SHARED ADVOCACY: A MULTIPLE-CASE EXAMINATION OF PRACTICES

SUPPORTING POSTSECONDARY STUDENTS WITH

LEARNING AND ATTENTION DIFFERENCES

by

Julie McNair

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

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ABSTRACT

This multiple-case study examined the practices of academic support providers who offered supplemental services for students with learning or attention differences at postsecondary institutions. Students with learning or attention differences transitioning to postsecondary institutions may need assistance developing self-advocacy through practice. The study employed self-determination theory and positive psychology (Deci & Ryan, 2002; Seligman, 2011), asking the central research question, "How do academic support providers at postsecondary institutions offer shared-advocacy, promoting intrinsic motivation through accommodative intervention strategies for students with learning disabilities and/or ADHD?" Previously unheard perspectives of academic support providers at five postsecondary institutions presented these insights. Analysis occurred through description, classification, and interpretation of the data collected from interviews, focus groups and supporting documentation. Triangulation of inputs formed a picture of each institution, embedded in the interactions between support providers, the environment, and those they collaborated with to provide support for students with learning and attention differences (Yin, 2014). Cross-case analysis from each of five postsecondary institutions yielded a synthesized understanding of practitioner responses that facilitate self-determination. Through analysis, common themes emerged including connectivity, accessibility, eligibility, responsivity, and extended support. Findings described the process for establishing new services, types of accommodations made available, means for disseminating accessibility of new options, effective practices of academic support providers and circumstances that worked in their favor when initiating new support systems.

Keywords: accommodations, advocacy, disclosure, eligibility, perceptions, persistence, positive psychology, postsecondary, self-advocacy, self-determination, services, support

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Dedication

Dr. Carol Cook-Koenig: you showed me that with determination I could accomplish anything I am called to do. With God's direction and strength, and much encouragement from you as my mentor and my mother, I trust that I have contributed a work other practitioners will value.

Randell, I would not have made it without your supportive patience and sacrifice. We still make a great team after all these years! N & N, you know who you are; thank you for making life interesting. It would be acceptable for you to invest less in this endeavor.

Acknowledgments

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List of Abbreviations

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA)

Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)

Grade point average (GPA)

Kindergarten through 12th Grade education system in the United States (K-12)

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA)

Individualized Education Program (IEP)

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

The United States education system has actively responded to demands for equal access to education; however, progress regarding this ongoing challenge merits continuous evaluation (Getzel, 2014; Leake & Stodden, 2014). Enrollment of students with learning disabilities or ADHD, or a combination of both, seeking a college degree has tripled over the past thirty years, yet in the United States, only 28% persist to graduation (Cole & Cawthon, 2015; Connor, 2012). Legislation has delineated accommodations that every institution receiving federal funding must offer to students with documented disabilities (Cawthon & Cole, 2010). Some support providers in postsecondary institutions have also responded to challenges associated with learning and attention differences by facilitating access to accommodations and investing in supports that target the challenges of their student populations (Reinschmiedt, Sprong, Dallas, Buono, & Upton, 2013). Research has reported student perspectives on academic support provisions at institutions that have implemented supplemental practices, documenting improvements in retention, grade point averages (GPA), and retention for students with disabilities (Demaris & Kritsonis, 2011). Perspectives of academic support providers describing how they respond to the needs of students with learning and attention differences filled a gap in the literature utilizing self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2002) and positive psychology (Seligman, 2011) to form a cooperative base for examining this phenomenon. This introductory chapter offers contextual background, problem, and purpose statements, and outlines the significance of examining practitioner responses to the needs of students with learning and attention differences.

Background

Academic support providers hold unique roles on their college and university campuses. Providers' responsibilities include facilitating delivery of support services to students with disabilities enrolled in their institutions, as a provision of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA) collectively referred to as ADA. At the postsecondary education level, ADA entitles qualified students with disabilities to receive accommodations, ensuring that academic curricula, environments, and practices do not affect these students in discriminatory ways.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1990 (IDEA) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEIA) are collectively referred to as IDEA and describe conditions for which K-12 students qualify for disability support services. IDEA recognizes learning disabilities and ADHD among the impairments identified as substantially limiting function ability. Through IDEA, both school personnel and parents have the right and the responsibility to request an evaluation for a student who may have a disability in grades K-12 at no cost to the student's family. Results of an evaluation are employed to determine a student's eligibility for education support services and documented through an Individual Education Program (IEP). IDEA states that if parents disagree with the results of a school evaluation, they may request that the school provide an independent evaluation or secure an evaluation at their own expense and share it with school administrators.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) is a civil rights law that prevents discrimination. Section 504 guarantees students with disabilities through age 21, a free appropriate public education (FAPE). In contrast to an IEP, a Section 504 Plan may provide adjustments to a student's learning environment, to accommodate any disability, since the

definition is broader and encompasses more impairments under this legislation. Parents are not eligible to request for schools to provide an evaluation; however, they may have a psycho-educational evaluation performed for their child at their own expense, and supply results to the school administration for consideration. Upon completing high school graduation requirements, the provisions of FAPE no longer apply, though protections of Section 504 remain enforced at the postsecondary level. During high school, students should participate in transition planning as part of the IEP provided by IDEA; however, legislation defining the parameters of transition planning has been slow to receive attention (Connor, 2012; Leake & Stodden, 2014; Madaus, Shaw, Miller, Banerjee, & Vitello, 2011).

Historically, students with disabilities frequently experienced rejection as applicants to higher education institutions (Leake & Stodden, 2014). Current protections delineated in ADA and Section 504 prohibit discrimination against people with disabilities and advocate for reasonable accommodations to be provided through transportation and in work, society, and education settings (Cawthon & Cole, 2010). Postsecondary schools that receive any form of government funding must comply with ADA and Section 504 regulations, providing support services that are measured and published periodically by the National Center for Education Statistics to report (Raue & Lewis, 2011).

Increased enrollment has accompanied expanded provisions of these government policies over the past three decades among students with learning disabilities at postsecondary institutions (Cole & Cawthon, 2015; Connor, 2012; Cortiella & Horowitz, 2014; Kane, Roy, & Medina, 2013; Richman, 2013). The percentage of students with learning disabilities enrolling in college in 2014 was 67%, equivalent to that of students without learning disabilities. However, of the students with learning disabilities attending postsecondary institutions, only

21% enrolled in 4-year colleges or universities, and only one out of three persisted to complete their degrees (Cortiella & Horowitz, 2014; Fichten et al., 2012). While increased enrollment may be due to the expanded definition of disability, as more students identify some type of disability (O'Shea & Meyer, 2016), much of this positive trend is attributable to the inclusive provisions of legislation (Connor, 2012; Leake & Stodden, 2014).

In 2016, the United States Department of Education reported the total representation of students with disabilities in the 2012-13 school year was 12.9%. More than a third of those students had a diagnosis of specific learning disabilities or 4.9% of the postsecondary undergraduate population. Many students with learning disabilities or ADHD, recruited by colleges for their academic success in high school received disability support services at the secondary level that could continue to facilitate their learning in postsecondary settings (Hadley & Satterfield, 2013; Madaus, Shaw, et al., 2011; Wizikowski, 2013). Besides receiving the required protections and government-regulated accommodations, students with learning disabilities and ADHD often need additional support in executive function skills, including self-advocacy, to compensate for delayed skill development in non-academic functions (Couzens et al., 2015; Delee, 2015; Madaus, Faggella-Luby, & Dukes, 2011).

Students with learning and attention differences accepted to postsecondary education settings demonstrate the same requisite potential for learning as their non-disabled peers. Often, evaluation results identify these students as twice-exceptional learners: those with both gifted learning abilities and learning differences typical of invisible disabilities (Foley-Nicpon, Allmon, Sieck, & Stinson, 2011; Reis, Baum, & Burke, 2014). Requiring these students to submit to an additional evaluation would be deemed discriminatory, as their rights to equal access are protected by the provisions outlined in Section 504 and ADA. Alternatively, using a self-

assessment tool or discussing personal challenges and potential solutions has provided insight regarding current self-advocacy, queuing introduction of supplemental measures to aid students in building self-advocacy skills (Kane et al., 2013). Substantial research documented the need for academic support providers to respond to the non-academic or executive function needs of students, to facilitate use of academic supports (Couzens et al., 2015; Demaris & Kritsonis, 2011; Leake & Stodden, 2014; Madaus et al., 2011; O'Shea & Meyer, 2016; Reinschmiedt et al., 2013; Richman, Rademacher, & Maitland, 2014). Lack of consistency in service provision among postsecondary institutions presents a challenge to students with disabilities, reflected by a 34% graduation rate among those with learning disabilities at 4-year colleges and universities in comparison with 51% among the general student population (Cortiella & Horowitz, 2014).

Few publications regarding psychological theory and the perceptions of students reveal the nuanced approaches employed by innovative practitioners to facilitate academic services (Costello & Stone, 2012; Richman, 2013; Wizikowski, 2013). Academic support providers can enhance access to ADA provisions without breaching students' rights to accessibility, answering a need promoted by multiple researchers (Faggella-Luby, Lombardi, Lalor, & Dukes, 2014; Getzel, 2014; Leake & Stodden, 2014). While researchers have previously investigated student perspectives regarding effectiveness and access to support, a gap exists in the literature examining the insights of academic support providers who successfully foster independence and self-determination among students with learning disabilities and ADHD on college campuses. Forming a picture of this phenomenon in light of self-determination (Deci & Ryan, 2002) and positive psychology (Seligman, 2011) provided a generalized model for practitioners in other institutions to consider emulating.

Situation to Self

I serve as a consultant to students with disabilities transitioning to postsecondary education environments, facilitating the translation of accommodations from secondary settings. Through these interactions, I have observed that many academic support providers require a maximum amount of documentation for a minimum level of support, while others formulate individualized support packages that successfully bridge the gap between support offered based on IDEA applicable only in K-12 settings, and support based on ADA, applicable in postsecondary environments.

While serving students with learning and attention differences, I have observed that they often do not arrive at postsecondary institutions with the same set of tools to aid in successful navigation of this chapter in their educational journeys. Some have developed a self-awareness to recognize their challenges, the confidence to ask for help, or even the perception that admitting weakness does not signal a failure, but a strength. Still, a majority of these students struggle with each of these skills. While many students with learning disabilities and ADHD are gifted learners, without these assets working for them, they often become disheartened and internalize frustrations while trying to adapt to the independent learning environment typical beyond secondary education settings.

The ontological assumption that intentional engagement of students with disabilities by those serving them may involve more than providing the supports standardized by government policy frames this investigation. Aiding this inquiry, I present an epistemological assumption (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011) that an individual can gain knowledge through understanding the subjective experiences of those who serve students with disabilities, emphasizing the importance of collecting that information from the providers directly. From an axiological position, the

assumption of value to qualitative inquiry supports examination of the personal and professional experiences of these practitioners, demonstrating value for the insights they have gained through observation and reflection. Methodological practices provide for the interjection of multiple perspectives while supporting rich, complex depth of inquiry (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011), intentionally building a case for each of the five institutions included in the study. Selection of the constructivist view of reality supported the concept that shared perspectives from multiple representatives at a maximum variety of postsecondary academic support offices provided practical insight for application among academic support providers in other institutions (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

Problem Statement

Academic support providers in postsecondary institutions serving students with disabilities must determine whether to offer supplementary non-academic services to facilitate academic support while observing federal regulations established by the ADA and Section 504. Students must disclose their disabilities to academic support offices to receive accommodations at the postsecondary level (Cole & Cawthon, 2015; Lightner, Kipps-Vaughan, Schulte, & Trice, 2012). However, many students with learning disabilities progress minimally or even drop out when they do not receive appropriate support (Connor, 2012; Hadley & Satterfield, 2013; Hong, Haefner, & Slekar, 2011; Stamp, Banerjee, & Brown, 2014). These students often need non-academic assistance in support of their academic accommodations to persist through their undergraduate programs and graduate (Richman, 2013; Wizikowski, 2013). Academic support providers committed to empowering students with disabilities respond differently based on their training and experience (O'Shea & Meyer, 2016). Without consistent non-academic support provisions, each school determines how to respond independently. Studies have assessed student

perspectives regarding these supports (Mytkowicz & Goss, 2012; Wizikowski, 2013). However, research reveals a gap in the literature as studies are dated before the adoption of current legislation (Hicks-Coolick & Kurtz, 1997), or express accountability to a government outside the United States (Couzens et al., 2015). Few studies offer in-depth provider perspectives examining how practitioners respond to accommodate students' needs for shared-advocacy. The problem for examination in this study was identifying how academic support providers respond to students with learning and attention differences, extending service accessibility by sharing advocacy as students develop self-determination.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this multiple-case study was to examine the shared-advocacy practices of postsecondary academic support providers, investigating their choices to offer supplemental services or interventions supporting students with disabilities. Incorporation of support practices that facilitate the use of accommodations has been promoted through research as an effective way to streamline access to support (Stamp et al., 2014). This investigation involved postsecondary institutions with 4-year degree programs from multiple regions, to share findings with practitioners in similar leadership roles in other institutions. For research purposes, shared-advocacy was generally defined as academic support interventions designed to enhance self-awareness, self-regulation, and self-efficacy, and promote the development of self-determination skills by facilitating access to the provisions mandated by ADA. Self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2002) and positive psychology (Seligman, 2011) guided this study, explaining the socio-contextual conditions that lead to self-motivation and a fulfilling life. When academic support providers share advocacy through accommodative intervention strategies, college

students with disabilities develop competency, autonomy, and relatedness, intrinsic

psychological skills that contribute to self-determination (Deci & Ryan, 2002).

Self-determination theory purports that socio-contextual conditions lead to self-

motivation, explaining that extrinsic factors influence competence as perceived control increases,

subsequently leading to autonomy, a reflection of intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2002).

Knowing that people care and are invested in a person contributes to the development of that

person's psychological relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2002). When academic support providers

share advocacy through accommodative intervention strategies, college students with disabilities

develop the intrinsic psychological skills that contribute to self-determination (Hadley &

Satterfield, 2013). Positive psychology (Seligman, 2011) proposes an internal need for the

gratification received through positive reinforcement, demonstration of skills through investment

in development, and confidence in purpose that empowers people to give back or serve others

outside themselves. Positive reinforcement experienced as students with disabilities are offered

opportunities to develop advocacy fulfills the need for gratification as it strengthens their ability

to succeed academically and prepares them to share their strengths on behalf of others (Costello

& Stone, 2012).

Significance of the Study

As students with learning and attention differences enter postsecondary environments,

they often have focused on developing academic skills rather than executive function skills such

as self-advocacy. The challenges of participating academically and socially in a college

community can magnify the deficits in self-determination experienced by students with learning

disabilities and ADHD (Cawthon & Cole, 2010; Lightner et al., 2012). Student perspectives on

the adequacy of academic support provided have been documented well (Mytkowicz & Goss,

2012; Wizikowski, 2013). Though a proposal for shared-advocacy precepts exists in the literature, rarely has research sought to enlighten practitioners regarding effective means for aiding students with this facilitative level of support from a practitioner perspective. A gap in literature calls for the examination of how academic support providers respond to skill deficits demonstrated by students with learning and attention differences, and the accompanying practices developed to address the lack of executive function skills frequently manifested by these students in postsecondary environments. This study provides empirical insight through a qualitative multiple-case study design (Yin, 2014), incorporating theoretical psychology (Deci & Ryan, 2002; Seligman, 2011), and practical application of both transition strategies and faculty engagement, fulfilling recommendations suggested in current research.

Practical

This study examined the perspectives of academic support providers who facilitate shared-advocacy interventions in postsecondary institutions. Findings provided practical insight, demonstrating how these providers have responded to needs for supplemental services, the innovative practices perceived as successful, and the diligent efforts to make these services accessible to students with disabilities, in order to share these findings with practitioners in similar leadership roles (Hadley & Satterfield, 2013). Researchers have suggested additional investigation of successful practices utilizing a qualitative approach that employs designs other than narrative and grounded theory (Connor, 2012; Daly-Cano, Vaccaro, & Newman, 2015) and the incorporation of a psychological approach (Cole & Cawthon, 2015). Recommendations for further research include successful practices supporting students transitioning to college (Mytkowicz & Goss, 2012), and best practices for training faculty (Hong et al., 2011). Unique insights from practitioners who have responded to the lack of self-determination in these students

proved beneficial to those in similar leadership roles seeking to implement effective supports that cultivate intrinsic motivation among students in other institutions, empowering them to persist through college and complete their degree programs.

Empirical

Previous studies have reported the practitioner perspective on academic support provisions. However, a gap exists in empirical literature because of limitations in the bounded sample, location, and date of publication, with consideration toward legislation, or focus on provisions rather than responses (Couzens et al., 2015; Faggella-Luby et al., 2014; Hicks-Coolick & Kurtz, 1997). Both quantitative and qualitative studies describe the perspective of students regarding the services they received, access to support, and persistence through two years in school (Madaus, Shaw, et al., 2011; Mamiseishvili & Koch, 2011). Faggella-Luby et al. (2014) advocated for the increase in substantive research examining disability support services in the field and publication of best practices for application in other institutions. This study presents previously unheard perspectives of academic support providers describing how they respond to the needs of students through the implementation of shared-advocacy interventions offered at postsecondary institutions with 4-year degree programs.

Theoretical

The examination of shared-advocacy practices has the potential to demonstrate the theoretical concepts of Deci and Ryan (2002) regarding the provision of external support for students with disabilities as they develop intrinsic motivation and self-determination. Self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000b) promotes the social conditions that improve well-being, by stimulating "autonomy, competence, and relatedness" (p. 76). Additional insight regarding positive psychology revealed effective training of the brain for self-reflection and how

academic support providers respond to aid students with disabilities in learning about themselves, helping these students refocus on abilities rather than disabilities, and empowering them through hopefulness (Seligman, 2002). Potential benefits for this theoretical application are supported by recent research (Costello & Stone, 2012), utilizing a positive psychology approach to intervention on behalf of college students with disabilities by nurturing strengths to promote self-efficacy.

Research Questions

Central Research Question

Academic support providers assess the needs of students with disabilities and provide accommodations in the form of tools and services. Proactive leaders in this role seek creative ways to facilitate the usefulness of these accommodations by aiding students in the development of self-advocacy, offering an individualized balance between helping and holding students accountable to advocate for themselves. Based on self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000b) and positive psychology (Seligman, 2002), providers can move students through extrinsic motivation to intrinsic motivation, incorporating positive reinforcement leading to the development of skills that empower these students to advocate for themselves in college and throughout their lives.

The overarching question central to this investigation was as follows: How do academic support providers offer shared-advocacy at postsecondary institutions, promoting intrinsic motivation through accommodative intervention strategies for students with learning disabilities and/or ADHD?

Research Sub-Questions

1. How do academic support providers facilitate self-determination among

postsecondary students with learning disabilities and/or ADHD on their campuses?

Students with learning disabilities have given many detailed reasons for waiting to seek support services, yet these delays cause students to lose ground in the pursuit of a 4-year degree and even fail to persist (Lee, Rojewski, Gregg, & Jeong, 2015; Lightner et al., 2012). Aiding these students in the development of intrinsic motivation can move them out of extrinsic motivation to personal accountability (Ryan & Deci, 2000b). Discerning successful techniques for connecting with students early in their enrollment revealed practices that can be adopted by academic support providers on other campuses.

2. How do academic support providers discern the accommodations to offer postsecondary students with learning disabilities and/or ADHD on their campuses?

Researchers have advocated for the employment of documentation guidelines with flexibility when determining the appropriate level of support to provide for students with disabilities, noting that schools should not withhold services if requested, despite incomplete documentation (Banerjee, Madaus, & Gelbar, 2015; Madaus, Shaw, et al., 2011). Understanding how to respond to the needs of students without undermining their ability to develop self-determination is challenging since every person develops at an individual pace (Delee, 2015). This very need for the flexibility to develop as an individual has been foundational to learning theories, based on the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky (1978) proposed that learning must precede development and that while students learn at their own pace, they learn from observing adults, and then develop the ability to complete tasks independently and move on to more challenging tasks. Responding appropriately through shared-advocacy allows a student to observe an adult and develop advocacy skills in preparation for practicing the self-advocacy representative of self-determination (Banerjee et al., 2015). Presenting balanced

and appropriate intervention strategies utilized for identifying students' needs at schools with

exemplary graduation records may incite consideration for inclusion at other institutions.

3. How do academic support providers use positive psychology to determine the shared-

advocacy needs of postsecondary students with learning disabilities and/or ADHD?

Researchers proposed utilizing assessment tools for determining whether students

entering college are at risk for learning disabilities (Hadley & Satterfield, 2013; Kane et al.,

2013). While arguments for the utilization of such assessments have merit, schools must regard

ADA stipulations so as not to discriminate or limit access to services. Employing positive

psychology to assess areas of strength in student abilities provides perspective for both the

practitioner and the student; this focus on strengths promotes an empowered perspective,

facilitating supports already in place through self-coaching, peer-coaching, and mentoring

(Costello & Stone, 2012).

4. How do academic support providers foster self-advocacy in postsecondary students

with learning disabilities and/or ADHD?

As research participants, some college students with disabilities have professed to

practice self-advocacy early in their college journeys, sharing the ways they developed this skill

before enrolling in college (Daly-Cano et al., 2015). Others have enrolled in a second institution

after becoming overwhelmed at the colleges where they first attended, because the support they

needed was not available (Stamp et al., 2014). Researchers in each of these studies admitted

they had limited samples due to a lack of heterogeneity. Insight gleaned from this study showed

how academic support providers can foster self-advocacy in students who do not arrive at their

colleges with the necessary motivation and poise to succeed, intervening before these students

become overwhelmed and leave the institution they invested in attending as a first choice.

Definitions

Understanding several terms presented during this study was essential to process the questions asked and the data collected. Following is a list of these important terms.

1. *Accommodations* – Support services provided as the result of documented disabilities in accordance with government policies that facilitate the education process without modifying measurement (Banerjee et al., 2015).

2. *Disabilities* - Physical, emotional, or mental conditions that compromise a person's ability to function as their peers (Americans With Disabilities Act, 1990).

3. *Disclosure* – The action that follows a decision made to admit a need for external support (Cole & Cawthon, 2015).

4. *Modifications* – Alterations in timeframes or courses requisite for completing degree programs, and practices for conducting course delivery (Mamiseishvili & Koch, 2011).

5. *Perceptions* – The viewpoints of participants in the study who contribute from their own observations and experience (Connor, 2012).

6. *Persistence* – A quality that reflects endurance through difficult circumstances to complete a goal (Lee et al., 2015).

7. *Postsecondary* –Institutions providing educational opportunities to students beyond publicly funded grades K-12 in the United States (Hong et al., 2011).

8. *Self-advocacy* - A skill employing effective communication regarding personal needs as assessed through introspective decision making (Daly-Cano et al., 2015),

9. *Self-determination* - A strong ability to make decisions about the path of one's own life regardless of circumstances (Madaus, Shaw, et al., 2011).

10. *Services* - Provisions in the form of actions to aid students with disabilities by facilitating access to accommodations (Cortiella & Horowitz, 2014).

11. *Supports* - Provisions in the form of accommodations to aid students with disabilities in the completion of work without modifications (Mamiseishvili & Koch, 2011).

Summary

Academic support providers serving in postsecondary institutions offer the bridge to equip students with disabilities by providing the tools, encouragement, and services that empower students to move from responding to external stimuli to acting on internal motivation. Through shared-advocacy, students may practice the non-academic skills modeled by academic support providers and develop the ability to advocate for themselves (Vygotsky, 1978). The focus of this investigation was to document how academic support providers reach beyond classroom adjustments and testing accommodations, proactively intervening on behalf of students, forming connective groups to give peer support, so students get a solid footing as they face the academic, social, and independent living challenges of postsecondary education environments. This study offers insight regarding how or why (Yin, 2014) practitioners seek to aid in the development of self-determination among students with disabilities by accommodating those students' needs for shared-advocacy.

A theoretical framework incorporating self-determination (Deci & Ryan, 2002) and positive psychology (Seligman, 2011) guided the investigation of multiple cases. Each case, bounded by the academic support office of a postsecondary institution, was purposefully selected based on a commitment to provide supplementary services to facilitate the implementation of legal accommodations for students with learning disabilities and ADHD pursuing postsecondary degrees. Researching the shared-advocacy practices of academic support providers offered

insight regarding the commitment of these educational leaders to equip students for success throughout their lives. A qualitative approach provided an opportunity to hear the voices of those making innovations while the multiple-case study approach delivered insight about the applicability of practices at institutions with similar populations.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

The transition from a secondary to a postsecondary education environment presents unique challenges for students with learning and attention differences. Though many of their non-disabled peers struggle with the adjustments to postsecondary environments, students with disabilities are at greater risk for withdrawing either temporarily or permanently, rather than persisting (Cortiella & Horowitz, 2014; Lee et al., 2015; Mamiseishvili & Koch, 2011; Richman, 2013; Wizikowski, 2013). These students often lack the self-determination and advocacy skills essential to college persistence, as well as the psychological balance to develop a positive perspective by focusing on ability rather than disability (Cole & Cawthon, 2015; Costello & Stone, 2012; Farmer, Allsopp, & Ferron, 2015; Mamiseishvili & Koch, 2011; O'Shea & Meyer, 2016). Academic support providers aid students with learning and attention differences through specified accommodations; however, without key executive function and advocacy skills, these students frequently are not equipped to effectively navigate a college journey (Richman, 2013; Wizikowski, 2013).

In the past, postsecondary institutions admitting students with disabilities typically offered only rudimentary accessibility tools to accommodate students with disabilities. However, with a greater understanding of disability, legislation through ADA and Section 504 has mandated that schools provide accommodations to students with disabilities, reducing the impediments of discrimination in the pursuit of their educational goals (Burgstahler & Moore, 2009). Academic support providers are present on every college campus, and while some abide strictly by federal policy, others respond with creative solutions to the additional challenges experienced by students with disabilities as they transition to college (Harrison, Areepattamannil,

& Freeman, 2012; Leake & Stodden, 2014; Mytkowicz & Goss, 2012; Richman, 2013). This study explored current research, documenting the state of academic support while learning the perspectives of support providers and faculty members. A resulting gap in the literature suggests a need to examine how academic support providers respond to promote understanding and share advocacy, so students with learning and attention differences persist through graduation.

