by the program for achievement of an educational credential are measurable. | | | | | | | | | |
| 5.1B: Program outcomes are publicly available (e.g., brochure, website, program application) | | | | | | | | | |
| 5.1C: Courses and internships are | | | | | | | | | |

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| related to achieving and maintaining gainful employment | | | | | | | | | |
| 5.1D: Outcomes/credentials established by the program also address engagement in college community life | | | | | | | | | |
| Quality Indicator 5.2: Provide access to academic advising that: | | | | | | | | | |
| 5.2A: Uses person-centered planning in the development of a student's course of study. | | | | | | | | | |
| 5.2B: Reflects the institution's policy for determining whether a student enrolled in the program is making satisfactory academic progress. | | | | | | | | | |
| 5.2C: Is aligned with the educational credential established by the institution for | | | | | | | | | |

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| students enrolled in the program. | | | | | | | | | |
| Quality Indicator 5.3: Provide access to college campus resources, including: | | | | | | | | | |
| 5.3A: Admissions, registration, and orientation | | | | | | | | | |
| 5.3B: College identification cards. | | | | | | | | | |
| 5.3C: Health and counseling centers, athletic center, information technology, career services, dining services, Greek system, clubs, student organizations, student government, etc. | | | | | | | | | |
| 5.3D: Co-curricular activities including practicum and | | | | | | | | | |

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| learning communities | | | | | | | | | |
| 5.3E: Support for participating in existing on- and off-campus university-owned or university-affiliated housing | | | | | | | | | |
| 5.3F: Orientation, training, and resources for parents of incoming students | | | | | | | | | |
| 5.3G: Campus shuttle buses to different campuses and the community | | | | | | | | | |
| Quality Indicator 5.4: Collaborate with faculty and staff, including: | | | | | | | | | |
| 5.4A: Accessing existing professional development initiatives on campus | | | | | | | | | |

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5.4B: Offering expertise of the program staff and students to faculty, other college personnel, and students through trainings, course presentations, etc. | | | | | | | | | |
| Quality Indicator 5.5: Adhere to the college's schedules, policies and procedures, public relations, and communications as evidenced by: | | | | | | | | | |
| 5.5A: Review of the college's code of conduct with students. | | | | | | | | | |
| 5.5B: Participation of students in courses and/or social events. | | | | | | | | | |
| 5.5C: Participation of students in graduation exercises and experiences. | | | | | | | | | |
| 5.5D: Observation of college vacations and holidays, not local education agencies | | | | | | | | | |

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| 5.5E: Recognition of students with intellectual disabilities as a representative population in the IHE's diversity plan | | | | | | | | | |

Table 37

Document Collection Guide, Standard 6

| | **Document type** (institutional webpage data, institutional report data, or government report data) | **HEI-A Document Available Y/N** | **HEI-B Document Available Y/N** | **HEI-C Document Available Y/N** | **HEI-D Document Available Y/N** | **HEI-E Document Available Y/N** | **HEI-F Document Available Y/N** | **HEI-G Document Available Y/N** | **HEI -H Document Available Y/N** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Quality Indicator 6.1: Establish connections and relationships with key college/university departments, as evidenced by: | | | | | | | | | |
| 6.1A: Students with ID effectively using campus resources | | | | | | | | | |
| 6.1B: Program staff effectively using college infrastructure. | | | | | | | | | |
| 6.1C: Program staff being aware of the governance | | | | | | | | | |

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| and administrative structures of the college or university that may impact the program. | | | | | | | | | |
| 6.1D: Program staff participating in faculty/staff governance or committees | | | | | | | | | |
| Quality Indicator 6.2: Have a designated person to coordinate program-specific services of the comprehensive postsecondary education program, including: | | | | | | | | | |
| 6.2A: Scheduling and implementing interagency team meetings | | | | | | | | | |
| 6.2B: Conducting person-centered planning and ensuring that the results of | | | | | | | | | |

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| those meetings are infused into the students' daily activities. | | | | | | | | | |
| 6.2C: Ensuring that data collection and program evaluation activities occur. | | | | | | | | | |
| 6.2D: Providing outreach to families. | | | | | | | | | |
| 6.2E: Providing training and supervision for educational coaches, job coaches, and job developers. | | | | | | | | | |