Theoretical Framework

In qualitative research, inquiry is developed from a theoretical foundation, considering a problem common to certain people or a society holistically from a particular interpretive perspective (Creswell, 2013). Research must be theoretically grounded to ensure trustworthiness of findings through credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. A problem common to students with disabilities is the social underdevelopment associated with a lack of self-advocacy skills as they transition to postsecondary education settings (DaDeppo, 2009; Grieve, Webne-Behrman, Couillou, & Sieben-Schneider, 2014; Harrison et al., 2012). Leake and Stodden (2014) reported, "Institutions may be content with only meeting the letter of the law by providing accommodations and supports for equal access to the physical plant and to academic instruction, while neglecting the social sphere" (p. 399). Academic support providers serving students with learning disabilities and ADHD incorporate observation and interviews to assess student needs for competency in executive function apart from requests for academic support accommodations (Grieve et al., 2014). In the current study, responses of practitioners serving students with learning and attention differences were examined, incorporating the application of self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2002) and positive psychology (Seligman, 2002).

Self-Determination Theory

Students transitioning from high school to college face expectations of being equipped for independent living, academic success, and relationship building (Hong et al., 2011). These responsibilities require students to perform tasks they may have practiced in secondary settings, such as balancing a course schedule, managing class assignments, and integrating socially with many people previously unknown to them. A student with self-determination will push past the challenges of education transition; however, students with learning disabilities and ADHD often lack this competency (Farmer et al., 2015; Getzel, 2014; Harrison et al., 2012). Ryan and Deci (2000a) purported, "For a high level of intrinsic motivation, people must experience satisfaction of the needs both for competence and autonomy" (p. 58). However, students with learning disabilities and ADHD often require a longer timeline to develop these skills and may fail to thrive while attempting to manage requisite responsibilities (DaDeppo, 2009; Hong et al.; 2011; Richman et al., 2014). Academic leaders who seek to aid students in developing self-determination must intentionally seek means for connecting with these students early and often.

Self-advocacy is also a skill learned through practice exemplary of executive function that reflects the intrinsic motivation to succeed; without it, students with disabilities are more likely to cease persisting (Daly-Cano et al., 2015; Lee et al., 2015; Richman et al., 2014; Stamp et al., 2014). Ryan and Deci (2000a) proposed, "Determination Theory is specifically framed in terms of social and environmental factors that *facilitate* versus *undermine* intrinsic motivation" (p. 58). Self-determination is a learned skill, and rather than being penalized for demonstrating deficits in this critical area, students who have focused on meeting the challenges of disabilities should have opportunities to further develop self-awareness, self-regulation, and self-efficacy (Grieve et al., 2014). Current literature established a need for students with learning disabilities

and ADHD to further develop self-determination skills while in college (Farmer et al., 2015;

Grieve et al.). Autonomy accompanies two increasingly practiced components of self-

determination: intrinsic motivation and independent decision-making accompany. Academic

support offices are equipped to facilitate the provision of legal accommodations, yet students

with disabilities frequently need more support than what is mandated specifically by policy

(Leake & Stodden, 2014). Students with learning and attention differences must receive the

assessment necessary to identify deficits in self-determination skills and learn methods for

developing these skills through application both in academic assignments and life experiences.

Extrinsic motivation compels people to perform nearly every activity to some extent (Ryan &

Deci, 2000a), and education provides an opportune example. While a student may find

satisfaction in pleasing a teacher, the motivation for completing assignments will not carry a

student beyond that teacher's classroom since the drive for achievement comes from outside self.

Intrinsic motivation results from a combination of perceived competence and autonomy (Deci &

Ryan, 2002). Without autonomous action, motivation cannot completely reflect intrinsic drive,

and discerning how much help to offer a student regarding non-academic tasks presents layers of

challenge for any academic support provider. Cole and Cawthon (2015) reported, "Students with

learning disabilities generally show lower levels of autonomy, competence, as well as other

internal motivation variables that contribute to self-determination than their general education

counterparts" (p. 164). While students with learning disabilities and ADHD may perceive

themselves as lacking in the ability to manage the demands of postsecondary transition, complete

advocacy by others representing these students undermines the goal of aiding their development

(Harrison et al., 2012; Stamp et al., 2014). Essential support requires a balance between

intervening and equipping these students as they develop the skills to manage their lives through self-determination.

Based on the results of a study on enhancing well-being, Ryan and Deci (2000b) reported, "placing strong relative importance on intrinsic aspirations was positively associated with well-being indicators such as self-esteem, self-actualization, and the inverse of depression and anxiety" (p. 73). Value of support is defined not just by filling a deficit, but also in equipping students to develop the strategies to build competence and empower them to gain autonomy. Proactive leaders in academic support recognize deficits in executive function and self-advocacy and move beyond what is required legally to meet the individual needs of these students (Grieve et al., 2014; Hadley & Satterfield, 2013; Leake & Stodden, 2014). O'Shea and Meyer (2016) reported, "Support for the psychological needs of competence, relatedness and autonomy is dynamic and varied for students with disabilities" (p. 17). Intentional support builds on accommodations required by ADA, intentionally seeking to address not only academic needs, but also needs for socialization, organization, and identity.

In response to observed or expressed needs, service providers look for innovative ways to foster advocacy while students continue to develop the core competencies of self-determination that develop essential life skills (Field, Parker, Sawilowsky & Rolands, 2013; Getzel, 2014; Harrison et al., 2012). This information may mean training faculty members on campus to develop a greater appreciation for the gifts students with learning disabilities and ADHD possess, and how best to respond to the needs of these students (Adams & Hayes, 2011; Burgstahler & Doe, 2006; Field et al., 2013; Humphrey, Woods, & Huglin, 2011; Lombardi, Murray, & Dallas, 2013; Parker, Hoffman, Sawilowsky, & Rolands, 2011; Richman et al., 2014). "Facilitation of more self-determined learning requires classroom conditions that allow satisfaction of . . .the

innate needs to feel connected, effective, and agentic as one is exposed to new ideas and exercises new skills" (Ryan & Deci, 2000a, p. 65). The building of self-efficacy depends on the success students experience in the classroom; educators who extend support may graciously reinforce rather than inhibit that growth (Burgstahler & Doe, 2006; Demaris & Kritsonis, 2011; DaDeppo, 2009; Komarraju & Nadler, 2013). Postsecondary academic support offices must proactively promote awareness campus-wide and provide training to faculty and administrative leaders, while still providing individualized assessment and accommodations.

Positive Psychology

Seligman (1998) initially described his theory as learned optimism, and first proposed the theory of positive psychology in the early 21st century, after observing the shift to focus on negative aspects of human behavior that developed after World War II. This former president of the American Psychological Association (APA) purported insights that led him to adopt the theory that individuals should learn to identify and nurture their gifts and find pathways to develop and give of these strengths. The impetus for the theory of positive psychology was an interest in emphasizing optimism and endurance to move beyond the perspective of succeeding despite the circumstances, to working circumstances to the advantage of the person previously perceived as disadvantaged (Seligman, 2002). A person who accomplishes this goal also develops the interest and ability to think of others, even investing in building up other disadvantaged persons without receiving any personal benefit.

Five elements comprise the theory of positive psychology: positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment (Seligman, 2011, pp. 16-17). Subjectively, positive psychology values contentment with the past, hope for the future, and satisfaction with the present. Students with learning disabilities and ADHD often endure education experiences

without hope (Costello & Stone, 2012; Farmer et al., 2015). Needed supports may not be identified or may be provided inconsistently while students continue to experience academic defeat. Through positive interactions geared toward improving self-advocacy, academic support providers can aid these students in gaining perspective (Costello & Stone, 2012; Grieve et al., 2014). For an individual learner, positive psychology promotes the capacity for courage, interpersonal relationships, and wisdom. It permeates citizenship through responsibility, moderation, and ethical living. Positive psychology has marked the improved treatment in a variety of disorders, emphasizing perspective on the human condition rather than focusing on the debilitating effects of the disease, and promoting self-efficacy (Costello & Stone, 2012). Positive psychology is the study of strength and virtue, rather than weakness and damage. It defines what will establish well-being, support autonomy, and build optimism in support of balanced health (Seligman, 2011).

The underlying theme of this approach to psychology is that self-efficacy empowers learners to reach their potential and ultimately share it with others (Costello & Stone, 2012). Persistence is a grave concern to many researchers investigating the success of bright students with the aptitude to remain enrolled in postsecondary programs, who are also challenged by expectations for self-advocacy still underdeveloped due to the demands of dealing with their disabilities. Students who become discouraged by the lack of success in learning may give up rather than developing their gifts to offer their unique contributions to society (Reis et al., 2014). Prevention and proactive measures initiated through educators and academic support providers can empower students to find their uniqueness and capitalize on it, to find a niche where they can give of their best and make a difference in others' lives while reaching their potential. Farmer et al. (2015) incorporated positive psychology in the design of an intervention program focused on

aiding students with learning disabilities and ADHD in the development and application of self-determination skills. Positive psychology promotes a sense of hope for students with disabilities who need to see themselves through their abilities rather than focused on the limitations associated with their disabilities; to find the things that make life more rewarding and pursue them (Costello & Stone, 2012; Richman et al., 2014). The focus of positive psychology steers thought away from impossibilities, toward a perspective that considers increasingly broad possibilities.

Educators contribute to this venture by creating learning environments that nurture students' talents and reinforce their strengths (Bettinger, Baker, & National Bureau of Economic Research, 2011; Humphrey et al., 2011; Sheridan, Hubbard Murdoch, & Harder, 2015). Continued provision of the supports students benefited from in the past is merited, as the intention in this environment is to enhance the supports already in place (Hadley & Satterfield, 2013). Positive psychology can provide the framework for training educators at the postsecondary level to better serve the needs of learners with disabilities because awareness and insight provide a perspective that promotes encouragement rather than a lack of understanding. Costello and Stone (2012) suggested that support for self-efficacy, executive function coaching, and peer-mentoring are all effective ways to implement positive psychology.

Often, students with learning and attention differences do not seek the resources that would help them develop positive psychology through the academic support offices on their campuses. It is imperative for these resources to be made accessible and for students to be made aware of their availability in postsecondary institutions (Cawthon & Cole, 2010; Grieve et al., 2014; Hadley & Satterfield, 2013). Students with disabilities often fail to reach their potential because they do not focus on their abilities; however, educational leaders are uniquely positioned

to intervene and educate students in a way that changes their perspectives (Costello & Stone, 2012). Dedicated academic support providers are facilitating that shift; this study investigated how they have responded with innovative strategies that have enhanced the support students receive.

Postsecondary education offers access to greater opportunities for employment, career satisfaction, and income (McCoy, McNelis, Dickinson, & Becker, 2013). These concerns are particularly important for students with learning disabilities, who experience greater challenges securing work without a college degree than their peers without learning disabilities (Cortiella & Horowitz, 2014). More research is needed that focuses on exploring "programs that might contribute to better retention rates for students with disabilities through to graduation" (McCoy et al., 2013, p. 1). Incorporating perspectives on self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2002) and positive psychology (Seligman, 2002), practitioners can aid students with the development of self-advocacy skills and a perspective that focuses on abilities rather than disabilities. This study examined the responses of academic support providers to the needs of students with learning and attention differences for developing self-determination and positivity, addressing a gap in the literature that enhances understanding of how such responses contribute to postsecondary persistence for these students.

Related Literature

Recent research documents the marked increased number of students with disabilities enrolling in postsecondary education (Newman et al., 2011; O'Shea & Meyer, 2016). Richman et al., (2014) reported, "Students with learning disabilities (LD) and Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) represent the largest segment of college students with documented disabilities" (p. 33). In reports analyzing data submitted by institutions throughout

the United States, Raue and Lewis (2011) calculated the representation of students with

disabilities, noting 31% with specific learning disabilities and 18% with ADHD. These students

are vulnerable on many levels, particularly because their disabilities are invisible (Burgstahler &

Moore, 2009; Foley-Nicpon et al., 2011; Leake & Stodden, 2014; O'Shea & Meyer, 2016;

Richman, 2013). Academic and social integration are critical predictors of persistence for

students with learning disabilities and ADHD (DaDeppo, 2009). The support measures that have

facilitated successful persistence to graduation for these students, merit examination (McCoy et

al., 2013; Wadlington, 2012).

Students with learning disabilities and ADHD demonstrate underdevelopment in many

areas including persistence, self-advocacy skills, and a willingness to disclose these challenges in

light of the associated stigma (Barnard-Brak, Sulak, Tate, & Lechtenberger, 2010; Connor, 2012;

Couzens et al., 2015; O'Shea & Meyer, 2016; Poon-McBrayer, 2013). Those who have not

developed self-advocacy before college frequently deal with other social challenges, issues that

deter them from believing they could succeed in college (Stamp et al., 2014). They require more

years on average to graduate from 4-year postsecondary degree programs, have lower grade

point averages, and have a greater tendency to withdraw from classes (Lee et al., 2015;

Mamiseishvili & Koch, 2011; Richman et al., 2014; Wizikowski, 2013). Deficits in assessment,

ineffective instruction, and limited services to facilitate accommodations are among the factors

exacerbating the extensive challenges students with learning, and attention differences face

consistently at both public and private postsecondary institutions across the United States.

Lack of Persistence

Increased representation of students with learning and attention differences entering 4-

year degree programs reflects improved access for students. This increase has primarily been

credited to policy reform and expansion of the definition of disability (Leake & Stodden, 2014; Raue & Lewis, 2011; Richman et al., 2014). However, Cortiella and Horowitz (2014) compared the numbers of students with learning disabilities and ADHD to those of the general population, calculating that only half as many enroll in 4-year institutions while twice as many enroll in community colleges and comparable 2-year institutions. Delee (2015) reported, "Over 50% of students with disabilities did not persist beyond their first year or left by the end of year three" (p. 42). The hardships common to students with learning and attention differences are extensive. Insufficient self-advocacy skills, concern about finances or the stigma of disability, inconsistent support, worry about disclosure, and a deficient awareness of the availability of academic supports by both students and faculty, all lead to the disconnect between students and the services required for persistence (Barnard-Brak et al., 2010; Cawthon & Cole, 2010; Lee et al., 2015; Mamiseishvili & Koch, 2011; Poon-McBrayer, 2013). Adams and Hayes (2011) claimed, "Students with disabilities often face confusion and a sense of being overwhelmed" (p. 8) during this transition period. Struggles meriting academic and social support that are typical to incoming first-year college outlined by Coles and the Institute for Higher Education Policy (2011) are exponentially more taxing for those with disabilities, who experience a greater variety of challenges, more deeply and more frequently. Mamiseishvili and Koch (2011) documented that "students with disabilities are at an even higher risk of non-persistence than their nondisabled peers" (p. 94), substantiating the need for additional support to be made available to these students who face even greater challenges than their peers.

Gaining access to mandated service offerings and optional intervention strategies from academic support providers presents a complicated set of challenges to persistence, in addition to the other barriers perceived by students for receiving services (Cawthon & Cole, 2010; Grieve et

al., 2014; Mamiseishvili & Koch, 2011; Poon-McBrayer, 2013; Richman, 2013). When students

with learning disabilities and ADHD perceive isolation, they quit, take a break, or find an

alternative institution where persistence is supported (Mamiseishvili & Koch, 2011; Poon-

McBrayer, 2013; Stamp et al., 2014). However, when a partnership is developed and maintained

between academic support providers and students with disabilities, learners who develop self-

advocacy skills persist (Daly-Cano et al., 2015; Mytkowicz & Goss, 2012).

Persistence for students with learning and attention differences requires a developed

stratum of psychological energy and poise, uncharacteristic of their experience. Cawthon and

Cole (2010) restated ADA policy, "Students are ultimately responsible for ensuring that they

receive the services they need" (p. 116); however, a lack of self-advocacy skills puts these

students at risk for not securing the best combination of services to support their particular

disabilities. Mamiseishvili and Koch (2011) recorded a strong association between disability-

related accommodations and the academic and social integration required for persistence through

the first two years of college. Early intervention from parents may aid in the development of

self-advocacy and self-determination for some students with disabilities (Daly-Cano et al., 2015;

Harrison et al., 2012; Hong et al., 2011). However, extrinsic, positive influence from peers,

educators, counselors, and even parents during college may build students' motivation to persist

while accompanying the time needed to develop self-advocacy and self-determination

(Burgstahler & Doe, 2006; Lee et al., 2015; Murray, Lombardi, & Kosty, 2014; O'Shea &

Meyer, 2016). Concern for dependency on extrinsic support spotlights a need for development

through shared-advocacy.

Researchers now advocate for interventional programs to be offered through

postsecondary academic support offices, facilitating the development of these life skills for

application both in coursework and in daily living, during college and beyond graduation (DaDeppo, 2009; Farmer et al., 2015; Hong et al., 2011; Komarraju & Nadler, 2013; Mytkowicz & Goss, 2012; Richman et al., 2014). For students with learning disabilities and ADHD, mentorship or coaching coordinated by academic support providers may promote self-perceptions of value, leading to persistence, rather than deficiency, leading to non-persistence (Adams & Hayes, 2011; Bettinger et al., 2011; Connor, 2012; Field et al., 2013; Harris, Ho, Markle, & Wessel, 2011; Komarraju & Nadler, 2013; Mytkowicz & Goss, 2012; Richman et al., 2014; Sheridan et al., 2015). During the period when students are developing competency in self-determination skills, opportunities to experience shared-advocacy present hope for students endeavoring to persist (Costello & Stone, 2012). Promoting self-determination among students with learning and attention differences also holds potential affirmation for faculty members and academic support providers seeking to aid students in their efforts to persist.

Need for Self-Advocacy

Self-advocacy is a skill employing effective communication regarding personal needs as assessed through introspective decision-making (Stamp et al., 2014). Students entering college are expected to have developed this skill, yet those with disabilities may continue to face great challenges and need accessible support throughout much of their postsecondary programs (Cole & Cawthon, 2015; Daly-Cano et al., 2015; Grieve et al., 2014; Kane et al., 2013; Lee et al., 2015; Sheridan et al., 2015; Stamp et al., 2014). Daly-Cano et al. (2015) documented a study asserting that students receiving support services in postsecondary institutions who exercised self-advocacy learned it through educators, parents and other significant adults who purposefully promoted it. Students reported learning to practice self-advocacy through messages of support,

intentional lessons, and directed instruction, though some stated the investment of others came while they were enrolled in college, rather than before college (Daly-Cano et al., 2015).

Communication among students with learning and attention differences affords them the opportunity to see other successful people with disabilities from a positive perspective and receive encouragement to seek academic support services. However, networking with those who share their challenges is difficult without external intervention (Foley-Nicpon et al., 2011; Mamiseishvili & Koch, 2011). Students who do not make social integration connections are also not likely to practice self-advocacy (Cawthon & Cole, 2010; DaDeppo, 2009; O'Shea & Meyer, 2016; Stamp et al., 2014). Though they have the aptitude for academic rigor, as students with learning disabilities and ADHD are displaced socially, they also typically falter in essential organization skills such as schedule maintenance, class attendance, and assignment completion (Farmer et al., 2015; Richman et al., 2014; Stamp et al., 2014). Without understanding their disabilities thoroughly, they may select courses poorly suited to their strengths and shut down rather than developing self-advocacy skills (Harrison et al., 2012; Richman, 2013; Wizikowski, 2013). This choice impacts every aspect of their lives, as they move between instructors, then between institutions, attempting to find the right fit. Stamp et al. (2014) advocated, "The support these students described as most helpful requires striking a somewhat delicate balance between intrusive intervention and forms of assistance that promote autonomy by providing students with many opportunities for choice" (p. 153). Seeking and processing student feedback can provide a substantial basis for proposing new approaches to facilitating support through accommodation.

In contrast to students without disabilities who graduate within six years at rates more than 50% (Cortiella & Horowitz, 2014), those with disabilities at the same institutions only complete 4-year degrees at a rate of 28% (Connor, 2012). The academic, social, and personal

challenges experienced by students with learning disabilities and ADHD in their transition to college, merit a response that improves degree completion rates progressively as an expressed and pervasive goal for every institution's leadership (Grieve et al., 2014). Current research emphasizes the value of increasing awareness of hidden disabilities, benefiting not only the students with learning disabilities and ADHD, but also the student body, staff, and faculty; this practice eliminates stigma and encourages students to seek support (Couzens et al., 2015; Humphrey et al., 2011; Leake & Stodden, 2014; Poon-McBrayer, 2013; Stamp et al., 2014). Colleges and universities involved in recent studies utilized mentoring, self-advocacy groups, and cultural events to help with this shift in perception (Adams & Hayes, 2011; Bettinger et al., 2011; Connor, 2012; Couzens et al., 2015; Mytkowicz & Goss, 2012; Poon-McBrayer, 2013). Peer mentorship, group events, and other support system enhancing programs offer structured environments for students with learning and attention differences, to augment their communication skills and provide a forum for sharing their strategies for success. Burgstahler and Doe (2006) suggested, "Increasing the knowledge and skills that faculty have in accommodating learners with disabilities has the potential to improve the postsecondary educational and career outcomes for people with disabilities" (p. 3). Though it is an ongoing and tenuous process, educating faculty members and administrators to establish inclusive environments has demonstrated a change in the tenor of multiple institutions (Adams & Hayes, 2011; Couzens et al., 2015; Harris et al., 2011; Mytkowicz & Goss, 2012). Academic support offices provide a resource for initiating this pervasive level of change by establishing a network among campus leadership, increasing visibility, and promoting accessibility.

Requirement for Disclosure

While some students never contact the academic support office after enrolling in college, others disclose their disabilities by registering and reporting the types of challenges they have experienced and supports they have received previously (Barnard-Brak et al., 2010; Cole & Cawthon, 2015; Couzens, et al., 2015; Lightner et al., 2012; Mamiseishvili & Koch, 2011). Disclosure of a disability is a requirement for students to receive accommodations at the postsecondary level, as mandated by ADA policy. Still, students who registered with their academic support offices frequently reported receiving beneficial support inconsistently, which resulted in many students with learning disabilities and ADHD subsisting without support rather than thriving, or dropping out of college rather than persisting to graduation (Barnard-Brak et al., 2010; Couzens et al., 2015; Hadley & Satterfield, 2013; Hong et al., 2011; Mamiseishvili & Koch, 2011; Richman et al., 2014; Stamp et al., 2014).

Resistance. When students with learning and attention differences are new to college campuses, the insecurity of change makes them vulnerable as they desire to fit in with peers. Researchers report that these students experience marginalization among other social barriers (Burgstahler & Doe, 2006; Leake & Stodden, 2014; Richman et al., 2014). Resistance on many levels is a common response to the need for disclosure. Cole and Cawthon (2015) reported, "There are important differences in willingness to disclose, attitudes toward accommodations, and determination between students who choose to pursue accommodation and those who do not" (p. 177). This study revealed that students were less likely to disclose because of stigmatization, lack of knowledge about support services, and a belief that support would not help them (Cole & Cawthon, 2015). Students with disabilities providing feedback through surveys express a mix of perspectives regarding access to support. While some have described

frustration regarding limited access to support services, others were unaware and apathetic (Barnard-Brak et al., 2010; Cole & Cawthon, 2015; Connor, 2012; Mamiseishvili & Koch, 2011; Reinschmiedt et al., 2013). When interviewed directly, most students perceived interventions to be helpful, reinforcing proactive support choices and promoting an openness to new approaches (Harrison et al., 2012; Mytkowicz & Goss, 2012). Stamp et al. (2014) reported, "A student's perception regarding the extent to which support services are sensitive to the needs of individuals with executive function challenges can have a significant impact on his/her persistence and willingness to access resources (p. 156). Academic support providers can bridge the gap in accessibility through proactive promotion of their service mission and a demonstrated sensitivity to students as individuals. An early connection with incoming students is essential, but not the only mechanism needed to counter resistance.

Lack of information. High school support coordinators unfamiliar with the supports offered in postsecondary settings and colleges tend to promote IEP documents. However, the two entities operate under different legislation and postsecondary academic support providers often discard IEP reports. This breakdown in communication robs students with learning and attention differences of the ability to advocate for their needs. While students must employ self-advocacy in college, they do not necessarily know what to advocate for and why (Hadley & Satterfield, 2013; Harrison et al., 2012). Gifted students with learning differences, often equipped through enrichment programs in secondary settings, may have unknowingly received support for invisible disabilities for which they do not know to advocate (Foley-Nicpon et al., 2011; Reis et al., 2014). Students with learning disabilities and ADHD indicated that they neither understand their disabilities, nor the support services that would have helped them in the classroom (Cawthon & Cole, 2010; Harrison et al., 2012; Lightner et al., 2012). Their grade

point averages (GPA) decrease as their struggles increase and these challenges prompt them to get support much later than they should have (Kena et al., 2015). They often do not know their legal rights, nor the extent of services available, and in retrospect, would have asked for support sooner and begun employing the services to their advantage (Cortiella & Horowitz, 2014). Promoting the services available to students with learning disabilities and ADHD among faculty members and campus leadership lays the groundwork for disseminating information among those directly interacting with these students.

   Lack of preparation. Transition services should begin with explanations of what students' disabilities are and what services provide the support they need. Lightner et al. (2012) recommended, "If we want students to seek services early in college, before an academic crisis occurs, then transitioning students need to be provided with information about the range of benefits provided" (p. 153). Colleges need to reach out to incoming students with learning disabilities, and high schools need to teach students more about their learning disabilities and educate them on services for which they should advocate (Madaus, Shaw, et al., 2011; Richman, 2013; Wizikowski, 2013). Kane et al. (2013) reported, "There is a critical need for college-level screening and 'early-alert' instruments that can help higher education professionals -- and disability support staff in particular--quickly and accurately identify college students at risk for learning disabilities and related academic challenges" (p. 22). Administering assessments is often a collateral duty for academic support providers, and proactive leaders in this role incorporate verbal and computerized assessment tools to help students identify their needs and the accommodations that best support those needs (Banerjee et al., 2015). Delee (2015) advocated for academic support providers in postsecondary institutions to engage students with disabilities, explaining the variations in accommodations between IDEA and Section 504, as well

as their rights and the benefits of exercising their responsibilities.

Assessment and Documentation

Students with learning disabilities and ADHD are required to disclose their disabilities to their institutional academic support offices as the protocol to consider accommodations. Academic support providers are accountable to extend legally mandated services to students with disabilities after students have initiated requests for support, describing the needs they have experienced and collaborating to determine appropriate postsecondary accommodations. Typically, students must supply medical or psycho-educational documentation at their own expense and inconvenience (Banerjee et al., 2015; Cole & Cawthon, 2015; Delee, 2015; Lightner et al., 2012; Wizikowski, 2013). Current standards qualifying students for support are open to interpretation by officials in academic support offices and the challenge to secure accommodations is exacerbated when students do not have the self-advocacy skills to request these adjustments or the determination to employ them (Banerjee et al., 2015; Cawthon & Cole, 2010; Madaus, Shaw, et al., 2011; Poon-McBrayer, 2013; Stamp et al., 2014).

Assessment. The inclusive wording of regulations articulated with the passage of ADAAA in 2008 reflects a clearer understanding of disability, and the reauthorization of ADA in 2010 guides implementing these regulations. Subsequently, the Association for Disability in Higher Education (AHEAD) created recommendations for practice to postsecondary academic support providers, facilitating the approval of accommodations as requested by students with disabilities seeking support (Klotz, 2012). The 2012 guidelines give greater priority to student self-reports and provider observation through individual interviews when qualifying students to receive accommodations (Klotz, 2012). Still, many institutions are reticent to provide accommodations without a historic record such as a Summary of Performance (SOP) or a current

individual psychoeducational evaluation (Banerjee et al., 2015; Madaus, Shaw, et al., 2011).

Planning plays a critical role in the transition from high school to college, facilitating the improvement of self-advocacy skills. The planning process needs to intentionally include students with disabilities who are still learning to advocate for themselves (Cawthon & Cole, 2010). Students with learning disabilities and ADHD often face challenges associated with these impairments that extend beyond the academic demands common to their non-disabled peers (O'Shea & Meyer, 2016; Richman et al., 2014). Practitioners in postsecondary education need to continuously write and observe policies that make support accessible to students with disabilities (Leake & Stodden, 2014). Some researchers have documented a need for more direction to aid in making correct referrals (Banerjee et al., 2015). Test scores, historical evidence, and objective evidence need to be weighed in balance with the stated need by a diagnostician as presented by the student advocating for legal support (Banerjee et al., 2015; Lombardi, Gelbar, et al., 2016). Assessment guidelines presented by AHEAD give student reports and provider observations priority over test scores (Klotz, 2012). Accessibility to services needed by students with disabilities at the postsecondary level could be facilitated more fluidly through the inclusion of high school records.

Documentation. Without communication between high school support personnel and postsecondary academic support providers, documentation presented by students with invisible disabilities is often insufficient to qualify students for the services they need (Wadlington, 2012). A comparison between mandatory services and practiced services revealed that states were not held accountable for compliance with federal legislation regarding support for postsecondary students with disabilities (Madaus, Shaw, et al., 2011). Practitioners analyzing this documentation and determining support eligibility for students with disabilities should find the

appropriate balance for accommodations to facilitate increased self-efficacy for students (Banerjee et al., 2015). A reduction of the disconnect that characterizes the transition of students with learning disabilities and ADHD from high school to college is possible if states require this documentation to be completed accurately and aid in making it available to the college, military, or employment opportunity next pursued by the student.

Strong recommendations have been made regarding the consistent inclusion of documentation summarizing the performance of students with disabilities in transition planning (Madaus, Shaw, et al., 2011). This involvement serves as a vehicle to aid the student in understanding strengths, weaknesses, and needs for accommodations; it helps the student develop self-determination needed to make the transition from the secondary to the postsecondary environment. Stamp et al. (2014) purported, "It is crucial that the steps and procedures required for students to access appropriate support services are streamlined and implemented by individuals mindful of the self-regulatory strategies required to follow them" (p. 157). Practitioners should employ AHEAD guidelines accordingly to prevent the incidental denial of accommodations when students can articulate their needs and self-advocate for supports (Klotz, 2012).

Accommodations and Services

Though some students benefit from transition planning before college enrollment, many have unusable or missing documentation (Banerjee et al., 2015; Cole & Cawthon, 2015; Madaus, Shaw, et al., 2011). Students choose not to seek academic support offices either because they could not locate the facilities, tried to prove they had outgrown their disability, believed that support services would not aid them, or endured experiences confirming this belief (Lightner et al., 2012; Mamiseishvili & Koch, 2011). Invisible disabilities enable students to avoid

advocating through disclosure, making those whose challenges are not known even more vulnerable (Delee, 2015; Madaus, Shaw, et al.). Students with disabilities transitioning from high school to postsecondary education settings have not outgrown their need for services and accommodations but may have difficulty articulating their needs (Cawthon & Cole, 2010; Harrison et al., 2012).

Accommodations. After receiving support at the secondary level, students with learning and attention differences face exponential challenges, often immediately upon entering college. In some cases, students with disabilities merit increased support because the extent of aid they benefited from through administrative staff, educators, and parents at the secondary level was not thoroughly documented (Hadley & Satterfield, 2013; Madaus, Shaw, et al., 2011). Other students who received modifications to the curriculum in grades K-12 may benefit from greater accessibility through accommodations supported by ADA, since modifying the curriculum is not supported by ADA at the postsecondary level (Mamiseishvili & Koch, 2011; Wizikowski, 2013). Grieve et al. (2014) proposed, "The processes of transitioning to and from college represent ideal time periods to provide targeted support to college students" (p. 28). Accommodations designated for consideration by ADA include strategies, tools, and other services that make it possible for students with disabilities to function as their non-disabled peers, without modifying the work required for completion. Strategies promoted as a result of ADA are schedule adjustments to provide optimal timing for classroom attendance and testing or limited access environments to minimize distractions; oral questioning and answering and writing in test booklets are among the tools frequently offered. Services typical as a result of ADA are tutoring, proctoring, and coordination of documentation. Gregg and Nelson (2012) conducted a meta-analysis regarding the effectiveness of accommodation, concluding that no one strategy, tool, or

service will suffice for any one disability; each student needs to receive an individualized assessment and supplied accommodations accordingly. Because students with learning disabilities and ADHD face unique challenges in postsecondary settings, ADA accommodations frequently do not provide sufficient support (Cawthon & Cole, 2010; Hadley & Satterfield, 2013). Academic support providers making assessing student needs through interviews and observation can determine the best services to supplement accommodations.

Services. Academic support providers are accountable to follow institutional protocols regarding accommodations as established by ADA and Section 504. Their roles may include advising students with disabilities about accommodations that are contingent upon face-to-face meetings with course instructors, or they may advocate on behalf of students initially, aiding students in the development of self-advocacy skills over time. Wizikowski (2013) documented students' experiences as they were mandated to disclose directly to their instructors to receive their legal accommodations; frequently carried out in the presence of other students, their appeals often met open challenges from those indiscreet instructors. Where policies are not known or not followed, inconsistency undermines the opportunity for these students to build self-advocacy (Foley-Nicpon et al., 2011; Poon-McBrayer, 2013; Wizikowski, 2013). Students have reported that the process of working with academic support providers is non-productive and frustrating due to inaccessible offices and providers, exorbitant documentation requirements, and misunderstandings about accommodations (Hong et al., 2011).

In multiple studies, a lack of training among faculty members yielded perceived discrimination among students with learning disabilities and ADHD (Cawthon & Cole, 2010; Couzens et al., 2015; Hong et al., 2011; Humphrey et al., 2011; Poon-McBrayer, 2013). Schools must affirm students for persisting despite negative responses from faculty members and provide

students the supports they need without having to claim a legal case in response to noncompliant leadership. Hong et al. (2011) proposed, "Higher education cannot forget that the goal of postsecondary education is to adequately prepare students to function in the 'real' world" (p. 182). Research validates the need for faculty to receive training and be held accountable to incorporate into their curriculum the instruction and practice that equips students with self-determination skills (DaDeppo, 2009; Harris et al., 2011; Mytkowicz & Goss, 2012). Rapport established between academic support providers and faculty members encourages the exchange of information, aiding in the understanding of invisible disabilities and effective ways to respond when observing a student characterized by learning differences.

Developing Self-Determination

Becoming self-determined means developing a sense of self and the agency to manage one's self, establishing goals, and prioritizing activities so as to achieve those goals. Learning disabilities and ADHD, identified among the invisible disabilities, are strongly associated with extensive struggles for those experiencing these conditions across many developed nations (Couzens et al., 2015; Fichten et al., 2012; Foley-Nicpon et al., 2011; Poon-McBrayer, 2013). Students lacking in executive function skills often struggle to activate and sustain effort over time, regulate a tendency for emotional overreaction, and effectively manage expectations for organization and goal-focused choices (Grieve et al., 2014). These students may benefit from shared-advocacy as they transition to postsecondary settings, since the differential between their successful degree completion compared to that of their non-disabled peers reflects their inability to navigate this journey without support (Banerjee et al., 2015; Bembenutty, 2011a; Connor, 2012; Kena et al., 2015; Newman, Madaus, & Javitz, 2016; Parker et al., 2011; Poon-McBrayer, 2013). Students with disabilities graduating from high school (N=11,000) were interviewed

regarding their postsecondary plans; the majority stated a goal for completing a 4-year degree, but only a fraction transitioned to a 4-year degree program ($n = 3,190$). After allowing 150% time for completion, only 34% of those who began college had graduated as compared to a 51% completion by students without disabilities nationally (Newman et al., 2011). Students with learning disabilities and ADHD, often having received support services in high school, represent the largest sector of those with disabilities enrolling in higher education (Kena et al., 2015; Richman et al., 2014). Equal access to education is particularly important to students with learning disabilities and ADHD. Though completing a 4-year degree improves the potential for employment in the general population, this correlation is even stronger among persons with disabilities (Burgstahler & Moore, 2009). As of 2011, the national rate of attendance in postsecondary education among those with learning disabilities was 67%, equal to that of their non-disabled peers; however, only 41% of those with learning disabilities completed a 4-year degree, still significantly lower than the rate for those without disabilities (Cortiella & Horowitz, 2014).

Academic support professionals coordinating the provision of support for students with disabilities are uniquely situated to bridge this gap through shared-advocacy, empowering students to develop self-advocacy while receiving support services and preparing them for future success in college and a more balanced life (Field et al., 2013; Richman et al., 2014; Stamp et al., 2014). Hong et al. (2011) reported that while faculty believed they taught self-determination skills, when asked to break these down into core components, they admitted some skill areas were conveyed less consistently than others. When institutions embrace the need for students to develop these core competencies, they provide training to faculty members. Students with learning disabilities and ADHD benefit from the incorporation of teaching self-determination

skills through every course curriculum (Couzens et al., 2015; Harris et al., 2011; Harrison et al., 2012; Hong et al., 2011).

Researchers recommend that institutions seek feedback from students regarding effective intervention and invest in supports that are perceived as beneficial rather than just following legal protocols (Hadley & Satterfield, 2013; Harrison et al., 2012; Reinschmiedt et al., 2013; Wadlington, 2012). As a result of such surveys, some academic support offices have responded by employing unique strategies that address the particular needs of students served on their campuses (Harrison et al., 2012; Humphrey et al., 2011). There is no legal requirement for representatives to advocate for these students to receive such support in postsecondary settings, and supplementary services not outlined by ADA that facilitate learning are also not consistently available (Hadley & Satterfield, 2013; Wizikowski, 2013). Students with disabilities who have endured setbacks and failures, and have the potential to succeed academically, greatly benefit from the investment of educational support personnel and faculty members who incorporate self-determination skill development in their support strategies (Hadley & Satterfield, 2013; Harris et al., 2011; Hong et al., 2011; Richman et al., 2014; Sheridan et al., 2015).

Self-awareness. Knowing one's self could be defined as having an awareness of one's abilities and limitations and perceiving the optimal ways to balance these attributes. Self-awareness is the first step in the development of self-determination to achieve to build the additional components of self-efficacy and self-advocacy (Ryan & Deci, 2000b). Without self-awareness, students with learning disabilities and ADHD do not seek support or do not know how to represent themselves when meeting with academic support providers, missing the opportunity to request appropriate accommodations even when they have received them in the past (Reis et al., 2014). Madaus, Faggella-Luby, and Dukes (2011) reported, "Manifestations of

poor self-awareness include not knowing where to start, or how to prioritize, and feeling overwhelmed, which in turn often leads to embarrassment, frustration, anxiety, self-doubt and depression" (p. 78). The self-defeating result of a deficit in self-awareness leaves students with learning and attention differences to face breakdowns in communication and increasing frustration in the postsecondary environment. In contrast, students who develop self-awareness improve communication skills and experience improved self-esteem as they can accomplish academic and social goals (Grieve et al., 2014; Parker et al., 2011; Reis et al., 2014). O'Shea and Meyer (2016) reported, "As students' needs become more internalized, a more adaptive integration of the disability to the authentic self is likely to occur and result in stronger patterns for use of services" (p. 18).

Among programs established to facilitate access to accommodations for students with learning and attention differences, faculty mentorship and coaching offer opportunities for these students to examine themselves with the guidance of advisors who prompt them to consider their self-concepts. Harris et al. (2011) reported, "Students who interact with faculty members get better grades, are more satisfied with their education, and are more likely to stay in school" (p. 27). One of the goals of postsecondary coaching programs targeting students with learning disabilities and ADHD is to improve self-awareness as a foundational element of self-determination (Connor, 2012; Field et al., 2013; Grieve et al., 2014; Komarraju & Nadler, 2013; Parker et al., 2011; Richman et al., 2014). Parker et al. (2011) proposed, "Coaching holds promise as an emerging type of academic support for college students with ADHD to promote improved executive functioning" (p. 115). Although such programs work in tandem with other facilitative initiatives from academic support providers, multiple studies have documented increased self-awareness among the benefits of coaching (Connor, 2012; Parker & Boutelle,

2009; Richman et al.). Self-awareness establishes the framework for developing the ability to manage one's self by tapping into strengths without being held back by limitations.

  Self-regulation. Students with learning and attention differences often are characterized by deficits in executive function skills critical to effective self-regulation. The ability to moderate one's self without intervention from an outside source is an integral component of self-determination (Deci & Ryan, 2002). Students with learning disabilities and ADHD who receive support through coaching for giftedness at the secondary level form positive identities and demonstrate self-determination in college (Foley-Nicpon et al., 2011). Field et al. (2013) examined the impact of coaching on the self-regulation of postsecondary students with ADHD. Results of this study indicate that coaching programs effectively support students' executive function deficits, "including such areas as time management, task organization, self-regulation, and stress management" (Field et al., 2013, p. 79). While some institutions share the commitment to coaching for the promotion of executive function skills, others advocate for faculty mentorship (Connor, 2012; DaDeppo, 2009; Harris et al., 2011; Hong et al., 2011). After assessing these two authentic approaches to equipping students with disabilities, it is clear that both have demonstrated effective outcomes.

  Although they have the capacity for mastery of rigorous postsecondary curriculum, students with learning and attention differences struggle at the postsecondary level to develop decision-making skills, practice emotional discipline, and move toward independence in their learning environments. The skills associated with executive function support self-regulation, as positive psychology purports, "Executive function consists of focusing and ignoring distractions, remembering and using new information, planning action and revising the plan, and inhibiting fast, impulsive thoughts and actions" (Seligman, 2011, p. 112). Students with learning and

attention differences ultimately must increase their self-regulation, yet at a pace appropriate for each as an individual. While many students develop the agency reflective of self-regulation at earlier ages, students with learning disabilities and ADHD often need extra time to develop these skills, having previously been focused on other types of development associated with their disabilities (Grieve et al., 2014; Hong et al., 2011; Komarraju & Nadler, 2013; Parker et al., 2011; Richman et al., 2014). Self-regulation promotes improved academic achievement, as it pervades into competency in completing class assignments, application in life management practices, and transfer of skills learned in one course to projects assigned in another course.

Self-efficacy. Preparing students to be intentional decision makers, learners, and members of society is the ultimate goal of postsecondary education. Without solid self-efficacy, students with disabilities do not persist at rates equal to their peers, failing to accomplish their goals for completing a 4-year degree (Connor, 2012; Foley-Nicpon et al., 2011; Lee et al., 2015; Mamiseishvili & Koch, 2011). The differential in completion rates is often attributable to a lack of self-efficacy. This differential could be mitigated through strategies aiding students in the development of self-determination starting from the point of postsecondary enrollment (Bembenutty, 2011b; Daly-Cano et al., 2015; Kane et al., 2013; Lee et al., 2015; Richman et al., 2014). Farmer et al. (2015) employed the Personal Strengths Intervention to explore the potential for influencing the self-determination levels of postsecondary students with learning disabilities and ADHD. As a result, student participants indicated that the self-management tools introduced and inclusion in the intervention facilitated their implementation of self-determination strategies including self-awareness, self-regulation, and self-efficacy (Farmer et al., 2015).

Shared-advocacy. Intervention in response to the deficits of self-determination among students with learning and attention differences may be described as a form of shared-advocacy.

The teaching of self-determination during the college experience can be very beneficial, particularly to first-year students. Getzel (2014) suggested, "It is the combination of the individual and specific environments that encompass the development and expression of self-determination" (p. 382). The experience of people to engage or withdraw is a function of their response to the environment (Ryan and Deci, 2000b). Leake and Stodden (2014) recommended that concerned individuals in support roles practice a form of shared-advocacy, providing aid to students while training them to develop the skills needed to advocate for themselves.

Cooperating within the postsecondary campus environment, academic support providers have created faculty and peer mentorship programs that aid students with learning disabilities and ADHD in developing the intrinsic motivation that leads to self-determination (Adams & Hayes, 2011; Bettinger et al., 2011; DaDeppo, 2009; Getzel, 2014). Adams and Hayes (2011) recorded, "Mentorship programs ensure that students will have positive interactions with individuals that will foster their development of confidence, independence, and other life skills" (p. 9). These benefits reach beyond college journeys into future work and life experiences. Coles and the Institute for Higher Education Policy (2011) outlined a process for establishing mentorship programs, advocating for the proactive recruitment and training of faculty members to serve as mentors to students, and strategically planning for the increase in postsecondary student retention. The stratified approach included researching student needs, developing a theory-based action plan, recruiting stakeholders, and identifying necessary resources, as well as encouraging family support of the mentees' connections with mentors' and ongoing monitoring of program effectiveness (Coles & Institute for Higher Education Policy, 2011). Mentorship programs are effective for first-year students across institutions (Bettinger et al., 2011; Connor, 2012; Sheridan et al., 2015). Mentorship and coaching included in the structure of academic

support services has been integral to the success of students with disabilities in multiple studies at a diverse variety of institutions (Adams & Hayes, 2011; Field et al., 2013; Harris et al., 2011; McCoy et al., 2013).

Hong et al. (2011) reported that instructors believe incorporating lessons that teach self-determination is important yet stated that they incorporate these lessons to varying degrees. Components comprising self-determination skills include problem-solving, self-advocacy, self-instruction, self-evaluation, goal-setting, self-monitoring, and leadership skills" (Hong et al., 2011). However, if a majority of faculty members cannot define self-determination, and the minority gained this understanding from outside the institution, there is a gap in the consistency students rely upon for support (Hong et al., 2011; Humphrey et al., 2011). Instructors can reinforce self-determination skills by offering examples of competency in assignments, making sure expectations are clear, and providing detailed feedback (Komarraju & Nadler, 2013). As training has been offered to faculty through disability support offices, educating instructors regarding appropriate support for students with learning disabilities and ADHD, these students report improvement in their self-efficacy and satisfaction with academic support providers (Burgstahler & Doe, 2006; Harris et al., 2011; Humphrey et al., 2011; Mytkowicz & Goss, 2012; O'Shea & Meyer, 2016). Institutional administrators must commit resources to this level of training since many professors perceive a placement of at least one student with disabilities each term. Academic support providers must proactively equip faculty members to support students with learning and attention differences, to include self-determination in instruction throughout college coursework.

Summary

The number of students with disabilities enrolling in postsecondary education institutions in the United States has increased substantially in the past decade (Cortiella & Horowitz, 2014). Still, no advocates are provided for these students to receive support after high school graduation, and support implemented at the postsecondary level is deficient in comparison with services students learning disabilities and ADHD received in secondary settings (Delee, 2015; Hadley & Satterfield, 2013; McCoy et al., 2013). Students with disabilities must disclose directly to academic support offices to receive accommodations, supplying documentation as required by individual institutions' academic support offices (Madaus, Shaw, et al., 2011). Transition planning occurs before college for some students; however, there is a distinct lack of connection to the support offices at colleges (Banerjee et al., 2015; Delee). Though students with disabilities offer a variety of reasons for not seeking academic support, they often are failing before they finally ask for help (Lightner et al., 2012). Students enrolling in college should have self-determination and advocacy skills; however, those with disabilities may still need to address deficits in these skills before they may persist and complete a 4-year degree (Harrison et al., 2012; Hong et al., 2011; Lee at al., 2015). Academic support providers can bridge this gap through shared-advocacy, facilitating access to accommodations, so students develop self-efficacy while receiving support services.

Previous studies provided the practitioners' perspective on provisions of academic support. There was a gap in empirical literature as these studies are either dated before the implementation of current service provision legislation or were conducted at institutions based on a purposeful sample that did not include the criterion of supplementary services for students with learning disabilities and ADHD. Additionally, the researchers did not employ case study

design or they strictly examined services exclusive of how providers respond. Studies were

bounded by cases in one state or region, or were accountable to a government outside the United

States (Couzens et al., 2015; Harrison et al., 2012; Hicks-Coolick & Kurtz, 1997; Wadlington,

2012). The literature demonstrated clear deficiencies in transition services and the need for

colleges to be proactive in picking up where secondary coordinators leave off. The literature did

not examine academic support providers' insight about how best to respond to the needs of

students when standard accommodations were inefficient or ineffective (Delee, 2015; Grieve et

al., 2014; McCoy et al., 2013). Examining choices by postsecondary institutions that have

returned effective outcomes through supplemental services or interventions, yielded insight for

developing best practices to be shared with academic support providers at similar institutions.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

The purpose of this multiple-case study was to examine how academic support providers respond to needs while serving students with disabilities at postsecondary institutions. Shared-advocacy practices that offer interventions on behalf of students with learning and attention differences may exceed standards to facilitate the development of self-advocacy leading to persistence. This chapter includes the study design, plans for selecting sites and participants, collecting and analyzing data, defining the researcher's role, trustworthiness, and ethical considerations. Results from multiple cases formed a generalized entity for practitioners holding similar roles in other institutions, leading to consistent facilitation of access to accommodations.

Design

Case study design applies to real-life experiences and has been utilized extensively in social constructivist research through the fields of psychology and education, though its roots are in anthropology and sociology (Creswell, 2013). Case study design investigates how or why a phenomenon exists and should be exploratory, explanatory, or descriptive (Yin, 2014). This exploratory study examined how academic support providers at five postsecondary institutions responded to students with learning and attention differences when academic accommodations did not thoroughly address students' needs. While case study design may be applicable for quantitative and quasi-experimental approaches, it is particularly useful in qualitative studies examining a phenomenon in a real-world context, exploring the decisions made, their implementation, or what outcomes have resulted (Yin, 2014).

This study aligns well with a multiple-case study (Yin, 2014), as it investigated the responses of academic support providers who served similar segments of the population in

clearly bounded systems within different regions of the United States. A researcher cannot manipulate the behavior of participants, and the contextual conditions integrated with this phenomenon meant they could not be studied separately (Yin, 2014). The holistic multiple-case design seeks common data points through cross-case analysis to form an overarching description of the phenomenon (Yin, 2014). Using a multiple-case study design for this study provided maximum variation in data collected through interviews, focus groups, and documents. With each unique case, I sought input not only from the providers but also from academic support staff and faculty members who received training and delivered the supports.

Yin (2014) further promoted the employment of propositions and descriptions of themes through collection methods such as observations, interviews, documentation, and artifacts. By examining the responses of practitioners representing the sites holistically, a synopsis was formed to describe effective practices for all types of institutions represented in this study. Propositions set limitations on the scope of an investigation, and benefit research efforts through increased feasibility, predicting either similar or conflicting results (Yin, 2014). Multiple propositions listed in Appendix H guided the development of the open-ended questions utilized in the interviews. Observing students' lack of preparation and executive function deficits, academic support providers offered training to faculty members, promoting paradigmatic shifts in perceptions of disabilities, and stimulating creative communication to put instructors at ease (Hong et al., 2011; Mytkowicz & Goss, 2012). Some academic support providers may have reached out to students through purposeful visibility at events, while others have made their offices more accessible without calling stigmatized attention to the challenges of students needing support (Lightner et al., 2012; Mamiseishvili & Koch, 2011). An advocacy partnership between academic support personnel and students with disabilities may aid these students as they

continue to develop the self-efficacy and self-determination imperative for self-advocacy (Daly-Cano et al., 2015; Stamp et al., 2014).