Table 38

Document Collection Guide, Standard 7

| | **Document type (**institutional webpage data, institutional report data, or government report data) | **HEI-A Document Available Y/N** | **HEI-B Document Available Y/N** | **HEI-C Document Available Y/N** | **HEI-D Document Available Y/N** | **HEI-E Document Available Y/N** | **HEI-F Document Available Y/N** | **HEI-G Document Available Y/N** | **HEI -H Document Available Y/N** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Quality Indicator 7.1: Use diverse sources of funding, including: | | | | | | | | | |
| 7.1A: Maintaining a relationship to the campus financial aid office. | | | | | | | | | |
| 7.1B: Ensuring that eligible students and families apply for financial aid. | | | | | | | | | |
| 7.1C: Providing information to students on | | | | | | | | | |

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| sources of funds for tuition and other costs. | | | | | | | | | |
| 7.1D: Using state funds, IDEA funds, developmental services agency funds, family funds, private funds, and federal grant funds to provide core funding for the program. | | | | | | | | | |
| Quality Indicator 7.2: Have a planning and advisory team which: | | | | | | | | | |
| 7.2A: Includes representatives from the college, including administrators, disability services, and faculty. | | | | | | | | | |
| 7.2B: Supports collaboration between the college and | | | | | | | | | |

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| the program and with outside entities | | | | | | | | | |
| 7.2C: Addresses program policies and practices (costs, access, partnerships) and student outcomes (data review) to ensure sustainability | | | | | | | | | |
| 7.2D: Communicates regularly | | | | | | | | | |

Table 39

Document Collection Guide, Standard 8

| | **Document type (**institutional webpage data, institutional report data, or government report data) | **HEI-A Document Available Y/N** | **HEI-B Document Available Y/N** | **HEI-C Document Available Y/N** | **HEI-D Document Available Y/N** | **HEI-E Document Available Y/N** | **HEI-F Document Available Y/N** | **HEI-G Document Available Y/N** | **HEI -H Document Available Y/N** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Quality Indicator 8.1: Conduct evaluation of services and outcomes on a regular basis, including: | | | | | | | | | |
| 8.1A: Collection of data from key stakeholders, such as students with and without disabilities, parents, faculty, disability services, and | | | | | | | | | |

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| other college staff | | | | | | | | | |
| 8.1B: Collection of student satisfaction data. | | | | | | | | | |
| 8.1C: Collection of student exit data | | | | | | | | | |
| 8.1D: Collection of student follow-up data. | | | | | | | | | |
| 8.1E: Review of all data compiled by the advisory team and other stakeholders. | | | | | | | | | |
| 8.1F: Implementation of program changes as a result of data review | | | | | | | | | |

# APPENDIX D – RESEARCH QUESTION ONE ANALYSIS PLAN

Tables 38-45 were used to analyze the documents collected from each HEI. Tables 43-50 were developed using the Think College Standards, Quality indicators, and Benchmarks for inclusive higher education and the Inclusive Higher Education Assessment (Grigal, Hart, & Weir, 2012).

Table 40

Research Question 1 Analysis Plan Standard 1

| **Quality Indicator 1.1 Provide access to a wide array of college course types that are attended by students without disabilities.** | **Evidence** |
|---|---|
| 1.1A Enrollment in non-credit courses attended by students without ID | |
| 1.1B Auditing college courses attended by students without ID. | |
| 1.1C Enrollment in credit-bearing courses attended by students without ID when aligned with the student's plan. | |
| 1.1D Access to existing courses | |
| 1.1E Course access is not restricted to a pre-determined list | |
| 1.1F Courses relate to personal, academic, or career goals. | |
| 1.1G Collection of objective evaluation data on course participation | |
| **Quality Indicator 1.2 Address issues that may impact college course participation, including:** | **Evidence** |
| 1.2A Policies regarding placement tests, ability, and prerequisites that negatively impact college course participation. | |
| 1.2B Access and instruction to use public or personal transportation. | |
| 1.2C Access to college disability services. | |
| 1.2D Access and instruction to assistive technology | |
| 1.2E Access to educational coaches who receive training. | |
| 1.2F Access to peer support. | |
| 1.2G Faculty training on universal design. | |
| **Quality Indicator 1.3: Provide students with the skills to access ongoing adult learning opportunities, including:** | **Evidence** |
| 1.3A Knowledge of the adult learning opportunities available in the community. | |
| 1.3B Knowledge of resources to fund adult learning opportunities. | |