Examining how academic support providers respond called for an investigation of how or why these practitioners would take risks on behalf of students to facilitate support through non-mandated means. This investigation examined how academic support providers respond to the needs of students with learning and attention differences at postsecondary institutions. I incorporated field methods for collaborative observation into each of the five investigations with their associated participants. The methods used included intensive interviews with academic support directors; focus groups with academic support staff; interviews with faculty members; and additional documentation regarding the impetus for innovative intervention and lessons learned, including surveys of service effectiveness and reports describing the population of students receiving services. Creating the combined picture of the phenomenon was essential to completing the study for presentation to practitioners (Yin, 2014).

Research Questions

Central Research Question

How do academic support providers offer shared-advocacy at postsecondary institutions, promoting intrinsic motivation through accommodative intervention strategies for students with learning disabilities and/or ADHD?

Research Sub-Questions

1. How do academic support providers facilitate self-determination among postsecondary students with learning disabilities and/or ADHD on their campuses?

2. How do academic support providers discern the accommodations to offer postsecondary students with learning disabilities and/or ADHD on their campuses?

3. How do academic support providers use positive psychology to determine the shared-advocacy needs of postsecondary students with learning disabilities and/or ADHD?

4. How do academic support providers foster self-advocacy in postsecondary students with learning disabilities and/or ADHD?

Setting

Public and private university campuses provided the setting for this exploratory examination, focusing particularly on the coordination of academic support. Since application of support outside the parameters of legal policy varies among postsecondary institutions, postsecondary institutions intent on facilitating accommodations for students with learning and attention differences cultivate an environment of interest for this investigation. Directors of academic support offices demonstrate varying degrees of this facilitation, based on a personal drive or the encouragement of the university's administration. The academic support office on any college campus upholds the protocols through which students obtain accommodations, but also establishes the climate in which students with learning and attention differences seek facilitation of these accommodations.

Identification of Sites

I identified institutions of interest through the research of institutional support offices documented as providing supplementary programs to students with disabilities that facilitated implementation of accommodations, as well as published expert practitioners. Yin (2014) advocates for the application of stratified triangulation, gaining multiple perspectives utilizing multiple tools, and in the instance of multiple-case studies, collecting these from multiple sites. The criterion sample identified postsecondary institutions in states from multiple regions, maximizing the potential for application across diverse settings. The variation in resources and

populations served at each of the institutions founded the rationale for selection, while all provided academic support services as a common criterion (Yin, 2014). Limiting the sites was validated by previous studies that set this precedent, though not for this phenomenon (Hicks-Coolick & Kurtz, 1997). As a multiple-case study, this inquiry examined exceptional practices at each institution, with consideration toward application at schools of comparable composition. Within each site, representatives with similar roles were sought for input, providing for consistency in cross-case analysis (Yin).

Site Descriptions

Sites for examination included five postsecondary 4-year degree granting institutions that have established policies expanding on those mandated by ADA, created to facilitate the implementation of legal accommodations. The examination focused on the creative application of shared-advocacy designed to accommodate students with learning and attention differences as they developed self-determination skills. Variation based on the size of enrollment, private or public governance, and the geographic region of institutions within the United States were elements of interest to this examination, but I gave primary consideration to academic support providers who sought to provide creative responses to students based on their needs. The inclusion of multiple methods of data collection proved useful for triangulation during data analysis (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

Regional University. Regional University (RU) is the pseudonym for a large public postsecondary institution in the Midwestern region of the United States that is characterized by a culture of investment in the student population. While it offered graduate programs, this regional university focused on building individuals from their entry as freshmen or transfer students to reaching their potential and giving back to the community.

Transformational College. Transformational College (TC) is a pseudonym for a medium-sized private institution in the Northeastern region of the United States that consistently emphasized the importance of every aspect of student development since its inception more than 100 years ago. While research was a valued facet of its contribution beyond the campus, the overarching emphasis was in aiding academically gifted students in their understanding of themselves and their potential to impact others everywhere.

Interactive Institute. Interactive Institute (II) is a pseudonym for a small private institution with a high acceptance rate, drawing students with diverse backgrounds from pockets around the globe. The mission of this postsecondary school, to include and equip every type of learner without regard for ethnicity or economic standing, was woven through every facet of the campus community from residential experiences to curriculum development to research investigations.

Comprehensive University. Comprehensive University (CU) is a pseudonym for a large postsecondary institution focused on securing grants and investigating questions from every discipline, with an emphasis on practical application. Several other institutions in the Mid-Atlantic region shared this common drive, shaping students into competitive learners and solution finders that routinely impacted research trends in other parts of the nation.

Innovative College. Innovative College (IC) is a pseudonym for a medium-sized private institution best known among those in other Southern states, with a long history of emphasis on research and contributing to the body of knowledge globally. Economically elite and academically gifted students are challenged to become invested in critical thinking about how to improve physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health for communities throughout the world.

Participants

I selected a purposive criterion sample of postsecondary institutions offering 4-year

degrees. Those selected included two public and three private institutions of varying enrollment

size, geographical location within the United States, and institutional academic support program

composition. Each case involved individual perspectives from multiple participants including

directors of academic support centers, other academic support staff, and faculty members as

subunits for analysis in the identified institutional cases. A pseudonym was assigned to each

participant to maintain confidentiality (Creswell, 2013).

Selection Criteria

Within each case in this multiple-case study, participants included directors of academic

support services and their support staff involved with students through face-to-face interaction,

online communication, and completion of legal documentation of disabilities. Faculty members

eligible for participation had taught students with learning and attention differences and had

implemented accommodations for these students. They provided perceptions of academic

support providers regarding training, dissemination of information, and general interactions with

academic support providers. Documentation from academic support offices offered insight

collected by the institution to evaluate the effectiveness of services and report descriptions of the

student population served. The inclusion of voices from multiple perspectives provided for

triangulation of data during analysis (Yin, 2014).

Sampling Procedures

Directors of academic support offices, from each of the universities who agreed to

participate, were invited to provide access to support personnel for a criterion sample of support

providers. With institutional approval, I sent an email to faculty members recommended by the

directors of academic support offices, inviting them to participate in individual interviews. Staff

members of the academic support team were invited to participate in focus group meetings, and

academic support offices provided documentation from in-house surveys and census data

describing the composition of the population (Yin, 2014).

Sample Size

In qualitative case study research, fewer sites or individuals with extensive detail for each

provides a focus on deeper analyses (Yin, 2014). This theory was applied by specifying thick,

rich descriptions of each site and utilizing input from as many academic support providers as

possible at each site, though these numbers were limited. Within each of the five identified sites,

I identified five to 11 participants for contribution; one to six from each of the subunits. The

sample included at least three academic support providers from each institution, the director and

other personnel as identified by the director. Also, I drew at least two faculty members from

each site from a convenience sample among instructors who responded to a request for an

interview as generated by the institutions. Participation included 37 postsecondary

administrators, faculty and staff members contributing to 21 interviews and five focus group

meetings.

<center>**Procedures**</center>

I conducted research to determine the schools for participation, based on published

reports of academic support services offered to students with learning disabilities and ADHD in

public postsecondary institutions in the United States. I completed an expert review of the

questions for the intensive interviews with these practitioners. I secured permission from

representatives of each institution that participated in this case study, and subsequently secured

Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval from Liberty University (see Appendix A). Before

beginning the proposed multiple case study, I conducted a pilot study with a small, private 4-year

postsecondary institution to identify areas of weakness in data collection tools requiring

adjustment before conducting additional research. As a result, I determined that the number of

questions asked of Directors of Academic Support should be reduced, limiting time required for

those interviews to 60-75 minutes. I combined three related items and eliminated two others,

providing a reduction of approximately 10-15 minutes per interview.

After completing the pilot study, I contacted directors of academic support offices at each

participating institution for initial planning. I requested documents supplying information

regarding services offered through the academic support offices and results from in-house

surveys regarding the effectiveness and the population receiving support services. I sent

questions to interviewees in advance to maximize the quality of time invested in campus visits. I

arranged appointments for focus groups as coordinated by academic support directors and invited

personnel from academic support teams to participate. Email invitations were generated through

recommendations from academic support directors, requesting participation by faculty members.

Informed consent forms disclosed the purpose of the study and provided an option to decline

participation or withdraw at multiple intervals (Creswell, 2013). I met with the academic support

office director on each campus, conducted an intensive interview, and interviewed faculty

members who offered insight regarding the training and application of support services

implemented in the practice of education. Focus group interviews were conducted with

academic support staff members, providing perspective from their interactions with students in

the determination of supports to be incorporated into individualized plans. Participants were

assigned pseudonyms so only they may identify their experiences in the published results

without breaking their own confidentiality or that of others (see Appendix C).

A handheld 4GB audio recorder with time stamps and effective noise cancellation provided complete recordings of interviews with academic support providers and faculty members, and in focus group sessions with academic support staff. I prepared and tested recording equipment in advance of campus visits to facilitate smooth interview recordings and designated appropriate institutional pseudonyms (Creswell, 2013).

With confirmed participation from each institution, I secured appointments and completed campus visits. I organized documentation collected from each institution, arranging each set of items for analysis. I made backup copies of recorded interviews, storing them on a password-protected computer before transcription. As I completed interview transcriptions, I employed member checking, offering participants the opportunity to review their contributions to confirm accuracy. Participants completed this review through secure password protected files sent via email. Participants replied with inquiries for clarification, remarks about their use of vocal fillers and repetition or diversion from the topic, and encouragement in the completion of data analysis.

The Researcher's Role

I served as the human instrument for this investigation, examining the setting, the participants, and their interactions with one another. I intentionally engaged participants and demonstrated the value each one's input brought to this study. I collected, analyzed, and reported information to describe the cases observed for analysis. I have experience negotiating with both high school coordinators of exceptional student education and their counterparts in postsecondary institutions and am familiar with the distinctive documentation differences and supports offered through each office. The institutions selected for this study did not include those in my current network; therefore, I did not have any pre-existing relationships with the

academic support directors, staff, or faculty members whose perspectives were sought for examination.

While bias is unavoidable, I strove to be honest about my perspective as a practitioner to gain the most insight from the study for analysis and publication. I have served as an advocate for students with disabilities and have been alerted that a bias may exist reflecting my concern for their welfare. I have great respect for those who seek to accommodate the needs of students with disabilities, and I identified strongly with the expressions of participants. I disciplined myself to refrain from judgment and minimize the impact of my own biases by discussing them with other participants involved in the research, journaling my previous experiences for reference rather than taking research time to share them. I created a reflexive journal before data collection and added to it as I proceeded using a two-column table (see Appendix J). The first column noted the date and the second column listed potentially biased thoughts to minimize the impact of my own bias.

I presented an in-depth understanding of the case and gave back to the institutions rather than simply using the participants for data collection (Creswell, 2013). I shared results for the benefit of decision makers who will determine how to offer support services to students with learning and attention differences in the future (Yin, 2014). I documented what works in each institution so that academic support providers can share best practices, as suggested by researchers who have published recommendations for this type of documentation (Fagella-Luby et al., 2014). New strategies and ideas employed effectively at some schools may not be feasible in others. Still, publishing documented insights regarding effective practices at institutions where students are persisting will help generate possible options for consideration at similar educational institutions.

Data Collection

Following Yin's (2014) steps for field methods, data collection included interviews, focus groups, and supporting documentation as provided by academic support offices. The theoretical framework provided by self-determination theory and positive psychology (Deci &Ryan, 2002; Seligman, 2002) supports the examination of practitioners' efforts to respond to students with learning and attention differences to develop self-advocacy and focus on their strengths, ultimately practicing these skills independently as their peers do.

Data collection events provided digital recordings of interviews and focus group meetings, observations made personally through site visit experiences, and supporting documents obtained through academic support providers. A paradigm for support formed a picture to serve as a frame for all other inputs, beginning with directors of academic support. Faculty interviews provided an alternate perspective on the effective strategies implemented through academic support services in response to students' needs. Focus groups included members of the academic support team who offered insight gained through personal interaction with students who receive support. I collected all recordings on campus at one of the five participating case sites, where field notes and other observations provided foundational perspective. Digital recordings were duplicated and stored securely, then transcribed in preparation for data analysis.

Directors of academic support presented documentation when it was available, including previously accumulated census data on students with learning disabilities and ADHD and offering further insight regarding academic supports and providers in practice. Some documents transferred in paper form, and I retrieved others through institutional websites, following directions given by academic support providers who posted extensively in that publicly accessible medium.

The intentional examination of data through multiple collection methods provided a foundation for triangulation during data analysis (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Field notes and institutional websites provided physical descriptions of each site, including both the campus properties and the facilities where students participated in support activities. I described details pertinent to this exploratory examination regarding faculty members, academic support directors, and staff participants from the support offices.

Expert Review of Data Collection Tools

Before to submitting an IRB application, I consulted with three practitioners who have served on behalf of students with learning disabilities and ADHD. Each expert held a doctoral degree in education and offered feedback regarding the content validity of my data collection tools. Dr. M. D. prepared future teachers of exceptional learners, and taught effective strategies for supporting adolescent students in the classroom at the graduate level. Dr. K. L. previously taught special education courses to undergraduate students and oversaw their student teaching internships. She returned to a public-school setting where she served as a pre-k teacher to students with disabilities and was the parent of a college student with disabilities who successfully transitioned to college. Dr. W. B. specialized in teaching exceptional learners in a Montessori setting and had two children with learning differences who, at the time of this study, would soon enroll in college. Collectively, the reviewers' experience included not only working with students with learning disabilities and ADHD, but also preparing others for this discipline. Their insight equipped them to provide me with valuable constructive feedback, helped me consider the sequence of questions and examine each set for duplication, and challenged me to make sure that data collection would effectively address the research questions for this case study.

Interviews

Meeting to ask questions face-to-face at an established time and place constitutes an interview designed to collect data in qualitative research (Yin, 2014). The interviews conducted in this case study were audio-recorded, reviewed, and transcribed for analysis (Yin, 2014). A mutually agreeable location was determined to maximize openness and convenience for participants.

Intensive interviews. Academic support office directors provided insight through open-ended questions regarding shared-advocacy roles and the processes for developing appropriate accommodative interventions, forming a picture of innovative responses to student needs (see Appendix D). These interviews were designed to answer the research questions. Standardized Open-Ended Interview Questions for Academic Support Directors:

1. How do you promote awareness of Academic Support Services to incoming students?

2. What facilitation techniques effectively prompt students to speak to their professors?

3. What accommodations or support services have you consistently offered?

4. What services have been offered that few or no students utilized?

5. As students enroll beyond their first term, how does their involvement in support activities that your office provides vary?

6. Please describe the accommodations and services prescribed by ADA that are utilized most commonly in your institution.

7. How do you observe students registered for Academic Support Services to discern whether supports are effective?

8. How do you determine which services may be offered to address non-academic or social deficits?

Regarding questions 9-11, self-determination theory promotes intrinsic motivation through the development of self-awareness, self-regulation, self-efficacy, and self-advocacy.

9. What strategies have you employed to facilitate self-determination among students with learning disabilities and/or ADHD?

10. How have you accommodated the executive function and self-efficacy needs of students with learning disabilities and/or ADHD?

11. Through what types of engagement have you fostered self-advocacy among students with learning disabilities and/or ADHD?

12. What supports have you been able to provide even though they were not mandated by legislation?

13. What types of coaching opportunities have you provided through your office?

14. What other types of mentoring partnerships are promoted on campus?

15. Please describe the level of rapport experienced between the Academic Support Services office and other departments on campus.

16. What statistics have you collected regarding retention and graduation for students with disabilities?

17. How do you collect feedback from students regarding effectiveness of supports?

18. What vehicles do you make available for students, faculty, or administrators to recommend supplemental supports in response to their own observations?

Questions one through four provided insight regarding the standard operating procedures established by each institution's academic support office for implementing federal policies supporting students with disabilities (ADA). Question one addressed the critical need for awareness of the services available to students with disabilities frequently noted as a barrier to

students seeking accommodations for learning disabilities in postsecondary institutions (Cawthon & Cole, 2010; Mamiseishvili & Koch, 2011). While it is each student's responsibility to disclose any disability for which they desire support, few institutions provide aid in transition, including directions to academic support offices (Connor, 2012). In light of students' resistance to disclosing, they are unlikely to seek support when it is difficult to determine the process (Cole & Cawthon, 2015). Question two revealed concern about employing appropriate processes to bridge access to support between faculty members and students with learning disabilities (Wizikowski, 2013). While documenting disabilities has proven difficult for many students (Wadlington, 2012), applying documentation in ways that provide the supports beneficial to students remains challenging to academic support providers (Banerjee et al., 2015). Question three elicited the directors of support to list services in circulation while question four was written to get them to identify those no longer utilized, to streamline processes and serve students efficiently (Hadley & Satterfield, 2013).

Getzel (2014) reported a concern for academic support offices to foster self-determination skills in support of students' needs to persist despite disabilities. Question five was written to prompt the interviewee to consider the impact of supports available to students with disabilities on persistence (Mamiseishvili & Koch, 2011). While ADA provides for several disability-related accommodations, it also lists those possibly offered to students with learning and attention differences who present supporting documentation; question six extracted which of these supports are offered most commonly (Wizikowski, 2013). Questions seven and eight delved into the motivation of academic support providers to observe effectiveness of supports provided through their offices and expand on foundational supports to offer additional services

that facilitate the implementation of regulated accommodations (Summers, White, Zhang, & Gordon, 2014).

Self-determination theory advocates for individuals to be involved in developing life goals rather than having external sources dictate a path for them (Ryan & Deci, 2000a). Question nine provoked practitioners to discuss the strategies they employed to promote self-determination skill development among students with learning and attention differences (Seligman, 2002). Costello and Stone (2012) drew a direct connection between the promotion of positive psychology through executive function and self-efficacy reinforcement from teachers and administrative leaders to help students with learning disabilities and ADHD compensate for previous setbacks. The tenth question encouraged practitioners to disclose strategic responses that promote executive function and self-efficacy and provide the shared-advocacy needed by these students. Parker and Boutelle (2009) reported that fostering self-advocacy helped students with learning disabilities and ADHD overcome weaknesses in executive function skills. Question 11 brought academic support providers to share what activities they provided to help build the self-advocacy skills that compensate for weak executive functioning.

Based on implications of research by Hadley and Satterfield (2013), question 12 was written to gain insight regarding the process academic support directors utilize for offering new supports, and question 13 was written to discern the supports offered outside of what is required by regulations (Bettinger et al., 2011). Current research reflects the effectiveness of mentorship among the practices applied by academic support providers (Sheridan et al., 2015). Question 14 was designed to obtain information on whether practitioners effectively incorporated this approach, and to what extent. Few institutions publish the persistence and graduation rates of students with disabilities, and even fewer track the outcomes of students with learning

disabilities and ADHD, though national data are reported for many other minority populations (Kena et al., 2015).

The visibility and rapport of academic support directors among campus leadership and faculty members have been tied to the expansion of understanding the needs of students with learning disabilities (Humphrey et al., 2011; Lombardi et al., 2013). Question 15 inquired as to the intentional actions of academic support directors to educate other leaders on campus regarding practices that facilitate supportive campus and classroom environments. Students with learning disabilities have attributed persistence to graduation to the level of support they have experienced; question 16 prompted the directors of academic support to speak about the intentionality of documenting the success of students with learning disabilities (Demaris & Kritsonis, 2011). Surveying students and faculty provides opportunities for insight and feedback to be employed as academic support providers seek to continuously offer beneficial supports efficiently (Harrison et al., 2012). Questions 17 and 18 were written to determine how students provided feedback regarding effectiveness of supports offered so these insights could inform adjustments to practices or procedures.

Faculty interviews. Members of faculty were asked semi-structured questions regarding the successful application of services in the classroom, through communication systems, and for assignment submissions (see Appendix E). These questions incorporated the research sub-questions regarding self-advocacy and self-determination to guide interviews and sought insight regarding interactions with academic support providers.

Standardized Semi-Structured Interview Questions for Faculty:

1. Based on training you received from administrators in Academic Support Services or another resource, what have you found beneficial in preparing you to accommodate students with learning and attention differences in your classes?

2. In what capacities would you benefit from additional training?

3. How many students do you receive support requirement notices for each term?

4. At what point in the term do you receive these accommodation notices?

5. What are the students' responsibilities for communicating with you about notices?

6. In what ways have you been required to offer support to students?

7. If students do not communicate a need for support with you, but you observe a need, what protocols do you follow to help them?

8. Beyond what is required, what supports have you extended to students with learning and attention differences enrolled in your classes?

9. If you have mentored any students with learning and attention differences either formally or informally, in what ways do you think that benefited the students?

10. How would you describe the responses of students to your efforts to provide support?

11. How has Academic Support Services facilitated your efforts to provide optimal support for students with learning and attention differences?

12. Please tell me about any particular cases when you observed the system for providing Academic Support working especially well.

Questions one through six established the protocols practiced at each institution, supporting students with accommodations in the classroom. Lombardi et al. (2013) reported that opportunities for training offered to faculty members impact attitudes toward disability and

inclusive instruction positively. Question one benchmarked the level of training experienced by faculty members at the institution, while question two provided for faculty member input regarding areas where additional training may be helpful. Training for faculty members has been reported as beneficial both to those receiving the training and to those they serve (Humphrey et al., 2011). Research has established the predictability of faculty members for having at least one student with learning disabilities and ADHD enrolled in a course each term (Hong et al., 2011). Question three confirmed that this experience could be considered typical for faculty members at this institution. When academic support offices are accessible, students learn protocol and seek services earlier, providing accommodations letters to faculty members (Banerjee et al., 2015). Question four reported the timeliness of the distribution of this documentation. Across institutions, students are expected to establish or renew accommodations letters early each term, but some do not follow protocol and miss the opportunity to receive support until they are overwhelmed (Hadley & Satterfield, 2013). Question five allowed faculty members to provide insight regarding their experience communicating with students about providing support. Faculty members are required to provide support based on accommodations described in the individualized letters created for students (Gregg & Nelson, 2012; Lombardi et al., 2013). Question six attempted to establish whether instructors have only been required to provide legally mandated supports. Though students with learning disabilities or ADHD may not affiliate with the academic support offices on their campus (Lightner et al., 2012), faculty members may recognize those who appear to need help and refer them accordingly (Hong et al., 2011). This level of intervention cannot be enforced, but question seven reflected the sensitivity of faculty members to make sure students with disabilities know support is available.

Faculty members have many opportunities to promote self-determination (Hong et al., 2011), and questions eight through 10 inquired about instructors' responses to students' needs. Faculty members are not required to extend support beyond what is outlined in accommodations letters provided by academic support offices, but there is documentation of those who do, thus making a difference for students with learning disabilities and ADHD (Mytkowicz & Goss, 2012). Question eight encouraged faculty members to share any strategies they have employed to facilitate the implementation of accommodations. Students with learning disabilities or ADHD often struggle with executive function skills like organization and processing and may even have difficulty understanding the benefits of academic support. Mytkowicz and Goss (2012) reported that mentorship and coaching had significant benefits in the facilitation of development among students with learning disabilities or ADHD. Question nine sought to learn about any such interactions and whether faculty members perceived the investment as beneficial to students. Positive faculty member attitudes about providing supports to students with learning disabilities and ADHD, and positive interactions between these students and faculty members, have impacted students who otherwise may not have persisted (Hong et al., 2011; Lee et al., 2015). Question 10 investigated faculty observations regarding the responses of students to the supports they have implemented.

The remainder of the interview offers participants the opportunity to provide feedback regarding their experiences teaching students with learning and attention differences. Research recommends that academic support providers help students assess the success of self-advocacy strategies (Daly-Cano et al., 2015). Question 11 asked faculty members to share observations about the benefits of interventions initiated by academic support offices. Question 12 requested

insight from personal stories experienced by faculty members in their efforts to support students with learning and attention differences.

Focus groups

Multiple-participant focus groups offer rich insight because participants stimulate one another to contribute more deeply than they may have separately (Yin, 2014). A focus group was appropriate for this study because of its emphasis on exploring complex concepts from the perspectives of the participants. I conducted focus groups with members of the academic support team responsible for providing services to discuss practices, examine forms, and share presentations regarding equipment and services. Although the number of academic support team members is limited in some colleges, input from those who rely upon and respect one another can provide valuable insight applicable to similar institutional settings. Directors of these teams were invited to serve as co-moderators to guide discussions so important details would be included (Yin, 2014). However, at each institution, the director refrained from participating in the discussions to maximize the emphasis of the perspectives unique to each focus group participant. Responses from these voluntary participants gave context for investigating responsive interventions (see Appendix F).

Standardized Open-Ended Focus Group Interview Questions for Academic Support Team:

1. In what activities do students with learning disabilities and/or ADHD participate through the academic support office?

2. What observations have you made of students with learning disabilities and/or ADHD who desired to participate fully in their classes but experienced limitations in the form of executive function and self-determination challenges?

3. What efforts has the Academic Support Services office initiated in response to these observations and reports of students describing their non-academic challenges to full participation?

4. What circumstances have led you to consider coaching intervention for a student with learning disabilities and/or ADHD in their determination to be fully included?

5. How have you provided coaching to students with learning disabilities and/or ADHD regarding their interactions with faculty members or to promote self-advocacy?

6. What reports have you received describing responses of faculty members or administrators to students receiving supports?

7. How has the training of faculty and administrators developed while you have been on staff in the Academic Support Services office?

8. Please describe any requests by students or support providers for other supplementary services that have been implemented.

9. What plans are still under development in response to students' needs?

Supplementary programs initiated by academic support offices in postsecondary institutions have demonstrated a positive impact on students with learning disabilities and ADHD. Summers et al. (2014) described a strategic plan for intervention. Question one established the scope of both mandatory and supplementary services offered to students with learning disabilities and ADHD by each academic support office. Students eligible for supports have reported barriers to use of accommodations the prevent access to potential benefits (Cawthon & Cole, 2010; Couzens et al., 2015; Mamiseishvili & Koch, 2011). Question two was developed to solicit academic support staff insights from their interactions with students on this matter. Hadley and Satterfield (2013) described the value of self-determination skills for

students in postsecondary institutions, and the importance of academic support providers to respond by offering opportunities for skill development to college students with learning disabilities and ADHD. Question three prompted focus group participants to share the supplementary supports that have been made available to these students in response to observations and student feedback.

Intervention practices promoting self-determination (Deci & Ryan, 2002) on participant campuses were presented through the next set of questions, incorporating the application of positive psychology as a theory (Seligman, 2002). In a study by the National Bureau of Economic Research, Bettinger et al. (2011) reported marked improvements in persistence among randomly assigned students from the general student population at private, public, and for-profit universities. Another study examining the benefits of academic coaching reported rates of retention and graduation for students with disabilities comparable to that of the general student population (McCoy et al., 2013). Furthermore, a study directly examining students with learning disabilities and ADHD showed significant improvement for those receiving coaching in self-advocacy, organization, and study skills (Richman et al., 2014). Questions four and five were written to learn about the activities of academic support offices in facilitating coaching for students with learning disabilities or ADHD, to assist with self-advocacy and inclusion.

Lee et al. (2015) reported the ongoing need for students with learning disabilities and ADHD to receive support from family, faculty, and academic support providers. Question six was designed to elicit insight from support providers about the responses of faculty members involved in providing and facilitating support. Ongoing training for faculty and institutional leaders is critical to the facilitation of support for students with learning disabilities and ADHD (Humphrey et al., 2011). Question seven was written to learn whether training has been

intermittent or ongoing, and if institutions offered any type of training opportunities. Tuning into

the needs of students sooner rather than later in the accommodation process impacts persistence

for more students and allows for adjustment in response to weaknesses in support provision

(Reinschmiedt et al., 2013). Question eight presented the level of response academic support

providers can offer as they discover unmet support needs among students with learning

disabilities and ADHD.

Research has documented the executive function skill deficits of students with learning

disabilities or ADHD, and the continued need they must develop self-advocacy in college (Stamp

et al., 2014). Question nine was developed to provide a description of the protocols established

by the academic support offices for introducing new services and concluded the meeting with

discussions about the vision academic support providers have for their roles in the future.

Documents

Documents for use in qualitative research could include letters, agendas, reports, or

records of meetings (Yin, 2014). For this study, documents provided by Academic Support

Center (ASC) directors and ASC webpages on institutional websites related supportive data

qualifying the interventions implemented as a commitment to shared-advocacy. Documents

supplied by the academic support offices were examined looking for details supporting decisions

made to incorporate non-mandated strategies that facilitate legal accommodations for students

with learning disabilities or ADHD. These institutional offices were encouraged to share

surveys, questionnaires, census data published in-house, and records that demonstrate the needs

of students and effectiveness of interventions. In contrast to surveys aimed at building

quantitative data for comparison, questionnaires pose both demographic and open-ended

questions and present narrative findings to describe or explain results rather than presenting them

in tabular form (Yin, 2014). Documents for analysis in this study detailed services provided, gaps in services observed, plans to mitigate deficits, choices to share advocacy, and actions taken by providers. With permission, I made copies for reference, with any non-essential personally identifying information removed.

<div align="center">**Data Analysis**</div>

After all data collection from each institution was complete, I transcribed the data from recorded interviews and focus group sessions, and also converted my field notes into typed documents. This transcription process aided in determining the point where it reached saturation. Coding based on a priori codes from an extensive review of current literature, open coding, and codes associated with the identified propositions contributed to structure in layers, allowing for the identification of patterns while establishing common themes (Yin, 2014). I managed qualitative data for analysis through Dedoose, an online database organization system providing fluid access to files with powerful searching, sorting, and security features. Dedoose is especially appropriate for case study design because it allows for single-case and cross-case analyses, revealing patterns based on common words or themes. Dedoose associated the auditory copies of interviews with their transcribed documents, so I listened and read along for greater depth of processing.

I dedicated time to reading and analytic memoing, a crucial component for building the structure that brings experiential insight to the reflective process (Yin, 2014). Data from interviews with the academic support providers and faculty members, focus group discussions, plus documentation offered by the academic support providers was used to describe each sub-unit separately, processing experience and meaning in light of propositions while focusing on

analysis (Yin, 2014). Input from interviews, focus groups, and documentation represented elements contributing to the analysis, building an account through describing each case.

I examined input collected from each participant and developed a description for each of the five cases. I critically examined the coded text and recorded interviews and verified that participants' views are reflected accurately. Also, I examined focus group and interview transcripts and documents supplied by academic support providers, substantiating intervention decisions. Finally, I compared inputs within each case to identify themes and prepare a complete picture for each institution (Yin, 2014).

I identified cross-case patterns by comparing intersecting points between the different cases and synthesized these findings (Yin, 2014). I developed generalizations from a naturalistic position, articulating synthesized findings for fluid readability and application consideration (Yin, 2014). The cross-case analysis led to assertions based on commonalities among the cases. Analytical generalization was feasible based on the rejection of alternate propositions, and affirmation of stated propositions became evident through this process (Yin, 2014).

Trustworthiness

Qualitative inquiry seeks a naturalistic interpretation of reality, making sense of phenomena when considering the meanings assigned by people (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). A constructivist response to validity and reliability offers parallel terms to address thoroughness and accuracy due to the potential researcher influence through the function as a human instrument (Creswell, 2013, p. 300). Trustworthiness is the confirmation of adequate rigor proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985) to include credibility, dependability, confirmability, transferability.

Credibility

Credibility is the evidence that claims made on behalf of participants are accurate reflections of participant input (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this study, credibility was established through prolonged input and multiple forms of data collection with participants, asking open-ended questions and following up with probes, then analyzing supporting documentation that reflected choices to provide shared-advocacy services. Member checking allowed participants to verify accurate transcription, by providing them the opportunity to review and correct their interview dialogues prior to analysis. Thick, rich descriptions of each data collection method maximized the commonalities available for comparison through analysis.

Dependability and Confirmability

Dependability provides detailed descriptions of research instruments and procedures for data collection and analysis so that replication of the research process is straightforward (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). As people and situations are certain to vary, so was the ability to maintain consistency. Honest reflection and accurate documentation of these variations, such as a change in the number of participants or uses of a specific method, supported findings as dependable. While this adjustment compromised the potential for replication, openness about deviations from the plan increased the dependability of findings. An audit trail, recording all activities conducted during this study, chronicled this process for review by an outside researcher (see Appendix G). Documenting thought processes and choices through the employment of an audit trail ensured dependability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Confirmability ensures that interpretations of analysis by the researcher accurately align with the data collected (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). By employing cross-case analysis, themes were identified, leading to confirmable assertions based on commonalities among the cases. Lincoln

and Guba (1985) described a peer review as one conducted by an external resource such as a

peer researcher or other colleague, who listens and helps process information objectively by

asking critical thinking questions regarding methods and interpretations to ensure confirmability.

Exchanges with the reviewer occurred after data analysis was completed and documented for

reference throughout the analysis. Detailed and thorough descriptions of data collection

promoted transparency, demonstrating that data reported accurately reflects the data collected.

Coding samples were included in Appendix I to demonstrate a commitment to accurate data

analysis.

Transferability

Transferability substantiates outcomes of research with the possibility of applying the

learning in one context to the widest possible array of other contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Considerations for transferability were grounded in adherence to the study design and selection

of participants through purposeful sampling. A multiple-case study provided diverse inputs at

each of the selected cases, and thick, rich descriptions of each site supported potential application

at similar sites. Bounded variation of sites supported transferability through the selection of five

geographically and demographically diverse institutions offering 4-year degrees. They included

a large state university in the Midwest, a mid-sized private university in the Northeast, a small

private college in the Northeast, a large state university in the East, and a mid-sized private

university in the South. Verification documented following the delineated process, and that

participants were appropriately vested members of the case. Questions approved by IRB were

answered and reported thoroughly to demonstrate the ability of findings for application in similar

settings.

Ethical Considerations

Pursuing identified theory while remaining sensitive to participants' concerns employs an ethical balance by which I weighed my investigation. I brought my own paradigm to this examination and appropriately shared my perspective without guiding participants. Ethical issues arise throughout the research process, and I anticipated and was alert to these concerns at every phase of the study. As the researcher in a qualitative study, I was the key instrument, respecting the insights of those involved in the practices under examination rather than manipulating them to achieve some predetermined outcome. I positively reinforced the sharing of effective practices and lessons learned and sought opportunities to give back to those contributing from their experiences.

I managed qualitative data for analysis through Dedoose, an online database organization system with security features (Creswell, 2013). Focus group participants interviewees voluntarily contributed as requested, had the right to withdraw before participating and again afterward, then once more at the point of member checking, prior to publication (Creswell, 2013). Questions for interviews and focus groups were based on the current body of knowledge as reflected through a thorough review of the literature and the established theoretical framework. Three experts independently reviewed each set of interview questions and verified for applicability regarding the study's purpose and research questions. Collectively, they helped answer the stated research questions and sub-questions (Yin, 2014), followed IRB policy, and secured approval (Creswell, 2013). All participants were over age 18 and provided a statement to verify competence and give informed consent (see Appendix C). IRB approval verified the appropriateness of sites and defined parameters, which were adhered to completely (Creswell, 2013). Due to the potentially sensitive information collected, results were not shared with the

academic support office directly; I published the analysis upon completion with all identifying information removed. Identities of faculty and staff members and academic support providers were kept confidential, and I created pseudonyms for each participant and for each of the institutions represented. Codes representing participants were used to associate participants with interview transcripts.

I will retain the data for three years from completion of the study, at which time I will erase the recordings. I will share the findings through the publication of this dissertation and other professional journal entries or conference presentations. I have protected the identities of participants in each case, so I only highlight the outcomes of research and not individual contributions. I have taken every precaution to protect participants' identities, but I cannot assure those who contributed to a focus group that other members of such a group will not share the discussion with persons outside of the group. With final participation agreements and no declines documented, data was securely stored online, in a password-protected database for easy reference, secure storage, and a record of coding and notes (Creswell, 2013; Yin, 2014).

Summary

The position held by academic support providers on college and university campuses uniquely situates them for responding to the needs of students with learning and attention differences. While overseeing the application of legal policies is their key role, responsibilities may extend to collateral duties that facilitate the implementation of accommodations.

With IRB approval, I examined the responses of academic support providers, actively and creatively facilitating self-determination development needs of students with learning disabilities and ADHD on their campuses. I conducted this qualitative study, collecting and analyzing data following recommended protocols for trustworthiness. Perspectives of

practitioners and faculty members were first examined within each case, then combined to develop one overarching representation of the intervention offered by academic support providers at institutions where students with learning disabilities and ADHD have access to supplementary services that facilitate accommodations mandated by government policy.

By integrating the perspectives of academic support service providers and faculty members, and analysis of academic support service documents, I formulated a paradigm for serving as an academic support provider responsibly and responsively. The evidence from the cases studied identified best practices at postsecondary institutions, revealing the impetus for providing supplemental services facilitating the delivery of accommodations for students with learning and attention differences. Educational leaders serving in similar roles at other institutions may consider this paradigm and apply it to the context of their own settings.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

A case study was conducted using a holistic, multiple-case approach as described by Yin (2014). Five postsecondary institutions offering 4-year degrees served as sites for examination of practices supporting students with learning and attention differences. Sites were purposefully selected based on subscription to a philosophy that simply complying with ADA requirements does not always provide adequate support for these students, and that additional support must be made available for students lacking in executive function to build a foundation from which to develop self-determination skills essential to academic success. Facilitation of accommodations through strategies uniquely created in response to the needs of students with learning and attention differences provided the focus for this investigation. Academic support providers characterized the interventions created in response to the needs observed in these institutions as strategies of 'shared advocacy.' Each one created opportunities for the academic support team to aid students in their development along the continuum of self-determination: from self-awareness to self-regulation, to self-efficacy, and ultimately to the goal of self-advocacy and independence as a student. Each of the institutions serving as a research site varied in combinations of enrollment size, geographic region of the United States, mission emphasis, program offerings, and private or public institutional governance. The inclusion of multiple methods of data collection proved useful for triangulation during data analysis (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Further analysis was made across cases to form a synthesized picture of the phenomenon (Yin, 2014).

From the onset, this multiple-case study was designed to examine how and why directors of academic support programs have responded to the needs of students with learning and

attention differences, extending services beyond those legally mandated as ADA

accommodations. The descriptive aspect of this examination yielded insight regarding the events

that led to the innovations incorporated into academic support programs, while the interpretive

nature of investigation yielded the motivation of leaders to respond to needs of students they

interacted with and observed. While each of these creative authorities has invented a remarkable

system that meets the needs of the student body at their respective institutions, they built many

aspects of these systems with transferable qualities allowing for emulation at other institutions.

As a researcher, I sought to preserve the anonymity of both the participants and the institutions

where they serve, out of consideration for their privacy. However, I placed no intention on

masking identity to protect an institution, faculty, or administrator from negative associations.

On the contrary, the work of these leaders is worthy of merit, exemplary in the positive impact it

has had on their learning communities overall and the difference it has made in the lives of many

who face the challenges of learning and attention differences.

Pilot Study

In preparation for the multiple-case study, I contacted leadership at an institution in the

researcher's home state with a proposal to serve as the site for a pilot study. With approval from

the academic support director, I further discussed the proposal with the college provost, who

subsequently requested documentation for submission for IRB approval. Due to exceptional

timing, I was able to arrange a one-day visit to the campus and conducted it within one week of

the initial consultation.

The pilot study was conducted to test the validity and reliability of the data collection

tools to determine whether content effectively addressed the research questions and whether the

interviews to be scheduled could be completed in a designated period. This preliminary

examination involved interviews with the academic support director and two faculty members, and a focus group with a team of academic support staff on a single campus, modeling the profile to be replicated at five additional institutions in the multiple-case study that followed. This learning opportunity also enabled me, as the researcher, to set aside assumptions and practice, letting participants speak about their experiences and insights, allowing for consideration of identification of themes and patterns in future data collection events.

Implications of the Pilot Study

Through interviews with the faculty members and director of academic support, I obtained valid and reliable data. Conducting each in a different setting also demonstrated the value of meeting in a room with a closed door and silenced phones. Students, staff, and other faculty received the message that the interviews were not to be interrupted, while those conducted with an open door or in an open space did not produce the same level of consideration.

The focus group experience proved challenging because it had to be conducted in the same time frame when members of the academic support team would have lunch, and thus lunch had to be ordered, paid for, and coordinated in advance, and delivered to the meeting location before the meeting's start. When this did not occur fluidly, it was evident that I should not attempt this logistically complex process on future site visits. Validity and reliability of the data collection tools were confirmed, with generous and transparent contributions from each of the four participants who committed in advance and brought signed consent forms to the meeting.

Conclusions of the Pilot Study

After completing the pilot study, I determined that the questions designed to learn from the directors of academic support might require more time than would be reasonable, considering

their commitment to working directly with students, overseeing members of the support team, and additional responsibilities common to department leaders on larger college campuses. I estimated a period of 60-75 minutes for these interviews, yet it proved impossible to address each of the original questions in this time frame. In the same vein, a subset of related questions seemed redundant, testing the patience of both the researcher and the participant. With a goal to reduce the total time commitment required and streamline the data collection for each subsequent interview with an academic support program director, three related items were combined, and two additional questions eliminated. This process provided an overall reduction for the estimated time required by approximately 10-15 minutes per interview, making it conceivable to complete the interview in 60-75 minutes. Finally, the pilot study experience confirmed that data collection for one site could be completed in a single day, even if the location of the site required distant travel; careful planning would support a one-day site visit with one focus group meeting and three to six interviews.

Participants

In qualitative case study research, fewer sites or individuals with extensive detail for each provides a focus on deeper analyses (Yin, 2014). This theory was applied by detailing thick, rich descriptions of each site and utilizing input from as many academic support providers as possible, though these numbers were limited. Within each of the five identified sites, I identified five to 11 participants for contribution; anywhere from one to six from each of the subunits. The sample included at least three academic support providers from each institution, the director and other personnel as identified by the director. Also, I drew at least two faculty members from each site from a convenience sample among instructors who responded to a request for an interview as generated by the institutions. Participation included 37 postsecondary

administrators, faculty, and staff members contributing to 21 individual interviews and five focus group meetings.

Pseudonyms for each institution, presented originally in chapter three, precede descriptions of the sites where I collected data. The descriptive landscape of each site forms a setting through which to view those serving at that campus. Following the framing of this environment, I introduced individual participants with consideration toward their interest in supporting students with learning and attention differences. I also assigned pseudonyms to individual participants for the reporting of results.

Case One: Regional University

This large public, coeducational postsecondary institution is characterized by a culture of purposeful investment in a population of students coming primarily from high schools in-state or neighboring Midwestern states. The expanse of the suburban property necessitates a campus transit system, but many students, administrators, and faculty frequently choose to walk for exercise or convenience. Besides opportunities for recognition and service through departmental and campus-wide honor societies, students may join a campus-based Greek society while student athletes participate in NCAA Division I sports. Approximately 70% of faculty held terminal degrees in their disciplines. Though some students came particularly to pursue graduate studies, many were among those who enrolled as undergraduates and were encouraged to continue beyond their initial degrees. Female students outnumbered males by a ratio of 3:2. The institution's mission translated into the practical equipping of individuals from their entry as freshmen or transfer students to reach their potential and become active contributors to the campus community and onward as they represented the institution even after graduation. About

one-tenth of students enrolled part-time, and published graduation rates showed that more than half finished 4-year degrees within five or six years.

   Mitch. Mitch served as director of the academic support center, and networked with faculty members and other campus administrators through participation in various leadership positions supporting campus-wide initiatives. He earned a B. S. in history and political science, then an M. A. in social science at this institution, prior to serving as Assistant to the Director of Academic Support. Subsequently, he followed in his mentor's steps and had interwoven the connections between other offices and the academic support center, building an inclusive environment for all learners by having their accommodations delivered through venues on campus where those without accommodations are receiving services. Mitch promoted awareness of the academic support center's role in coordinating support services by meeting with department leaders, making short presentations at departmental meetings, and making himself available to anyone to speak by phone, in person, or through email, diligently responding to each question and concern. Mitch co-authored research articles to increase the body of knowledge regarding successful practices for students with disabilities transitioning to college, and transitioning from college to the workforce, and maintained an innovative mentorship program he proposed early in his tenure. Results in press now are very encouraging as Mitch shared, "We're finding that students with disabilities are being retained at the same rates as students without disabilities" (Interview, September 21, 2017). He advocated for students supported through accommodations by establishing internships with local employers to offer valuable work experience and training for those least likely to be selected for competitive placement and serves as a consultant to other area institutions working to develop appropriate responses to the needs of students with disabilities.

Millie. Millie was a determined advocate not only for the population representing the greatest minority, people with disabilities, but also others perceived as slighted by society. She promoted self-determination, overseeing a student group to promote peer mentorship through leadership opportunities and encouragement. In addition to her responsibilities in the academic support center, Millie served as an adjunct faculty member and had first-hand experience providing classroom accommodations for students with learning and attention differences. She completed her preparation at this institution, including a terminal degree in Education.

Jerry. Jerry held an undergraduate degree in elementary education and a Master of Arts in higher education from this institution. He served as an advisor both here and at another public institution in the region and instructed the first-year seminar for freshmen. At the time of this study, Jerry supervised the implementation of accommodations for students with learning and attention differences. He helped in the development of a peer mentorship program, providing more than 20 hours of training to student leaders experienced in tutoring so they can offer additional aid through accountability. Though in its early stages, the equipping of peer mentors already demonstrated positive results and given consideration for expansion to serve more students who would benefit from this investment in the development of self-determination skills.

Jennifer. Jennifer thrived on innovation and poured her boundless energy into mentoring both students and other faculty while constantly seeking new ways to incorporate universal design into social sciences instruction. Jennifer's preparation included multiple degrees from an institution on the West Coast where she completed a Ph.D. in sociology. Her passion for making instruction accessible to all learners was exemplary; as evidenced in the recognition she received through institutional, state, and national awards. Never compromising on integrity, Jennifer investigated methods of research, communication, and evaluation that

permitted students the greatest flexibility, promoting mastery without altering the legitimacy of

the curriculum. She published extensively regarding the application of methods she has

investigated, invented, and implemented. At the time of this study she was overseeing the

implementation of institutional initiatives, but still instructs and encourages others to seek the

kind of continuous improvement she practiced herself.

  Wally. A born researcher, Wally, sought effective methods for connecting future

educators with the most challenging learners. Self-described as twice-exceptional (gifted with

learning differences), he sought to model acceptance: holding students accountable to synthesize

and apply instruction while utilizing accommodations without seeking curriculum modifications.

Wally's preparation included multiple degrees from an esteemed military institution and a Ph.D.

in education from a research university in the Southeastern United States. His commitment to

investing in students with learning differences pushed him to build a rapport that demonstrated

his confidence in the potential of every learner, reflecting the compassion shown to him by a

mentor as an undergraduate. Wally consistently served as a faculty mentor, having initiated this

practice himself before the establishment of the mentorship program on campus over a decade

ago. He made time to serve in campus governance and other leadership roles to represent the

School of Education and encourage students with disabilities to take active leadership in

positions across the institution.

  Monica. Speaking briefly with Monica, her sense of care for students facing great

challenges effervesced. Her preparation included multiple degrees from another Midwestern

institution, including a Ph.D. in communication. A committed expert in her discipline, many

students graduating from her department were recognized in this field as they assumed research

roles at the graduate level in other institutions. Monica served as an advisor for student

organizations and managed a program that introduced students to leaders in the industry. As a mentor, she intervened to aid students with learning and attention differences and held them accountable to persist. Monica intentionally checked in with students who were struggling and took the time to invest in helping identify how to get help when they needed it.

Case Two: Transformational College

This medium-sized private, coeducational institution consistently emphasized the importance of each student developing as a community member involved in service to others, a leader concerned about global problems, and a scholar equipped to create effective solutions. Like other institutions in the Northeast, research was an integral facet of this university, with over 90% of faculty holding terminal degrees. However, faculty gave greater priority to aiding academically gifted students in understanding themselves and realizing their potential to impact others in all circumstances, so research initiatives must align with this overarching mission. Only one-third of students applying were accepted, and only 25% of those accepted completed high school within the state. Initiatives have been taken to increase racial minority representation, and numerous departments are designed to aid students with learning differences, those first to pursue postsecondary education in their families, representatives of minority groups, underperforming members of the student body, and those who fall into more than one of these categories. A balance existed in enrollment representation regarding gender, and approximately 50% participated in intramurals, while athletes representing the institution competed in NCAA Division I sports. Students had limited access to participate in honor societies, but the community was strong, housing almost 85% of undergraduates on its urban campus. Transportation was almost non-existent on campus, as buildings were close together and the estate flooded with pedestrians during class transition periods. Majors included

disciplines within the arts and sciences, giving strong consideration to preparation for advanced study beyond a 4-year degree; over 90% of students finished in six years or less.

Margaret. At the helm, Margaret was respected as a leader throughout campus, both by the administration and faculty at this highly ranked institution. She earned both her undergraduate and graduate degrees in education at this institution and completed a Ph.D. in exceptional education here while serving as an assistant to her predecessor. As director of the Academic Support Center, Margaret built on its strengths and formed a team unified to offer innovative options for students with learning and attention differences. The school offered the extensive range of supports to all students on campus, not just those with documented disabilities. Regarding the center's optimal location at the middle of campus, Margaret shared,

> We have honestly probably outgrown our space. I think if I ask for another space, I would get something that I did not like as much as this, so we say we will extend the hours. You know, we are open from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. We are open on Sundays. We are only closed on Saturdays. (Interview, October 2, 2017)

Margaret empowered her team to investigate and experiment with new support techniques and recommend opportunities for expanded services. Tying proposals to the mission of the institution helped Margaret garner funding to implement both tested and newly created interventions.

Sabina. Sabina earned a master's degree in education from a West Coast institution and previously served in the Northeast at another institution, helping students with learning and attention differences transition to college. At the time of this study, she served as assistant to the director of academic support, building on the established model by continuously educating faculty and leadership on campus about the nuanced needs of these students. Sabina sought

opportunities to strengthen understanding and extend additional support through the vital network of programs offered in the academic support center, building up students while equipping them for success. Periodically, she represented the ASC by making presentations to representatives of other institutions who were developing programs to serve students from this population better.

Brenda. Brenda was a gifted negotiator with an incredible instinct for the multi-faceted needs of students with learning and attention differences. With a master's degree in Psychology from a nearby institution, she served as a coach in the ASC and was pursuing a second graduate program in philosophy at the institution where she served. Brenda always had her antennae tuned to forge new relationships with departments on campus, serving as an ambassador for the academic support center by offering insight about the needs of students, and training faculty and administrators to offer the support to serve students in ways not considered previously.

Judy. With both undergraduate and master's degrees in organizational administration from this institution, Judy oversaw coordination of testing services and related technical assistance, serving all students who sought support by coordinating tutoring and testing services. Recently implementing a specialized system for organizing the scheduling of these services, she expanded the ability of the support team to meet the needs of students without increasing personnel. Her colleagues reflected that her innovative oversight facilitated the accessibility of existing support staff to focus attention investing face-to-face support for students.

Kelly. Kelly held a Ph.D. in developmental and educational psychology, and served as a key leader in administration, situated to study and report trends in student development. She served as a student advisor, curriculum developer, and instructor of newly enrolled students who frequently experienced the undermining effects associated with transitioning to collegiate life.

Kelly completed both her undergraduate and terminal degrees at this institution and recognized that life circumstances, including newly discovered learning and attention differences, can exacerbate the challenging terrain of this transition. She consistently reminded students she advised, as well as those enrolled in her courses, of her availability to respond if they were struggling. This extension of her concern ameliorated many situations that would otherwise have been detrimental to successful management of academic and living skills for these students. Kelly encouraged students to search within themselves introspectively, to build a support base while in college, and above all, to find a mentor.