Table 41

Research Question 1 Analysis Plan Standard 2

| **Quality Indicator 2.1: Provide students with the supports and experiences necessary to seek and sustain competitive employment including:** | **Evidence** |
|---|---|
| 2.1A Implement person-centered planning to identify career goals. | |
| 2.1B Access to job coaches who receive ongoing training. | |
| 2.1C Participation in internships or work-based training with people without disabilities. | |
| 2.1D Opportunity to participate in service learning | |
| 2.1E Participation in paid work experiences related to career interest | |
| 2.1F Connection with community and adult service provides to sustain employment. | |
| 2.1G Collection of objective evaluation data on student employment | |

Table 42

Research Question 1 Analysis Plan Standard 3

| **Quality Indicator 3.1: Provide access to and support for participation in existing social organizations, facilities, and technology, including:** | **Evidence** |
|---|---|
| 3.1A Campus programs | |
| 3.1B Residence life facilities & activities and off campus options | |
| 3.1C Technology and social communication | |
| 3.1D Social activities facilities by students without disabilities | |

Table 43

Research Question 1 Analysis Plan Standard 4

| **Quality Indicator 4.1: Ensure student involvement in and control of the establishment of personal goals that:** | **Evidence** |
|---|---|
| 4.1A Reflect student interests and desires | |
| 4.1 B Are reviewed regularly and modified as needed based on the student's preferences | |
| 4.1C Address accommodations and technology needs. | |
| 4.1D Lead to outcomes desired by the student | |
| 4.1E Reflect family input when desired by the student. | |
| **Quality Indicator 4.2: Ensure the development and promotion of the self-determination skills of students with intellectual disabilities as evidenced by students:** | **Evidence** |
| 4.2A: Monitoring their own progress toward their personal goals. | |
| 4.2B: Directing their choice of courses, activities, and employment experiences. | |
| 4.2C: Being involved in course registration, accommodation requests, and payment of tuition. | |
| 4.2D: Being involved in all aspects of employment, such as creating a resume, setting up job interviews, etc. | |
| 4.2E: Interacting directly with faculty and employers including the articulation of accommodations | |
| 4.2F: Managing personal schedules | |
| **Quality Indicator 4.3: Have a stated process for family involvement that reflects:** | **Evidence** |

| | |
|---|---|
| 4.3A: Clearly defined roles and responsibilities for parents and students. | |
| 4.3B: A process for the provision of information to parents. | |
| 4.3C: Student control over how parents are involved with their experience. | |
| 4.3D: Adherence to the guidelines set forth by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). | |

Table 44

Research Question 1 Analysis Plan Standard 5

| **Quality Indicator 5.1: As required in the HEOA, identify outcomes or offer an educational credential (e.g., degree or certificate) established by the institution for students enrolled in the program, including assurance that:** | **Evidence** |
|---|---|
| 5.1A: Outcomes established by the program for achievement of an educational credential are measurable. | |
| 5.1B: Program outcomes are publicly available (e.g., brochure, website, program application) | |
| 5.1C: Courses and internships are related to achieving and maintaining gainful employment | |
| 5.1D: Outcomes/credentials established by the program also address engagement in college community life | |
| **Quality Indicator 5.2: Provide access to academic advising that:** | |
| 5.2A: Uses person-centered planning in the development of a student's course of study. | |
| 5.2B: Reflects the institution's policy for determining whether a student enrolled in the program is making satisfactory academic progress. | |
| 5.2C: Is aligned with the educational credential established by the institution for students enrolled in the program. | |
| **Quality Indicator 5.3: Provide access to college campus resources, including:** | **Evidence** |
| 5.3A: Admissions, registration, and orientation | |
| 5.3B: College identification cards. | |

| | |
|---|---|
| 5.3C: Health and counseling centers, athletic center, information technology, career services, dining services, Greek system, clubs, student organizations, student government, etc. | |
| 5.3D: Co-curricular activities including practicum and learning communities | |
| 5.3E: Support for participating in existing on- and off-campus university-owned or university-affiliated housing | |
| 5.3F: Orientation, training, and resources for parents of incoming students | |
| 5.3G: Campus shuttle buses to different campuses and the community | |
| **Quality Indicator 5.4: Collaborate with faculty and staff, including:** | **Evidence** |
| 5.4A: Accessing existing professional development initiatives on campus | |
| 5.4B: Offering expertise of the program staff and students to faculty, other college personnel, and students through trainings, course presentations, etc. | |
| **Quality Indicator 5.5: Adhere to the college's schedules, policies and procedures, public relations, and communications as evidenced by:** | **Evidence** |
| 5.5A: Review of the college's code of conduct with students. | |
| 5.5B: Participation of students in courses and/or social events. | |
| 5.5C: Participation of students in graduation exercises and experiences. | |
| 5.5D: Observation of college vacations and holidays, not local education agencies | |
| 5.5E: Recognition of students with intellectual disabilities as a representative population in the IHE's diversity plan | |