Sue. Sue served in a unique role within administration, extending the institution's mission to develop character and leadership among first-generation students. She held undergraduate, and master's degrees in English, the latter from this institution, and relished her teaching responsibilities in arts and sciences. Distinctly sensitized to students who faced learning challenges that complicated other life and academic circumstances, accessibility enabled Sue to promote empowerment among those she mediated for, holding them accountable to persist and overcome obstacles most students have never had to consider.

Case Three: Interactive Institute

This small private, coeducational institution with a high acceptance rate draws many international students from particular regions around the globe, representing 10% of those enrolled. Nearly 20% represented racial minority groups from within the United States, but females outnumbered males 3:2. Over 95% maintained full course loads, and almost 90% lived on campus throughout their 4-year programs. Consequently, transportation was a non-issue, and parking was not limited; extensive room for expansion was available on this large suburban property. From residence life to campus events to classroom experiences, the college's mission

was evident: develop intellect, character, and commitment to service by including and equipping every learner without regard for ethnicity or economic standing. Collaboration between administrators, faculty, teaching assistants, and learning coaches facilitated successful progress for all students, as evidenced in a graduation rate of 70% within five to six years.

Grace. Revered by faculty, admired by her staff, and publicly credited by students she assisted, Grace provided a model for academic support leadership on this intimate campus. Though she completed her undergraduate degree in psychology at this institution, she earned a master's degree in education at a medium-sized private research institution in the vicinity prior to developing her role in the directorship. As a devoted innovator, she sought every opportunity to learn from other professionals and improve the processes employed at her institution when offering support to students with learning and attention differences. For instance, Grace shared,

> We teach a class that kind of embodies a lot of the things that we do with students. It's called Applications of Learning Theory. We take stuff from learning theory and explain it to students and how it looks in their own studies. (Interview, October 3, 2017)

In this capacity, Grace represented the academic support center as a member of the faculty, instructing students who received accommodations which put her in peer status with other faculty members. She also served on the Council of Chairs as the Director of Academic Support, reporting directly to the provost.

Trey, Serena, Molly, June, Marcia, and Laura. The academic support staff functioned as a team, collaborating to strengthen one another while offering expertise as individuals. Laura studied here as an undergraduate, and after completing a master's degree in counseling, served as assistant director, coordinating the activities of each counselor. With a B. S. in management from another small private college in the state and 10 years of technology management

experience at another campus, Trey introduced advances in assistive technology and facilitated implementation by students and co-workers. Serena held a master's degree in language development from a small state institution nearby and aided English language learners (ELL) in their efforts to synthesize instruction and other learning concerns. Marcia earned a master's degree in English and instructed outside the department in addition to coordinating the writing support program, implementing accommodations, and returning to offer other types of support at the center. Molly earned her undergraduate degree at this institution before completing an M.S.W. at a large private research institution in the area, and at the time of this study, facilitated training in the promotion of self-determination skills among the team. June, a recent graduate of this institution, served as the center's coordinator of access to support services. The majority of the team have served in their roles for over 10 years. All members served as coaches, meeting with students on a weekly or biweekly basis, and were characterized by great listening and observation skills and the expertise to identify the strategies that will support students' singular needs.

Jane. Jane, recently recognized for outstanding support in the classroom, earned her undergraduate degree in the United Kingdom, and completed her Ph.D. at a very selective private institution in the Northeast. Jane brought experience from many campuses where she served as a math instructor and tutor. While sensitive to legal obligations for providing classroom accommodations, she appreciated flexibility at this institution which allowed her to respond to the needs of students who had not previously sought academic support services.

Von. Von, a professor of biblical studies with a Ph.D. in theology who thrived on research, constantly investigated new technologies as a means to aid in the delivery of instruction. Genuine concern for students with learning and attention differences drove him to

create interconnected, multimedia tools that met the instructional needs of all students, and initiatives to serve those with language challenges that further complicated engagement in learning. He never rested after incorporating a new medium, but instead turned to discover how he might create yet another forum facilitating greater accessibility for learners.

Marie. A respected scientist and published researcher, Marie diligently observed the needs of students with learning and attention differences, investing the same vigor she applied to experimentation. Her preparation included undergraduate studies at this institution, a master's in the sciences from a very selective medium-sized private institution in the Northeast, and a Ph.D. from a large public research institution in the Midwest. Realizing that science presented application challenges for many students, Marie held them accountable to set and reach measurable goals, and encouraged students leading in each class to engage with those who were struggling so that they stretched their synthesis of instruction as well. She consulted with the academic support center routinely to learn new strategies and discern best practices to provide the best possible support to students with a variety of life and learning challenges.

Rose. Rose was also a science professor, having studied at this campus prior to completing a master's degree at a large public research university in the Southeast and a Ph.D. at a medium-sized public institution in the Northeast. Her passion for equipping students with learning and attention differences extended beyond the classroom where she incorporated accessibility tools into instruction. Rose initiated and oversaw a pilot program to connect with potential science majors before their first term as freshmen, helping them identify strengths and weaknesses, and potentially receive services through the academic support center if merited. This partnership with the academic support center has already proven fruitful and considered for replication among other disciplines on campus.

Case Four: Comprehensive University

This large coeducational postsecondary institution focuses on conducting research leading to practical application, securing grants, and investigating questions for every discipline represented. Similar to other Mid-Atlantic institutions, this university seeks to shape students into critical thinkers and problem solvers who will set trends for investigation across the nation. Reflective of its vision, the administration successfully expanded representation of minority groups, presenting a balance more aligned with the state's population. Approximately 70% of faculty hold terminal degrees in their disciplines, overseeing a diverse variety of programs from arts and sciences to technology. Few students from outside the state enrolled as undergraduates, and almost 15% enrolled part-time; however, all completed the typical liberal arts sequence requisite to upper-level coursework in their majors, with 50% graduating in five to six years. While students may choose to drill with military officer training programs, female students outnumbered males 2:1. Student athletes competed in NCAA Division I sports, and many students were invited to participate in campus-wide or major-specific honor societies; however, more were likely to attend one of the many campus-based religious organizations since Greek society presence is low compared to enrollment. The campus transit system was essential to navigating the terrain across which the university has continuously expanded. Students typically parked on the perimeter of campus and were shuttled to various transfer points, since the majority commuted from off-campus and parking is sparse.

Drew. A respected professor, expert, and published researcher in psychology, Drew was compassionately responsive to students, particularly those with attention differences. His training included undergraduate studies at a small, selective, private research institution in the Northeast, graduate work at a small, private, research institution on the East Coast, and a Ph.D.

in clinical psychology from a very large, public research institution in the Midwest. Drew's

concern reached beyond classroom accommodations to securing grants for investigating not only

appropriate support for this population, but also coaching, counseling, skill development, and

accountability measures. He emphasized the students' lack of understanding about their ability

status based on the results of an in-house questionnaire, stating, "College students with ADHD

have barely more knowledge than someone off the street" (Interview, October 4, 2017). Drew

was positioned to implement support measures and track the progress of students through a

program that lasted one to two terms, equipping students in the development of self-

determination skills through psychoeducation, coaching, executive function skill training, and

group meetings.

Rhonda. The assistant director in this department was Rhonda, an adjunct professor of

social sciences who studied at a private Mid-Atlantic research institution before completing her

Ph.D. in clinical psychology at this institution. Her interest in helping students also extended to

researching effective means for teaching students how to develop self-determination skills

applicable in higher education but also in managing their lives. While she oversaw a staff

composed mostly of graduate students, her door was always open to those with learning

challenges who needed help figuring out why they struggled and how to persist.

Stephanie, Jami, Cara, Bell, and Stacia. Each of the staff in this academic support

group served part-time, except Stephanie, the center's administrative assistant. She had

experience outside the institution serving people with learning and attention differences and

proved instrumental in data management and organization. Jami was developing mentorship

skills as she pursued a master's degree in counseling; this was the first year each served in the

center. Cara held a master's degree in counseling and played an integral role with the intake of

students, providing assessments for identifying learning and attention differences. Bell was a clinical psychology doctoral student, experienced in mentorship and prepared to share effective strategies. Stacia, a counselor in the student health center with a master's degree in education counseling, split her time there and served as the leader of graduate students who served on this team, training them as mentors and equipping them further as new issues arise.

Mary. As a member of faculty not associated with the center, Mary was a long-term professor of statistics, and a loyal fan of academic support professionals who provided student assessments and facilitated evaluations. These services enabled her to focus on delivery of instruction that incorporated the implementation of accommodations in the classroom. Mary earned a master's degree in her discipline from a large, sister public institution and at the time of this study prepared business and social science students for advanced applications of math through required general education math courses. She embraced the opportunity to transition a portion of her courses to the online environment and appreciated the nuances of accessibility naturally aligned with this form of instruction.

Betty. Betty was a multi-talented educator who studied at a sister university as an undergraduate and completed a master's in education at this institution. She was great at networking among specialists in her field, helping share best practices and promote innovative programs in response to the needs of students with learning and attention differences. Betty's experience led her to build a model curriculum sequence, serving students with learning and attention differences who struggled with mastery of a second language. This program expanded to include another instructor and additional sections each term to meet the demand for this accommodative strategy to fulfill the foreign language requirement at this institution.

Case Five: Innovative College

This medium-sized coeducational private institution is not only well known among neighboring states in the Southern region of the United States, but also is reputed for contributing to the international body of knowledge through research, reporting 60% of faculty have earned terminal degrees. The acceptance rate is 50%, and the ratio of males to females was 1:1. Only one-half come from high schools in-state, and nearly 100% study full-time at its urban campus. Though economically elite and academically gifted students are common, over 30% of the enrollment includes representatives of minority populations within the United States, and almost 10% come to study from other countries. Approximately half the enrolled students commuted from off-campus, which in this metropolitan setting presented considerable traffic frustration. Relatedly, parking complications were only partially assuaged through access to the campus shuttle system since campus facilities sprawled across the expansive property. An extensive variety of organizations provided opportunities for engagement and leadership: from honor societies, to religious organizations, to Greek society and other campus-based interest groups. NCAA Division I athletic programs offered additional events to promote participation and build unity among the student body, but students remained focused with nearly 80% graduating in five to six years. Initiatives for strategic institutional goals held to the mission's standard: developing creative minds and equipping future leaders to not only succeed in life but also to stimulate positive global change in communities throughout the world.

Liz. Liz played an integral role in the development of the academic support center at this well-reputed research institution. With undergraduate preparation from a public land-grant institution in a neighboring state, her graduate studies brought her to the vicinity of this institution, where she completed an M. S. in counseling at a large state university in the South.

Serving in a collaborative role in a sister department situated her well when the two offices merged to include all support services under one roof. After taking the helm in academic support, Liz proposed and implemented new initiatives to facilitate delivery of accommodations for students with learning and attention differences. One example was a group aiming to help students develop self-regulation and self-efficacy, about which Liz described, "The central focus is still the communication and the experience between members as they come to a group and get to talk about something they probably never get to talk about with anyone else" (Interview, November 2, 2017). Having established a model coaching program, she continued to oversee it and participated as needed each term, committing that no student who sought this support would go unserved. Liz also compiled data, conducted studies to measure outcomes, published newsletters both for faculty and students, oversaw web content, and networked effectively with other departments on campus, advocating on behalf of the students she represented.

Tyrone. As Liz moved from the assistant role to leadership, she passed the baton to Tyrone. He came from another state with a degree in psychology to complete a master's degree in counseling from this institution. He then accepted leadership in the academic support center ready to keep moving the initiatives in place forward while adding new vitality through expanded services. Among these, he oversaw an accountability group, taught a course that incorporated the facilitation of self-determination skill development for those marginalized by executive function deficits, and shared coaching responsibilities with a colleague. He continually looked for new options to reach all students with learning and attention differences and equip them through new service offerings.

Barb. Barb brought a wealth of experience to her role and devoted her attention to coaching full-time, building on learning-focused roles and research she has conducted on behalf

of those with learning and attention differences. She held a B.A. from a very selective private research institution on the East Coast, and a master's in public policy from a very large, public research institution in the state's capital city. While all enrolled students were eligible to receive coaching, those with learning and attention differences were referred specifically to participate in this service. The primary focus of coaching rested on three priorities: setting realistic goals, time management, and development of organizational skills. Typically, Barb, Tyrone, or Liz would build rapport with individual students over time. This began with participation in the coaching program during the first term a student disclosed to academic support center personnel, and could extend through graduate school if requested.

Cindy. In addition to her role as a math instructor, Cindy served in the learning support center, tutoring in math, and coordinating tutoring services for all students. She earned her undergraduate preparation in mathematics out of state, and she completed an M. S. in statistics at this institution. Cindy's experience as a tutor enriched her interest in supporting students with learning and attention differences, prompting her to observe those who struggled and extend academic support by encouraging them to meet with her or check out the services offered through the academic support center. Sensitized to the needs of learners, she made herself available to those in her classes by proctoring their testing with accommodations in the testing center or even in her office, to make sure they could ask clarifying questions. When concerned about the protocol for implementing accommodations, she consulted with a member of the academic support team face-to-face and appreciated the proximity of her office to theirs.

Holly. Holly also provided academic support as an instructor of writing, and through her position as a writing tutor and presenter in the learning support center. She sought to incorporate universal design for instruction, not only to meet the needs of students with accommodations, but

also to help those who had yet identified their learning challenges. When she learned of a student who was struggling, she did not hesitate to reach out to them, encouraging them to meet with her or consult with the academic support center. Again, she enjoyed the close proximity of her office to that of academic support staff and would speak to them directly when questions would arise.

      Celia. Celia's preparation included undergraduate studies at a small, private college; graduate work at a multi-campus international university; and a Ph.D., in English from another small private institution in a neighboring state. As an Honors writing instructor, Celia made herself accessible to students in and out of her classes. She networked with other faculty members and administrative leaders on a campus-wide team committed to promoting awareness for those with physical, psychological, and learning differences. Collaborating with the director of academic support helped build a unique rapport that benefited students; Liz referred those she advised who shared a disability to consult with the ASC director about how best to advocate for accommodations.

      Carol. With a master's degree in math from this institution, Carol was a model instructor who developed a sensitivity for students by working with them on multiple levels over many years. She recognized that all students faced learning differences on some level and incorporated a variety of delivery methods into her instruction. Carol purposed to offer positive reinforcement to students, encouraged them to do their best while emphasizing persistence over perfection. Providing accommodations was a fluid extension of her persona; always flexible and ready to adjust to accommodate individual students' needs. Though her office was not near the academic support center, she preferred to consult face-to-face with members of the academic support team when a concern or question about a student would arise. Measures introduced to build self-

determination skills among these learners mobilized students to advocate for disability awareness in ways that erode the *dis* antecedent, moving toward acceptance and inclusion of all students by faculty, staff, and peers.

Results

The data collection tools actuated for examining the practices supporting postsecondary students with learning and attention differences yielded results that filtered into several concentrations. Directors of academic support interviewed, and members of faculty also contributed through individual interviews, while ASC staff offered generous insight from their collaborative efforts serving students with learning and attention differences. Results include data analyzed first according to theme development and then by the study's research questions.

Theme Development

I assigned codes to the participants' comments according to the general ideas conveyed, and this permitted the emergence of themes. Coded comments were highlighted and arranged according to their relevance to particular research questions. Within each coded group, comments were prioritized according to the richness of content, identifying sufficient representation from each case while illuminating the greatest depth of content. I retained reinforcing comments while removing redundancies at the point of saturation. A table listing each code created a visualization of patterns and was subsequently used to note the frequency of each code among the data. The completed enumeration table provided structural detail to support the development of an outline describing codes within each theme.

Connectivity. Among the academic support centers in this multiple-case study, insights offered evidence for the theme of connectivity during data collection events. Interview and focus group questions regarding the relationships and rapport experienced between the ASC and

other departments on campus were positive and strong, almost without exception. ASC directors

served as ambassadors on campus commissions and made presentations at faculty forums,

disseminating information regarding current practices while renewing invitations for contact

initiated by department leaders many times before. Serving as instructors strengthened the

positions of these leaders since the perception is that they understand classroom responsibilities

and the value of preserving curriculum integrity. The data revealed evidence of connectivity in

the networking between academic support centers and other departments, accessibility for

contact by faculty members, and a commitment to training, particularly regarding the ongoing

promotion of universal design.

ASC networked with other departments. Consistently across cases in this study, the

reputation of the ASC received the highest level of respect. The ASC directors were

interconnected with other leaders on campus and invited to speak at faculty and staff meetings

and serve on leadership committees with both faculty and administration. They not only

presented talks about policies and answered questions about procedures, but also offered insights

about working with students and new practices for serving students with learning and attention

differences. At RU, the ASC director collaborated with faculty and administration to conduct

research reflecting the effectiveness of services he proposed, regarding a grant for internship

opportunities for students with disabilities and a study on retention and graduation rates.

> The ASC director and his office work with lots of other units to do programming in
>
> addition to the [faculty] mentoring [when] the mentors invited to come . . . at that the
>
> lunches and stuff to come to these trainings as well. Then there is Disability Awareness
>
> Month, lots of programming that happens during that they take lead on. (Jennifer,
>
> personal communication, September 21, 2017)

Interactive Institute's ASC enjoyed an elevated level of connection since the director began serving as an instructor. At the time of this study, she served as faculty in addition to her role as a department chair.

> I feel like we're on the radar. We talk to Athletics; we talk to admissions and enrollment. I go to faculty meetings. There is a council of chairs of all of the divisions departments as well as me, as director of this department; I go to those as well. So, there are ways for me to speak into what's going on. We also have an ADA committee; there is no one role in charge of that. So, we made a proposal that there should be a committee and so that has representation from faculty and all departments. So, I feel like we're visible. (Grace, personal communication, October 4, 2017)

At TC, the ASC associate director shared that some routine activities that require contact with departments lead to more opportunities to represent the ASC and provide ongoing training within those departments.

> Our relationship is one-on-one with department directors. In another campus department, I approached the director and said, 'This is something I'm seeing. We've been advocating the coaching through other offices as well and my colleague does a wonderful job of going and seeking out other departments.' We do a lot of collaboration. Part of it, you know, for as much as our testing center is here, which basically has us interact with every single department on the campus, so as much as that can be difficult and tedious . . . that brings a lot of interaction that we would otherwise have to work hard to get . . . then we have conversations, then we get invited to department meetings. (Sabina, personal conversation, October 3, 2017)

Members of the ASC team expressed confidence in the positive relationships they enjoy through networking. As they hear of events sponsored by other departments, they investigate whether they can contribute and usually feel welcomed.

We make an effort, the professional staff, to get out. Last week we supported the Health and Wellness [in] running a fair about healthy living; we said, 'Hey, let us do something on time management.' Time management is a piece of healthy living, so there we were out on the dustbowl with a whole different office. We had our table out, and we were promoting time management and organization. (Margaret, personal communication, October 3, 2017)

ASC team accessible to faculty. When an ASC team coordinates with both academic and student support offices throughout campus, the resulting rapport provides an additional benefit to students with learning and attention differences. When instructors have a concern, they feel free to consult with the ASC about how best to respond, often going straight to the directors who have extended their availability to all faculty members. A faculty member at IC shared it this way

We kind of work together. You know they'll call or I'll call, and they say, 'Go and give this kid a little extra time. Give him two times because he's going to have a hard time calming down.' I've seen that with in-class quizzes. He has a hard time calming down, even though it's a group. (Carol, personal communication, November 2, 2017)

The increased number of students with learning and attention differences enrolling in postsecondary institutions faces challenges not previously experienced by tenured professors. A faculty member from RU participated in the Student Mentorship program since it began, but still struggled with a student who demonstrated behaviors that no student had presented until

recently. She brought the challenge up at one of the workshops presented by the ASC team, uncertain that they could find a solution.

> After I did the workshop, it concluded with, 'If you have any special students, come see me.' And really, from that point on, I could say, 'All right here's how she's acting.' And they say, 'Professor you need to do this.' And I would try that. 'OK, that didn't work.' So, we just kept on until we had a structure that worked for the student. (Monica, personal communication, September 21, 2017)

At TC, faculty members contacted Margaret numerous times through her decades of service both as the associate and now as the director of the ASC. When asked how she would respond if an instructor called about how to help a struggling student, she answered

> We would reach out and let them know [coaching] is available. Probably, more than likely what would happen here is that the faculty member would suggest it to the student. 'I know the director at the Academic Support Center . . . she's great; I think you should talk to her and make an appointment with a coach.' So more than likely a referral would come right from the faculty member telling the student what to do. The faculty member may email me and say, 'Hey, I referred Joe Smith, can you be on the lookout?' And so, then I might just see if the student shows up or whether he has made a coaching appointment. (Margaret, personal communication, October 4, 2017)

The consistent, committed work on behalf of students with learning and attention differences has built a bridge on many campuses, connecting these students to the resources they need. Through the extended supports offered to students and training provided to faculty, every student can win.

The great thing about the professors here at Interactive Institute, they seem willing to

work with us, there is a great relationship. A lot of times like even the liaison with the

professor if the professor might not understand a student's issues. It's being able to sit

down with the professor and the students and say this is about attendance, or this is about

being behind. You know, making a plan. (Molly, personal communication, October 4,

2017)

These seasoned professionals have determined to aid students in developing self-

determination skills and are open to finding a solution that works for each one, with the

cooperation of supportive faculty. The reflections of faculty further emphasized the value of an

academic support team that is accessible to faculty and committed to excellence. Von noted,

We communicate and I'm one who trusts ASC implicitly. And if they tell me that they've

got a good reason for what happens, then I flex with that. ASC will send me an email

and tell me a little bit about the student and then I'll call back and say, 'I'm missing this

student, it drives me nuts. How do I connect here?' And she'll say, 'Why don't you try

something like this or that or the other thing?' So, while it's not been a formal thing, and

by the way, I probably don't work well formally, but I work very well with this. 'Here's a

student, you've given me a background. Now, how do I adjust my teaching stuff to

connect with them?' And so, they've been wonderful. It goes back and forth--not daily,

but I'd say weekly or multiple times a week possibly. (personal communication, October

4, 2017)

Marcia shared,

From a faculty point of view, I'll talk to one of these folks who are meeting with that

student and say, 'I have a student that has a documented learning disability. Everything's

just falling apart with that student. OK. Help me know how to help this student: How

strict should I be? How lenient should I be? What are some strategies we can put in

place together?' And then, we work at that together and it's really helpful. (personal

communication, October 4, 2017)

Jane stated,

I think truly the effort to provide optimal support is at academic support. My job is to

teach math, statistics as well as I can to the entire class. I want to accommodate students

that need accommodations. I've been really happy that academic support guides them

and provides and makes it possible. (personal communication, October 4, 2017)

Von expressed,

I've seen ASC work with literally hundreds of students since I've been here, and their

interventions have been critically important. And when you talk to those students, they

will credit the ASC. The personal contact that ASC provides is just encouraging.

They're the ones, who do the mentoring of these students, and they talk, they know

family situations and things like that. When you see them talk about ASC people, it's

inspiring. (personal communication, October 4, 2017)

Training provided to faculty. Besides the networking of ASC team members with other

departments on campus, ASC staff members strive to be accessibility and respond to faculty

members regarding observations made while working with students in the classroom. Training is

an essential component for providing successful support to students with learning and attention

differences in postsecondary institutions and awareness is a vital component of destigmatizing

disability. A faculty member synthesized a presentation on awareness made by the ASC director

at RU

He wants to make sure that the playing field is even and talking about the difference

between equity and equality. Equality [is], I give everybody a block and you all stand on

that block, but it's the same block. Equity is, I figure out how high that block has to be

for you based on what the starting point is. So, I'm working toward equity, and fairness

isn't always equal. (Jennifer, personal communication, September 21, 2017)

Exposure to workshops, events and official training aid faculty, students, and

administrative leadership in awareness, acceptance, and a synthesis integral to the strong access

and healthy support services critical to students with learning and attention differences. At TC,

the director described a common experience working with senior faculty members.

We have the Centers for Teaching Excellence. It is right across the hallway, and that is a

center for faculty. So, if you said, 'Gee, I'm 60 years old, I don't know how to do any of

this stuff, I think it's really neat, but I would need significant help to get there.' They

offer all kinds of training and workshops and helpful hints to help faculty do that.

(Margaret, personal communication, October 3, 2017)

Similar options are available to faculty at, "We have a 'Center for Teaching

Effectiveness,' which is where faculty kind of go through training sessions on teaching better"

(Liz, personal communication, November 2, 2017). A faculty member from that institution

further shared her observation regarding the advancement of training during her tenure

Academic support does a presentation for new faculty members where they, the new

faculty are [invited], they're not required, but they're strongly encouraged, to come to

these information sessions and academic support provides them with basic information

on what to do if a student identifies as needing accommodations. And also, some

preliminary information on what to do if the faculty member suspects that perhaps the

student needs some help whether they have identified as needing accommodations or not. You know how to pursue that which is really valuable. They come to our faculty meetings at the beginning of every semester and communicate, 'Here's the basic information and then more importantly here's how to contact us,' and a Q and A session. And frequently this is where professors, we'll use that as an opportunity to vent a little bit about their frustration with [not] knowing exactly what they need to do--the basics that they have to do. But in most cases also, what can they do that might make the student's life a little bit easier. (Holly, personal communication, November 2, 2017)

A faculty member at Interactive Institution (II) reflected regarding the types of training opportunities that have helped develop awareness, acceptance, and facilitation skills, empowering them to respond effectively to students with learning and attention differences. The first offered,

Timely training, especially about how things change over time and how we can help them, because all of their wisdom has been so helpful, and I have incorporated it into my courses and I've seen improvement in the way students respond. (Rose, personal communication, October 4, 2017)

II promoted awareness through a variety of activities that made a profound difference on this campus, impacting students, faculty, administration, and even members of the academic support team who shared these insights.

The 'Disability Awareness Week' that we had a few years ago was a great way for faculty to have some more exposure to students with disabilities and what we do. We had a panel discussion from students that had graduates and alumni. And that was open to everybody. The first year I came, at one of the faculty forums, they spoke about how

to support students in the classroom. Giving extra support, best practices, teaching

strategies, things like that. And a colleague from the academic support team continued to

do that with our first-year seminar/writing course, helping to train faculty and working

with ELL students. I find it's been developing slowly, but steadily. We've instituted

things like the Academic Support Advisory Committee. It includes a couple of faculty

members since it is a committee. We usually do new faculty orientation with the

adjuncts, so they know what we're about. (Laura, personal communication, October 4,

2017)

Professional leadership of the ASC directors received expressions of appreciation at each

institution, not only regarding the influence they had through presentations and networking with

faculty and administration, but also through training provided in-house at the ASC. In the focus

group, members of the team at II modeled the collaboration demonstrated by Grace.

We watched our director of academic support services [coach]. We learn so much from

her. The director is a great developer of people. She's has taught us a lot. Trial and

error and modeling after her--our director of academic support. We also bounce ideas off

each other. We're always collaborating so we want a more accessible space. Having

contiguous offices and accessible offices. We are running around this circle of each

other's offices, that is why we want our offices close together; we are always constantly

in and out of these doors. (Serena, personal communication, October 4, 2017)

Universal design encouraged. When the administration presented the tenets of

Universal Design for Learning (UDL), the motivation for exercising them can even take hold in

any institution. Faculty representatives from two of the larger institutions expressed how UDL

training at their campuses have impacted themselves and how this has led to conversations that

reinforce the value of investigating its implementation. At CU, a modified language instructor shared, "I did, through the university, take a semester-long workshop on universal design [for] learning which I've tried to incorporate into a lot of the class, all my classes" (Betty, personal communication, October 18, 2017). At RU, an associate provost described the protocol for introducing UDL to incoming faculty members.

> All tenure track faculty are required to go through New Faculty Course. We talk about some [Universal Design] principles in there. I was one of the mentors for two years in that program, and we talk about many of these principles there to get people started. The director [of ASC] comes in and talks about the [student mentorship program] with all the new faculty. So that's been effective, definitely. (Jennifer, personal communication, September 21, 2017)

The director of the ASC at II reported, "Our philosophy is Universal Design, and the mission statement promotes inclusivity for everyone; make things work for everyone" (Grace, personal communication, October 4, 2017). A member of her team offered additional insight for application, saying, "We're not looking to target accessibility for students, faculty, and staff with disabilities, but accessibility for everyone. It's more of a universal design" (Serena, personal communication, October 4, 2017). Faculty have begun to embrace this philosophy, recognizing its merit for aiding students with learning and attention differences.

> Part of what I do is interface those things with the digital world and what I've tried to do is leverage the digital medium to help kids that have different styles of learning. I've just experimented with [UDL] over the years and particularly since I've been here and been encouraged by the ASC to pursue those types of things. There's not a mandate to really

accommodate every [enrolled] student, you just would like to do that. (Von, personal

communication, October 4, 2017)

Accessibility. When speaking of services for people with disabilities, accessibility

references the extent to which measures have been taken to remove barriers. This theme

emanated from questions regarding students' ability to locate the ASC on their campuses to

disclose their disabilities and secure accommodations. The elimination of walls translates into

improved access for any person, but obstacles for students with learning and attention differences

are not as obvious as for those with physical or health challenges. While the number of students

with disabilities has continued to increase, improving accessibility for a person with invisible

disabilities comes with a unique set of considerations. Intentionally including this population

reduces stigma and is best addressed through awareness and training. However, campuses also

have centralized services including academic support or located the ASC in the same space

frequented by other students for a variety of purposes. While exposure to all students introduces

the facility to those who need it, the inclusion of the ASC promotes an acceptance that

emphasizes likenesses instead of differences.

Combination centers reduce stigma. At II, documents supplied by the director of

academic support and featured on the center's website describe the various support offices

housed under a single roof. Situated above the library, the ASC offers one-on-one coaching for

all enrolled students who seek this level of support for academic and executive function

challenges. While the ASC serves as the starting point for securing accommodations, the testing

center provides a variety of services. This office also includes oversight of a unique course

designed to aid in students' academic and social transition to a postsecondary environment,

workshops addressing study skills and organization, and a support group offering networking

opportunities for students with social skill deficits. The ASC houses a study hall where students enjoy a quiet environment to focus six nights each week. They also house a writing center where students work with peer tutors to fine-tune their research and articulation, space for small group support for large enrollment general education courses, as well as tutoring in foreign languages, math, and other subjects. Specialists in assistive technology, English language learning support, and disability assistance are available for walk-in consultations or weekly appointments. The center provides opportunities for leadership development as it hires upperclassmen and graduate students to receive training and invest in helping others through these support programs. Because they offer these supports to all students, there is no stigma associating the facility with learning or attention differences or other invisible disabilities. The director of academic support at TC offered a description of their center that reflected a similarly inclusive environment, open to serving all enrolled students.

> There is no stigma attached to this office at all. One of the nice things I like about it . . . but we serve all students enrolled at this institution, so not just students with learning disabilities. One of my favorite tags that I tell kids is that 50% of the freshmen come in here for tutoring. So, when you have half of your freshmen class or almost half of your student body, it is very normalized. (Margaret, personal communication, October 3, 2017)

Services were once dispersed across campus at IC, but about 15 years ago when designing the current facility, planners capitalized on the opportunity to bring everything under one roof. The associate director for the ASC reported, "It was strategic that we are housed here. It's a one-stop shop so students can tap into tutoring, the writing center, study skills workshops, and meet one-on-one with academic counselors" (Tyrone, personal communication, November

2, 2017). The advantages are similar to those experienced at other campuses; students are circulating through the building for a variety of reasons, and consequently, students do not associate stigma with a visit to the academic support center. Supports coordinated under one roof include English language learning, writing skills, diverse tutoring options, disability accommodations, success strategies workshops, new student advisement, and athlete support resources. All students are eligible to participate in these services, and learning specialists work one-on-one to help students develop self-determination by applying the instruction they receive through these opportunities. Students with learning and attention differences may also participate in a study skills course whether they receive accommodations or not, developing academic and communication skills through practical application.

Well-located centers provide convenience. Determining the location of an academic support center could potentially prove difficult if added after designating other functions for buildings over time. However, many institutions have repurposed existing buildings to make sure the campus ASC is accessible. At RU, support services are provided through various offices across campus where other students also go for tutoring, counseling, or other supports. "Our model is very much that we don't like to segregate students with disabilities to the academic support office. We want them using the resources that are available for everybody else" (Mitch, personal communication, September 21, 2017). The ASC previously was located on the upper floor in a centrally located student center but relocated to the ground floor during a renovation, increasing visibility. Similarly, the student center housed the ASC at the other large public institution, CU. The facility on this property is adjacent to the library and across a street from the tutoring center, in the middle of a large sprawling campus.

In our first group we go over all the resources on campus for various supports and

throughout groups and we have a couple of speakers. We have the director of academic

support come and a representative from the Student Success Center and then I do a

presentation about the Counseling Center and services there, so we try and make them

informed about it. One of our primary goals is to connect them with other services on

campus . . . addressing those needs and helping them find resources on campus. (Stacia,

personal communication, October 18, 2017)

Cara noted,

We're like the bridge for them to get there to get the accommodations they need. And a

lot of those will call here at random, just not really knowing where to go and how to get

there. We try to introduce them to the process within the campus. (personal

communication, October 18, 2017)

Three of the cases in this study centralized all student support services to be housed in

one building since their services are open to all enrolled students. Placing these support offices

in one location took deliberate planning, with an intention to eliminate stigma, improve

convenience, and increase participation so that more students experience optimal success and

persist despite the inherent challenges of transitioning into postsecondary environments. The

ASC director at IC described how accessibility increased through a campus restructuring. It

began with a determination to offer extended support to students with learning and attention

differences. As roles shifted, the administration discerned how moving support offices together

would encourage interaction between practitioners and facilitate access for all students. Further

sustainability planning led to even greater benefits for students.

Our location has improved even though we haven't moved . . . five new residence halls were built [adjacent to this building] about three years ago. And before that, we were essentially kind of [at] the southern-most end of campus . . . The majority of first and second year students are now living at this end . . . I think that has given more visibility to this office given that so many more students are down here with the construction that's changed, but the ASC in general is pretty well known and it's well touted during orientation. It's talked about by staff not affiliated with [it] a lot within sessions, whether [by] students or other staff or faculty, so [freshmen] are already getting a sense of it [during orientation]. (Liz, personal communication, November 2, 2017)

On a college campus, a library is frequently housed in a centrally located building to welcome and stimulate usage. Libraries are utilized extensively by students for researching, studying, meeting in pairs and in groups to plan projects, or just to have a quiet place to think outside their dorms. In two of the cases, the academic support center was intentionally housed in the same building as the library, improving visibility while reducing stigma and increasing awareness. Though the property where II is expansive compared to those of other suburban colleges in the vicinity, the buildings are clustered together, creating an intimate community, connected by a large central courtyard. The ASC there is centrally located in the same building as the library, directly between a village of residence halls and classroom buildings. Similarly, the ASC at TC was purposefully situated in the library, as described by the ASC director, facilitating acceptance of students with a variety of learning differences, as the facility offered support to any student making a request.

You know . . . we are kind of in a fish bowl, so those stairs outside of the academic support center, students come up and down and up and down all day, and we have a big

sign that says Academic Support Center. We are in the library, which is right in the

middle of the entire campus, so we are very visible. Everyone on campus knows us, so

we are very close to the Deans and [academic advising]; any students that are struggling

are sent right over. I have never had a student say, 'I don't know who you are, I don't

know where you are.' We have honestly probably outgrown our space quite some time

ago, but there is no way we will give it up. We do not have to do a lot of advertising, we

will occasionally throw something in the student newspaper, but we really do not have to

advertise. We have 100 students who work for us, and I would say that they are our

biggest promotors… sometimes their friends will come in and visit them, [other] times

they will come in and [work with] a tutor, but [students] are kind of out promoting us

quite a bit. (Margaret, personal communication, October 3, 2017)

Entering freshmen visit ASC. Recently published studies documenting the experiences

of students with learning and attention differences raised awareness to their plight of needing

support and not knowing how to get it. While academic support centers housed in facilities

shared with other student support services increases awareness, centrally located offices improve

visibility. Sometimes upon enrollment, students benefit from the introduction of the location of

the ASC and the services they offer. RU mails an academic support disclosure form to every

newly accepted student, and the ASC director meets with those who disclose a disability in

groups during the first week of fall term. They hold a meeting in the learning support center for

students with learning and attention differences, inviting them to make individual appointments

to discuss eligibility for accommodations in their office while introducing options for tutoring,

testing, coaching, and other support services provided elsewhere on campus. IC connects with

students during the week before the start of classes and through summer events for incoming students.

When they see presentations or booths or flyers, they're more receptive to it . . . During the orientation sessions in July there is a campus tour and they bring [students] all the way in and spend about 15 minutes in here so they go around the space. The student leaders have a presentation that they give . . . to the [new] students. That has made a huge difference . . . because most people then have been here, and when you've been here once you get it. And then there's one more thing that we do kind of intentionally during what we call welcome week, which is . . . the week before school starting. There's lots of events, [and] one of them is kind of a scavenger hunt where the residence hall folks bring them all through here. They get water, they get a cool semester planner, we have this cool calendar. So, it's a very fast way to physically get them into [the] space. (Liz, personal communication, November 2, 2017)

II invited students to stay on campus over the summer for multi-week programs. Through department advisors' observations and meetings with students, referrals of some students with learning and attention differences to the ASC ensued, to prepare coaches to connect before fall term begins. Similarly, freshmen admitted to TC attending campus sessions throughout the summer learn about all the services available through the ASC.

We speak at all freshman orientations, so 2500 students who come to campus over the course of the summer sit and listen to . . . our students promote us because the kids will listen more to other kids than they do to an administrator sitting up there talking. We have a pre-freshman summer program, run through this office called 'college transition program' and we book an appointment with [each of] them at freshman orientation. They

actually come into the center, physically come in, and maybe they are here for 15 or 20

minutes. (Margaret, personal communication, October 3, 2017)

Eligibility. Each of the institutions serving as cases in this study receives federal funding

and observes the provisions of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1974, the Americans with

Disabilities Act, and the ADA Amendment Act of 2008. These laws incorporate language

applicable to postsecondary schools, describing requirements to make their programs accessible

to qualified students with disabilities. Common practices for determining eligibility presented as

a theme among each of the institutions in this study. AHEAD is a national professional

organization that provides guidelines for practitioners to utilize in determining eligibility for

accommodations in postsecondary environments. AHEAD provides networking and educational

events to promote understanding of Section 504, ADA, and ADAAA, sharing information

among participating members and facilitating appropriate application of these laws. Chapters

formed within regional or state offices where annual conferences and workshops are planned

make it easier to provide appropriate dissemination of legal interpretation and continuous

training for evidence-based practice. Individuals may join, but it is common for institutions to

subscribe to this association and encourage academic support providers, ADA coordinators, and

instructional personnel to participate jointly, sharing information and promoting research

initiatives. AHEAD's guidelines for meeting with a student to determine eligibility combine

observation, conversation, and documentation to identify appropriate accommodations rather

than requiring documentation without deference to the student's individual needs and experience.

In this study, practices for determining eligibility and offering appropriate accommodations to

students with learning and attention differences reflected the recommendations stated

collectively by AHEAD.

Students receive individualized plans. The academic support team in each institution represented in this study solicits documentation for students with learning and attention differences from enrolled students over the summer. However, some teams are not determining eligibility based on documentation alone. Their practice is to review and verify documentation and schedule an appointment with the student to discuss individualized accommodations. It is possible to schedule some appointments over the summer, particularly for local students or those visiting campus for the summer program aimed at orienting new freshman. At II

> We have summer advising. Each department has someone who does summer advising to help freshmen set up a good plan . . . in the Fall they are handed off to their [assigned] adviser in the department. For students who are at risk in any way, who have a disability . . . somebody from academic support is their summer adviser so that we can help set them up well for their first semester. When we [complete] the form, we actually go through it with them and say, according to your documentation, I think you're eligible for the this. Is there anything else you think you need? Why do you think you need that? I can see why that would be appropriate. Okay, it says this, but you don't need that, then we won't put it on the form. (Grace, personal communication, October 4, 2017)

At IC the director described their protocols followed for initial meetings to discuss accommodations for students with learning and attention differences in even greater detail.

> During our summer 'Focus' sessions . . . We talk a lot about coaching in those sessions. That if you're a student that have been has benefited from that in the past it might be something you want to consider when you transition. Some of my files though . . . specifically request coaching. They have come from homes that have provided that and so they are already got that in their radar. We tend to do [intake appointments] during

[the] beginning [weeks] of school, as many as we can. You can only fit in so many the

first week, so it goes into the second, third, fourth and we do intakes all the way through

finals . . . It doesn't necessarily mean they're going to get accommodations for finals, but

they're becoming active in our system at that point. It's all dependent on when they were

diagnosed, when they provided complete information for us, when we've gotten to the

end of that process. (Liz, personal communication, November 2, 2017)

IC focused this type of conversation so there was time to assess what worked in the past for a

student and what may work in the future, with the understanding that accommodations vary

between secondary and postsecondary environments.

Our LD/ADHD population tends to have already been through an accommodation

system, usually in their high school, [and] they have a better sense usually of what they

need, what is available, but there's still discussion about it. They're saying things like,

'Yeah I got diagnosed my junior year of high school and boy, you know I'm glad I started

my medicine. It's helped a lot.' [I respond}, 'Has anyone taught you any study skills?

Did you ever read your report?' When you look at the online form you'll see those

different areas, the time management, or organizational . . . these different areas that they

would comment on. And then some may say, 'I'm fine with this' and then in other

sections they say, 'Oh, I'm terrible at this.' We always ask them, 'What do [you] do

about it? How do [you] handle it?' And they'll maybe give a strategy, or they'll say, 'I

try to write everything down, but I've failed miserably at it.' So those are statements

we're observing. And when we are inquiring about them to students and we're hearing

the level or the severity of the impact that's where we're starting to intervene with

recommendations, whether there are accommodations or referrals. (Liz, personal

communication, November 2, 2017)

On the campus at TC, the associate director described the process practiced similarly

It really is very individualized, I would say. For most students, the accommodations they

need are based upon what classes they are taking. So, myself and two other

representatives from the academic support center, we get all incoming freshmen. We do

a whole presentation on the academic supports available and academic coaching (what it

is), and that's in conjunction with live area tech services here. (Sabina, personal

communication, October 3, 2017)

Coaching services are open to all students and recommended to those with learning and

attention differences who demonstrate a deficit in executive function or self-determination skills.

This is common practice at CU, in referring students to work with mentors.

Intake is primarily for determining eligibility, but the treatment has to be somewhat

prepackaged . . . within that there's individualization. For instance, the person delivering

the group treatment doesn't have a lot of flexibility, but the mentors do have flexibility to

tailor some things. (Stacia, personal communication, October 18, 2017)

Flexibility regarding types of accommodations. Academic support centers at each

institution followed procedures established in-house for assessing the appropriate

accommodations to offer each student presenting a learning or attention difference. While ADA

describes conditions supported through government funding and Section 504 delineates some

specific accommodations all must offer, those deemed reasonable vary between campuses. In

this study, I intentionally looked for unique interpretations by academic support directors and

their responses to observed needs among their populations of students with learning and attention

differences. Instructions to advisors at CU posted on the institution's website under advising explains, "Some students, who have physical challenges or learning disabilities, may find that four courses is a full load" (Advising, n.d.). If advisors are sensitive to the individual needs of the student, it will help the student gain confidence and take more responsibility for his/her academic success.

This type of flexibility is indicative of institutions that have balanced what is reasonable with an understanding of how discouraged students with learning and attention differences may get when expected to perform at the same pace as their peers. A social science professor from CU described her concern for students demonstrating their best efforts on tests, and her practice of working with these students in the classroom if possible.

I at least want them to have access to me to ask questions, which all my students [taking the test in the class] have. So, if they're in a testing situation and they don't understand the question, then they can come ask me. So, I don't like my students who get academic support access to have to go to the center if they don't want to. (Rhonda, personal communication, October 18, 2017)

At TC, the ASC director described the conversation practiced with incoming students to figure out what types of supports will serve them best. There is no standard set of accommodations prescribed for any one diagnosis.

We are very open to talking strategies and say, 'Hey, I'd like to try this. Let's see, what do you think of this?' A small percentage of our students use note-takers . . . I see it increasing, the numbers increasing of students that are requesting note-takers. (Margaret, personal communication, October 3, 2017)

Testing is a common issue needing accommodation among students with learning and attention differences, and TC has such a high rate of students requesting one or more testing accommodations, they adopted an accessible disability services management software called Clockwork. Originally, it was intended to put all test documents online, to reduce the need for faculty to deliver tests in paper form. "Professors can upload the exams and communicate with us how to proctor the tests. Facilitation was improved as students can now book their own testing appointments with us, so less of our time is [spent] making appointments" (Mary, personal communication, October 3, 2017). This online access frees the ASC team to dedicate their time to meet with students who need coaching.

Reduction of standards for completion of assignments or deficiencies in the demonstration of mastery are not acceptable means for accommodating students with learning and attention differences. However, extending support beyond the mandates of ADA frequently can be accomplished without those compromises to an institution's reputation for rigorous instruction, and often requires little or no additional funding.

> If you have a student that you know is good at writing papers, but not taking exams and you know these three teachers teach Western Civ and this one does all exams and [that one] does all papers, you can try to put them in the one that meets their strengths. So, we do advising, we are actually second advisers to anybody who has a disability so that we can speak into that. (Grace, personal communication, October 4, 2017)

This support translates to increased persistence for a population that until recent decades enrolled in postsecondary education at a fraction of the rate of their peers due to a lack of available support and related insecurity.

There might be a student that does have documentation, but they need help kind of above and beyond maybe what the writing center can offer, a subject tutor could offer, or a one-on-one, and so we'll try to find a peer tutor who could be a dedicated tutor for that student just for that semester. (Marcia, personal communication, October 4, 2017)

Several participants from IC offered contributions about the flexibility practiced in determining the best way to accommodate students with learning and attention differences.

They might say, 'My notes are terrible, I zone out and I get half the material, but what really helps is using my laptop.' So then in our intake we'd be talking about, 'Okay, you asked us for extended time here we were going to approve time and a half for your ADHD, but you also mentioned note-taking as a challenge. What can you tell me about that, what's happening?' And if we do see a connection with their disability, their condition, we might then come up with a solution, an accommodation, that's reasonable. And for that particular student it might be a laptop for notetaking. (Liz, personal communication, November 2, 2017)

A math instructor shared her response to students needing flexibility regarding timing of exams, as presented on behalf of the student by the ASC.

They've requested to take this, a final exam [scheduled] on this day but they've requested to take it a day ahead, because they have three exams, and you don't want that, do you know what that would be? Thirteen and a half hours of testing? Nobody's going to do well with that. So, do you mind if they take it a day early? I don't care when they take it. You know I'll send them one version here. I've got like five or six different versions of my final exam. (Carol, personal communication, November 2, 2017)

As an instructor who also tutors in the writing center, Holly has learned from decades of working with students who have learning and attention differences.

> I've recognized through years of [working with] students that, there's better ways to do that or there's ways that can be not just helpful for students who have diagnosed learning difficulties, but [for] students who maybe need to cushion one of the areas where they're a little bit weaker. (Holly, personal communication, November 2, 2017)

Another English professor shared a personal experience regarding a student who officially had accommodations for testing but preferred to take quizzes in class so that he did not miss any instruction.

> I noticed that [a student] wasn't performing well on his quizzes. I just caught him after class and asked if he could hang back for a minute, and said I noticed you didn't do well on the quiz. 'Is that because you didn't have enough time?' He said, 'Yes, can you just make it like a few minutes more?' And I just told him the he should just continue and finish the quizzes. I ended up, instead [of] making the quizzes two minutes, I made [them] five minutes, and he said that was better. I just let him finish. It was only a few minutes just to write it all. I was appreciative that he spoke up. (Celia, personal communication, November 2, 2017)

Carol has benefited from many years of working one-on-one with students before her role as a math instructor on this campus.

> I've had students that are not labeled as learning different, so they don't get accommodations that have approached me and said, 'I don't want to bother other students in the classroom, but I have to read the question aloud to myself in order to fully understand what it is you ask. Can I take the test in your office? Before or after you've

given the test?' And I let them do that, and sure enough they [sat] there and they read the

question aloud and then it was silent for five or 10 minutes and then they read the next

question aloud and worked the next problem. I just said I don't have a problem with that.

(Carol, personal communication, November 2, 2017)

Students responsibilities for notification. After students participate in a consultation to

determine eligibility, most of the institutions in this study require them to deliver

accommodations forms to each of their instructors and have a conversation regarding the

application of these supports to particular courses. The director of academic support at RU

described a typical presentation at the conclusion of an intake visit.

Here's a copy of this letter to give to your teachers. PLEASE don't put that letter on the

teacher's desk and walk away. I want you to have a conversation. Ideally this happens

during office hours, when you can talk privately about it. (Mitch, personal

communication, September 21, 2017)

This delivery of the accommodations form serves as a valuable opportunity to practice

self-advocacy, representing themselves to professors they will need to interact with again in the

future as application of accommodations comes into play. In anticipation of those meetings,

some students express a lack of confidence about how to initiate a discussion about their

individualized needs. However, instructors who have participated in this kind of conversation

with many students expect the hesitation of students with learning and attention differences.

They are ready to meet with students and even encourage them not just to present the letters and

disappear. A member of the academic support team at II shared a typical experience preparing

students.

I tell them, 'Now you need to talk to your professor.' We kind of rehearse that with them. I don't know if it's really role-playing, but practicing the conversation seems to help them think about how it will go. 'In this class you probably need to make sure you ask for this, and the instructor will be glad to talk about how that will work. (Laura, personal communication, October 4, 2017)

Within the ASC, representatives have facilitated these interactions by describing not only the protocol but also a scenario in which the student can approach their instructors and fluidly talk about how their accommodations transfer to testing and assignments in the classroom and other environments. At IC, Liz described the process.

We talk about it in our intakes and in our one-on-one academic coaching sessions, so all of them are hearing the importance of having those conversations, and having a letter is a perfect excuse to go in and start the conversation about, 'This is me. This is kind of what I'm going to need.' And then we also include this document in their red folder. [It also includes] a handout; the front and back is talking about how to prepare for that meeting, some do's and don'ts and then actual language, especially if they were maybe either introducing themselves or sending an email and then how to follow up. It's kind of the etiquette, but it's very specific to students with a disability with accommodations. How do we get this going? You know in academic coaching, they'll do role-plays. In coaching we might create an e-mail with the student. If they still haven't identified themselves, [we say] 'let's start an e-mail right now. Here's how you can present it.' So those are all good techniques. And more and more they're going in pretty comfortable. There are still some that just aren't. (Liz, personal communication, November 4, 2017)

A member of the IC faculty offered insight about how it looks from her position. Holly, who instructs in mathematics and tutors in the academic support center explained her experience.

Typically, the letters are in envelopes. They hand me the envelope and I say, 'What things do you need from me?' Most of the time, it's extended time on testing, even if their accommodations say they could get more things, that's usually all they ask for . . . I just ask them what they feel like they're going to need, like after class or they'll come to my office. 'What do you need me to provide you with?' And most the time they say, 'I use the extended time on testing,' and I say, 'When it gets close to the test, your options are to either take it with academic support or to take it with the class, and if you don't finish we'll go somewhere else to finish; or [you can] schedule a time with me, and you can take it at a different time, but [with] me proctoring, not academic support.' And then when it gets close to the test, we usually e-mail back and forth to be sure. (Cindy, personal communication, November 2, 2017)

The perception of faculty members reflected a positive reception to their invitations for students to have a conversation regarding accommodations, and though they may do the majority of talking in these meetings, they work proactively with students to make application of accommodations a seamless exchange.