Table 45

Research Question 1 Analysis Plan Standard 1

| **Quality Indicator 6.1: Establish connections and relationships with key college/university departments, as evidenced by:** | **Evidence** |
|---|---|
| 6.1A: Students with ID effectively using campus resources | |
| 6.1B: Program staff effectively using college infrastructure. | |
| 6.1C: Program staff being aware of the governance and administrative structures of the college or university that may impact the program. | |
| 6.1D: Program staff participating in faculty/staff governance or committees | |
| **Quality Indicator 6.2: Have a designated person to coordinate program-specific services of the comprehensive postsecondary education program, including:** | **Evidence** |
| 6.2A: Scheduling and implementing interagency team meetings | |
| 6.2B: Conducting person-centered planning and ensuring that the results of those meetings are infused into the students' daily activities. | |
| 6.2C: Ensuring that data collection and program evaluation activities occur. | |
| 6.2D: Providing outreach to families. | |
| 6.2E: Providing training and supervision for educational coaches, job coaches, and job developers. | |

Table 46

Research Question 1 Analysis Plan Standard 7

| **Quality Indicator 7.1: Use diverse sources of funding, including:** | **Evidence** |
|---|---|
| 7.1A: Maintaining a relationship to the campus financial aid office. | |
| 7.1B: Ensuring that eligible students and families apply for financial aid. | |
| 7.1C: Providing information to students on sources of funds for tuition and other costs. | |
| 7.1D: Using state funds, IDEA funds, developmental services agency funds, family funds, private funds, and federal grant funds to provide core funding for the program. | |
| **Quality Indicator 7.2: Have a planning and advisory team which:** | **Evidence** |
| 7.2A: Includes representatives from the college, including administrators, disability services, and faculty. | |
| 7.2B: Supports collaboration between the college and the program and with outside entities | |
| 7.2C: Addresses program policies and practices (costs, access, partnerships) and student outcomes (data review) to ensure sustainability | |
| 7.2D: Communicates regularly | |

Table 47

Research Question 1 Analysis Plan Standard 1

| **Quality Indicator 8.1: Conduct evaluation of services and outcomes on a regular basis, including:** | **Evidence** |
|---|---|
| 8.1A: Collection of data from key stakeholders, such as students with and without disabilities, parents, faculty, disability services, and other college staff | |
| 8.1B: Collection of student satisfaction data. | |
| 8.1C: Collection of student exit data | |
| 8.1D: Collection of student follow-up data. | |
| 8.1E: Review of all data compiled by the advisory team and other stakeholders. | |
| 8.1F: Implementation of program changes as a result of data review | |

# APPENDIX E – RESEARCH QUESTION TWO ANALYSIS PLAN

Table 48

Research Question 2 Analysis Plan

| **Program Category** | **Known Characteristics** | **Is characteristic present?** | **Evidence of Characteristic** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Separate Programs | No interaction with mainstream students | | |
| | No "mainstream interaction" option | | |
| | Curriculum basis: life skills, employment training, community engagement | | |
| | Serve 5-10 students | | |
| Mixed Programs | Semi-regular interaction with mainstream students | | |
| | Shared social spaces with mainstream students | | |
| | Traditional course options | | |
| | Life-skills course options | | |
| | Serve 5-20 students | | |
| Inclusive Programs | Curriculum is based on person-centered-planning | | |
| | Traditional course options | | |
| | No segregation from mainstream students | | |
| | Students are provided: coaches, advisors, or resources based on independent and individual support | | |

# APPENDIX F – RESEARCH QUESTION THREE ANALYSIS PLAN

Table 49

Research Question 3 Analysis Plan

| **HEI** | **How many (of the 86) Quality indicators are present?** | **Percentage of available Quality indicators.** |
|---|---|---|
| HEI - A | | |
| HEI - B | | |
| HEI - C | | |
| HEI - D | | |
| HEI - E | | |
| HEI - F | | |
| HEI – G | | |
| HEI – H | | |

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