Responsivity. Faculty members interviewed for this study described the degree to which they practiced responsiveness, providing insight regarding innovative strategies incorporated on behalf of students with learning and attention differences. Among the responses described, examples of practices developed by faculty reflected a sensitivity to the needs of this population. Faculty members' creative employment of assignments for application, flexible use of facilities for testing, and face-to-face conversations with students about their potential for benefiting from

services provided by the ASC and other support offices on their campuses, provided evidence of responsivity. Considering the numbers shared, an instructor may have one or two students enrolled in a single section for every 20 students enrolled, estimating 10% of each course roster. However, multiple faculty members indicated that planning for universal design during the development of their instructional materials meant less time accommodating the 10% when an accessible infrastructure was already available to all students.

Faculty reach out to students. Through the seminars, workshops, and awareness events, both required and optional, faculty members and administrative leaders synthesize the value of tuning into students. However, the ASC team modeled this behavior every time they answered a call, invited a faculty member to their offices, or visited departments around campus to offer new insights through positive presentations. The responsiveness demonstrated by the ASC professionals on the campuses in this study has consistently effected change. Faculty makes themselves approachable to students, often from the first day of class or their first meeting with a cohort of students. A professor at TC shared the approach she uses both the students she advises and those in her unique first-year course sections.

> I think that they've found somebody here at this institution that is on their side. And what I say to my freshmen is, 'Your job for the next five years is to find your team. Who's your team? I'm one of them. I'm not necessarily even captain, but I'm one of the members of your team. Who else is on your team? I've known [this] student since last October. She was in my class starting in January and her parents know that she feels comfortable with me. She is also working with the Academic Support Center, but she comes to me on this stuff, you know, wanting to find support but also wanting to be pushed a little. While we're a medium-sized postsecondary institution, we do not let

bureaucratic red tape and reporting lines get in the way of being there for students. And

so, it is all about relationships, which is very much in tune to our institution's ideologies

and our way of perceiving through education. I'm pretty open to my students and

available. I mean, I do have office hours twice per week, but I'm here five days per week,

9:00-5:00, so students feel really comfortable just stopping in. (Kelly, personal

communication, October 3, 2017)

Through these mechanisms, faculty opens the door to a conversation that punctures the invisible

wall between themselves and students by presenting common challenges and inviting students to

contact them directly about matters other than curriculum. An instructor at II offered her

perspective on making herself approachable and flexible.

I talk about it in the seminar to everybody, because all 60 of them are together and

otherwise they're not all in the same set of classes. And we just talk about like, you

might find yourself feeling like this is way harder than [you] expected and your coping

strategies might be at their end, and that this might be the time to get help. And we talk

about the other part of that, too, anxiety and depression. It really kind of crops up when

you get to college and we see an uptick in that partially because I think, a lot of variables

change at one time, but also that maybe their coping mechanisms, their support isn't there

like it was. And so, I try to have that conversation together to introduce that this kind of

stuff can happen. (Rose, personal communication, October 4, 2017)

Her colleague, another science instructor at II, described her openness to work with students who

struggle with transitioning to college-level work, and the ways she works with those who are still

trying to figure out what works best for them in this new environment.

I've often met with them and talked about their difficulties. I give extensions on their

work. I've helped people get tutors. I'm happy to accommodate as well as I can. I can't

really get in the head-space of faculty who sort of see an adversarial relationship between

themselves and students and believe that every request for accommodation is sort of like

a trick. There are some people that feel like that. My own life experience with a kid with

learning disabilities, with whatever, just being a human, has convinced me that

sometimes people cannot do their best, and that not everybody learns the same way.

Because I start there, I am happy to do some things that other people might fuss about.

(Marie, personal communication, October 4, 2017)

Another instructor at TC shared the type of conversation she might have after a student

contacted her about ongoing struggles, having established that open relationship her colleague

described.

Well we'll do the best we can to figure out a plan for you to get your work done. But

now, we've been talking about this for a while, we might want to start that ball rolling so

by the beginning of the next semester you might have something in place. (Sue, personal

communication, October 3, 2017)

When faculty at some institutions notice concerning behavior, their first step is to contact

support offices. Other times, faculty approach students directly. They reach out to see how they

can help in response to observations they have made after getting to know their students each

term. At IC, this approach was standard operating procedure.

You know like when the class is leaving I'll say, 'Hey Sally, wait.' I would talk to them

one-on-one and just say, 'Here's the thing I've noticed, like I notice you can't ever kind of

focus or I notice you have been struggling to finish the tests' or whatever thing I've

noticed. I just tell them I've noticed it, usually face-to-face, if I can catch them. Most of

the time students just [say], Oh. I'm just busy,' or something, and kind of blow you off.

And if I can't [catch them], then I'll send them an email. Usually they respond, and

usually with an apology, you know, they think maybe I'm doing it because I'm angry or

something. But I [say], 'I'm not [angry], just is there anything I can do to help you with

this?' A lot of times they're just glad [I asked]. They're you know, 'Thank you for

noticing,' kind of thing. (Cindy, personal communication, November 2, 2017)

Celia noted,

A couple of things I will do depend on the student. I will e-mail the academic support

director if they haven't disclosed. I might say, 'Do you have this person on file, because I

see a lot with the writing that is concerning. If it's a student of mine I think that's OK. I

had another case with a student. I felt like she needed some support through

accommodations and she said that she felt like she needed to be diagnosed. I didn't want

to tell her [to do that] in so many words, and suggested that [she] go in, [saying] 'In the

academic support office, they do other things like schedule management, time

management. Those same things, and you might benefit from that.' I let the director

know and said that there's an opportunity to go further with this student. (personal

communication, November 2, 2017)

Carol shared,

We're here to help you, we want you to get through this. Our job is not to try and stop the

next great Broadway actor or playwright or somebody that excels in athletics and wants

to be a high school coach; and that it's not our job to keep you from getting a college

degree. We're trying to just get you through this course as best possible. If you come

and you do everything I tell you, you're going to have success in this class and they

generally do. [Another educator put it this way], 'All students learn differently, some are

visual, some need to hear it, some need to use their hands, do something.' So, she said, 'I

offer all three . . . [because] all of us are learning different.' (personal communication,

November 2, 2017)

In cases when attempts to connect with the student have not yielded any result,

responsible faculty members have followed up with appropriate campus authorities. A faculty

member at CU described an observation that led her to act on behalf of a student.

I reached out to student affairs to let them know that I had concerns about this student.

There was a change in behavior and it turned out that there was a reason to be concerned.

She had had some substantial personal things happen and safety concerns and things like

that . . . they reached out to find her because I contacted them. (Rhonda, personal

communication, October 18, 2017)

If a student is nonresponsive, faculty members at two institutions described the relentless

determination their administration has taken to ensure they find students, and address solutions to

their challenges in a timely fashion. At II, a science professor said this situation had come up

more than once, and because most students live on campus, they are still within reach.

Somebody besides me will try to get a hold of the student. Usually that's over in CSD

and sometimes it's in academic support. So, like if literally they're not leaving their

room, student life walks into their room. If they're attending classes and Academic

Support already has a relationship with them, then they'll usually say, 'This person is on

our radar . . . Then I'll find out what's going on. (Marie, personal communication,

October 4, 2017)

Similarly, a math professor at IC expressed her feeling of responsibility toward students in her classes and the way she has responded in the past.

> If I had a student who I knew was always in class and then all of a sudden, they just
>
> stopped showing up. Maybe we missed a test and don't contact me or something like
>
> that. Or if I noticed they're crying one day in class. Then I fill out a thing online saying,
>
> "Here's the behavior I noticed, here's, I guess the level that I personally think it's at." And
>
> someone from student affairs contacts the student. And they'll, you know they try
>
> calling, they'll show up at their apartment, or their dorm, if they live on campus, or can't
>
> get a hold of them and you know different stuff to reach out to the student. I did have
>
> one student who kind of felt like he'd gotten in trouble and I was like, "You know you
>
> told me two weeks ago you've missed class because you're depressed, and then you came
>
> to class and then you were missing again. So, I was concerned." (Cindy, personal
>
> communication, November 2, 2017)

Faculty initiate alerts. Academic support center professionals seek to be accessible by interweaving their support with instruction as well as other student services. This level of interconnectivity promotes the sharing of information on behalf of students to prevent the level of discouragement that could cause them to stop giving their best effort or drop out altogether. Each institution participating in this multiple case study utilized an alert system to notify appropriate support offices when a student was not persisting. The coordinated effort typically began with instructors who were in tune with their students and genuinely concerned when a student's behavior was out of character. At IC, instructors have been trained to think through possible scenarios.

Well, if they're not coming, then you worry, 'What's going on, is it just my class that they have gotten frustrated with and they're going to drop, or is it all classes?' So, when I report my concern, [the early alert team] will contact the student and ask them to come in and talk, and they'll contact all the other professors and say, 'Is this student attending in your class? Are they doing OK in your class?' So, you kind of get a clue. (Carol, personal communication, November 2, 2017)

This training was characteristic of institutions with academic support centers that offered extended supports. However, the recently hired faculty members also shared a compassionate mindset with an openness toward helping students develop self-advocacy by standing with them with crises. An example was given by one such faculty member and advisor at TC, sharing the story of students who trusted their instructors to help them get back on track.

Not only am I disclosing, but I need a lot . . . I need you to talk to my parents. . . I need you to walk me to the Academic Support Center . . . I need you to mediate a conversation with the dean.' For one kid it was, 'I need you to prepare me to go in front of the academic review board, because they think I'm cheating in chemistry.' And all of [the] things in between [for which] I feel really responsible to these students, not because this institution made me, it's just who I am. (Kelly, personal communication, October 3, 2017)

At II, a leader in similar instruction and advisement roles shared her perspective on the need to provide early alerts and offer appropriate intervention to students facing life and academic challenges that have caused them to get stuck.

We all have jobs as advisors. Knowing that your students are struggling is part of that job, and as faculty members, we are all in the first 100 and 200 level courses we have to

give midterm grades. That's for everybody but it helps catch this. We have early alert

system and we are regularly told about how to do that. We sometimes have trainings

about things besides learning disabilities, like mental health issues, and how to deal with

them when students. There is a whole early alert team and I would use them. It is

absolutely expected that you will care about whether your students are thriving, whether

they are learning, whether they are mentally stable, and that you will connect to other

people on the team. Before we had the early alert system, I already had my own little

one. And I had a group of people I would email, "student in distress." Then we'd have a

round table via email about what to do. (Marie, personal communication, October 4,

2017)

Among those notified, the ASC staff intentionally watch for these alerts. At RU, one staff

member contacts each student receiving academic support on the list when a faculty member has

generated that report.

Faculty are supposed to give deficiencies at mid-term to freshmen getting D's or F's. We

work really closely with the retention office, and they will send us a list of students that

are registered with us that have mid-term deficiencies. We'll have our graduate assistant

reach out and meet with them one-on-one throughout the semester. (Millie, personal

communication, September 21, 2017)

At CU, it is the mentors who work one-on-one with students who follow up with students

in their network. "We get e-mail alerts when faculty members are flagging students in their

classes for those students that we mentor, so then we can kind of address that with them" (Bell,

personal communication, October 18, 2017). The ASC at II serves all enrolled students.

Subsequently, they have a responsibility to follow up with every student reported on a referral

list. While the regular report is published twice every term, a student who is failing to thrive could be placed on alert at any time and contacted for early intervention.

> Often if a student at mid-semester has a low grade or at the end of the semester where they have an academic warning, they have to meet with us to fill out a study contract. The early alert system actually isn't just a list of students with learning disabilities or ADHD, it's any student whose grades are really low in the early weeks or at any time in the semester, or if they're not attending classes. A faculty member just noticed something amiss with what's going on: they are not engaged, they are falling asleep, or whatever, to the extreme where it's really a pattern. They will discuss, "What should we do? Is this a residence issue? Is this an academics issue? Are they on the academic support center list of students with documentation? And try to troubleshoot that way. (Molly, personal communication, October 4, 2017)

The ASC director at II explained that she serves on the early alert team along with other leaders of support offices on campus. "[As] a team we'll assign [each student] to someone to be followed up by [when] we meet Monday mornings and go through a list of people who are in referral. So that's like a coordination of several departments" (Grace, personal communication, October 4, 2017).

Faculty encourage students to contact ASC. While the number of students enrolling in college who have disclosed learning differences continued to increase, so has the frequency of students discovering in college that they have struggled with undiagnosed learning differences. The rigor of curriculum, inconsistent class times, and lack of a support network often contribute to underperformance among this group, who often do not recognize the source of their challenges. However, professors who are in the practice of reading students and connecting with

them often perceive chasms in proficiency when a student's aptitude is excellent. The Associate

Provost at RU explained some of the responses she exercised as an instructor and mentor.

Sometimes I'll refer them to the learning center because what they need is writing

assistance. If it looks like it might be something else, I refer them to the counseling

center for testing options, or to the academic support office. There's a whole sort of

counseling center needs category that if I feel like that's where they need to go, I've

walked students over, I've made references, I make resources available. (Jennifer,

personal communication, September 21, 2017)

A colleague from another department at the immense RU campus who has also served as

a student mentor shared the scenario that led to her referring a student to academic support.

If we both understand that you've got a challenge that you and I can't handle, I need for

you to affiliate yourself with academic support services; because if you don't, you limit

the accommodations that I can make for you. And one student came back and said I'm

glad you told me to do that. He said all these years that I've been telling myself I was just

kind of stupid. I just needed to read differently, I needed some help in this area.

(Monica, personal communication, September 21, 2017)

At TC, an instructor and freshman advisor expressed her confidence in sending students

to the ASC for help when she observed behavior characteristic of those with learning and

attention differences.

Whether its extra time or a note-taker or what have you. I have had more situations

where I have thought a student was presenting who had never been diagnosed, and then I

always pick up the phone, and in those cases, have worked closely with the [ASC]

director and her staff to get that student to them and go through proper testing. (Kelly,

personal communication, October 3, 2017)

A colleague from TC described her protocol for referring a student begins with the student.

I talk to the student first . . . just as I would any other student, to try to get to the bottom

of what's going on. And you know, for some students they are having trouble at home.

And for some students, I ask them questions to figure out, is it their learning process, and

has this ever been something that's come up for them before this institution. You know,

is it the bump into college or is it something that you've dealt with before? And often it's

something they've dealt with before, but the work wasn't as hard. So now it's rearing its

head in a bigger way. And so, then I talk to them about getting evaluated, which can be a

tricky conversation, and then have them go over and then report back to me in a week or

so about how it's gone. Did they make it over there? Just as a regular check-up. (Sue,

personal communication, October 3, 2017)

The approach Sue took was contingent on the openness she expressed at the onset of the term,

consistent efforts to connect with the students individually, and a positive reputation for

consideration associated with her leadership roles on campus. Similarly, instructors at II

recognize the value in speaking directly to the student, encouraging them to pursue an evaluation

by recommending contact with the academic support center. In response to a student who was

disruptive in class, a science professor arranged to have a conversation with a student.

I want them to be documented so they can get their provisions that they should have

because it just makes sense. You can see I feel strongly about this, I just want people to

thrive. I one time had a student tell me that they were offended by another faculty

member who asked, 'Do you have a learning disability?' But I have to say out of all the

conversations I have had, and I think I'm kind of nice about it, I have not generally had a

bad experience with that and the student hasn't either. For example, with this guy who

blurts out stuff all the time; I might ask, 'Has anybody ever asked you?' or 'Have

teachers ever wondered? Have you ever been tested?' Or I might say, and I did say to

him, 'Who in the class, do you feel you are most like?' And he said, 'That kid that blurts

out random stuff.' And I said, 'You're right and the rest of the class can see that you have

something in common with him. You present very similarly.' I made a case, 'While in

college is a really good time to be tested, and you can keep that information to yourself if

you want, but it is a useful tool to know. And it turned out that his whole life people have

wondered, and he's never been tested and he's going to get tested now, he's got it

scheduled. (Marie, personal communication, October 4, 2017)

Before the conversation ever took place, several factors had to align: approachability and access,

followed by sensitivity and response by the professor. Instructors who reached out to students

established a rapport that permitted them to respond when they saw a student struggling, but the

motivation that drove this response came from a sincere concern for each student to succeed.

Another science professor at II described her proactive approach, educating students about

potential learning challenges, and designing an early referral that set students up for success.

I teach a seminar class for the incoming first year students, the first quad for seven weeks,

about how to study, how to manage your time, how to do our program, what our program

is like. I took direction from academic support two years ago when we started the course.

We're one of the only majors that does this because we want to help students be

successful at this institution and if this program is their home we want them to stay, but if

it's not, we want them to feel okay to go [to a different major]. One of the things I

address is that sometimes you don't realize that you might have a learning difference or

an attention difference until you get into this setting, where you're doing different types

of learning [and] you're being challenged in different ways, like this might never have

seemed like an issue in the past or maybe you accommodated for it really well, but now

you've hit your limit and you don't know how to cope. Just this summer, we tried this

new strategy for students coming in . . . trying to link them up with some academic

support from the get go. (Rose, personal communication, October 4, 2017)

Faculty sensitive to students. When college students are aware of their learning

differences, it may be due to years of support during elementary and secondary education

experiences. Students may locate the academic support center on campus to learn how

accommodations will work there. They often have the expectation that supports will be the same

as in high school, and some want to show that they do not need this help anymore. Approaching

a student who has not requested support involves some risk, but an award-winning social science

instructor has overcome any hesitation. She experienced acceptance in assisting students who

were trying to develop self-advocacy and left the door open for them to stay in communication

about their use of accommodations.

I personally like to touch base with them like if I haven't heard from the learning center,

like if they haven't made an appointment [for an upcoming exam]. I [ask], 'Hey, you

know what's up, all good?' And what I find is a lot of times the students have

accommodations, but they don't necessarily always use them. And they're like, 'I'm just

going to take it in the computer lab, I think. OK?' I'm like, 'OK good. Let me know if

that changes. (Jennifer, personal communication, September 21, 2017)

Those who disclose have the choice to exercise their accommodations or work without them. Others may think they have developed all the necessary skills employed before college and enter a postsecondary setting without disclosing. At TC, Kelly shared her observations about students getting through that challenging transition.

I don't know that many kids with diagnosed learning disabilities come out of high school to a postsecondary institution without good relationships of support people in their lives. Right? Now they've got to start that over again. Not only do they have to find friends, after not having to make a friend, many of which, not since kindergarten. But they also have to find their resource people and who to trust. Kids with learning disabilities and kids from really humble financial situations, they are so proud of what they've done because they have been able to do it. I wish half of the really smart rich kids had half the grit that those two demographics have, but they don't, because they've never been tested. These kids have been tested and will continue to be tested their whole [lives]. (Kelly, personal communication, October 3, 2017)

While this effort reflects a desire to become an independent learner, college provides an environment where supports can aid in further development of self-determination. When Sue at TC observed this struggle, she looked for an opening to discuss it at a periodic meeting incorporated into the course structure.

I would notice their behaviors in class, and I would notice what they were writing and, when we met one-on-one, they would often disclose something that was going on with them. Whether it was already documented or not documented, as we talked about why they were having difficulties, they would tell me, 'Well you know, I stare at my book and I can't get anywhere, or I sit in class and I realize I'm drifting all over the place.' There's

also an essay that I have them write . . . and it's what their experience has been with learning in academics, and a lot of things sort of show themselves. (Sue, personal communication, October 3, 2017)

Through assignments such as this one, faculty can capitalize on opportunities to speak into students' lives, encourage them to get help, tell them how to find it, or admonish them to hold themselves accountable. Cindy, a math professor at IC, remarked about her initiative to keep students engaged.

There's been a couple times where I've had a couple of students that, I kind of just you know as I'm teaching, and I notice they're really not paying attention. Just kind of as I walk by like [patting on the desk], you know just trying to bring them back if it's a student that I know would appreciate it. (Cindy, personal communication, November 2, 2017)

Aiding students in the development of self-advocacy skills often involves direction; not doing work for the student but walking with them through the process until they can stand on their own. Another math instructor at IC shared how she invited students to persist.

I have a learning different kid, and he's so smart and I worked with him from the time he was little, and they generally they have low self-esteem. They're not keeping up and they feel bad about it. So, I'll just share with them. [My son is] the most successful of all my children, because he learned at a young age, 'I have to do a little bit every single day. I cannot wait till the night before.' And so, he did very well; he went here to [college]. He got a degree in accounting and history . . . he writes beautifully. Nobody can read his language . . . he would just write all these thoughts down and then organize them and then have somebody spell check it for him because the computer doesn't always get it.

And people will say, 'Well it's amazing how well he writes.' But he just battled through

it. And I tell [my students who are learning different], once you're out of the classroom,

there's going to be somebody that will spellcheck your work. You just tell them, 'Hey I

have dyslexia. This is my proposal. Will you read it for me?' (Carol, personal

communication, November 2, 2017)

At II, Von shared his experience working with a student who had disclosed but was not

applying himself despite the accommodations he received.

I had a kid last year who was [an athlete]. He had ADHD and so he came in [to the

classroom] saying he's not going to be eligible because his grades are so low. I told him

he needed to come in and talk to me because I saw the wreck that was going to happen.

So, he came in and I shut the door. I don't think he's got any parental stuff going and so I

said, 'I'm going to talk to you like I would my son. I'm just going to shoot straight with

you you're going to fail this class.' I said, 'I'll give you an opportunity, but I need to see

that you're going to do some work.' And I said, 'Man, you gotta start getting your act

together as a human being and stuff and start working and you've got to start being

responsible yourself,' because it was always 'everybody else' and 'the coach is going to

help me.' So I said, 'You know it's you, and it's your own person, but you control your

destiny and therefore, you make decisions and there are consequences to those decisions

so if you mess up and you decide, 'Hey, I'm going to blow this off and stuff' well then,

you go down, and you have nobody to blame but yourself. But I'm saying you've got an

opportunity to step up here. (Von, personal communication, October 4, 2017)

Von took a risk by challenging the student to pursue self-determination rather than expecting

others to compensate for him. Von offered the student a chance to do a supplementary

assignment to show he would apply himself and try to learn. The student completed the work, and Von gave him a second assignment, affirming his efforts at self-motivation. Ultimately, the student was able to pass the exams and earn a passing grade in the course. It was because his professor cared enough to speak truth into this student's life. Von commented, "And he learned something about his character and that the decisions he makes shape his own destiny" (Von, personal communication, October 4, 2017). This sensitivity, though not expressed by every instructor, was evident in the personal communication events at every site in this study.

Creative responses to students' needs. Responding creatively to students' needs requires sensitive instructors who can think outside traditional lines. Employing tools for instruction that employ effective application aid every student, alleviating pressure to identify specific strategies that work for the minority. Finding ways to equip every learner means have to request fewer accommodations, and subsequently, few provided. These strategies target the needs for competency, relatedness, and autonomy experienced by every student that lead to self-determination. A math instructor from IC shared some of the strategies she incorporated into her instruction.

> They're going to use this a lot in the future and so they really need a mastery of it . . . they
>
> need to learn that you prepare for class by doing the homework so then the next day
>
> you're ready to learn the new things and you understand it, and it cements the idea and
>
> the process, not just looking at, 'Oh I get that what she did, [without] putting pencil to
>
> paper. They're not going to remember that. So, I supplied the key to the homework . . . I
>
> just started doing that three or four years ago. I found a lot more students who will
>
> actually sit down and do that homework if they know when they get stuck they can look
>
> at it online and say, 'Oh, that's what she did. I see now why she did it.' And then they

can come in and say, 'OK, I still don't see what it is you did and how you figured this

out.' And we can address those individually. (Carol, personal communication,

November 2, 2017)

She further described another strategy she employed, encouraging students to rewrite the sample

problems because they can learn kinesthetically from experience and apply their practice to

future problem-solving.

And then even just copying that homework down, they're having to think about what it is

they're writing down and somehow . . . it cements it more in their brains, so when they go

to do it on a quiz . . . on a test or the review, they are familiar. I put tons of homework

problems up there and tell them . . . 'You've been doing math for years. You know how

many of each type problem you need to do.' Some kids just need to do one or two of

each type and they've got it, and others need to do 10 before they get it. So, they can

pick and choose and do as many as they want, and that's up to them. (Carol, personal

communication, November 2, 2017)

Another math instructor at IC offered three options for taking tests: in the testing center,

in the classroom with the class, or in her office at a scheduled time. She explained that a

drawback of taking a test in the testing center was that there was no one available to answer

questions.

Some students always just like to ask questions and I think others, it just makes them feel

more comfortable that they know that if they get stuck I'm here that they could [ask], 'Is

this what this question is really asking?' If I have another class I have to go to . . . we all

have grad student teaching assistants, and I'll try to get one of those ahead of time to be

ready and say, 'Okay here's the test; can you guys come by at this time so in case I have

any students you can take them?' (Cindy, personal communication, November 2, 2017)

To accommodate those who chose to take the exam in-class with their classmates, she described

how she provided extended time to those with that accommodation.

There's a little conference room in the department that they can take them to finish it.

Usually, if I don't have to go anywhere right afterwards, I'll just take them to whatever

the closest, quiet space is that I can find depending on where on campus I am. (Cindy,

personal communication, November 2, 2017)

Students with learning and attention differences have experienced success in recent years

when responsive instructors saw a need for accessibility and devised access creatively so that

every student benefitted. At TC, one of the writing instructors shared about the skill

development offered in a special course aimed at practical application.

It's a practicum-based course where you learn a method for doing your work, from lecture

notes, to reading, to papers, to time management, all sorts exam preparation, post exam.

So, it's a set of skills, one method for doing your work. If you take this class, then in

class twice a week, you learn about the method and then you apply it to all the other

classes you're taking that semester, and you meet once a week with an undergraduate TA

in her office who evaluates the weekly work that you're doing applying the skills. (Sue,

personal communication, October 3, 2017)

Faculty members at II shared stories about the ways they responded to students with

learning and attention differences to help them develop self-determination skills while in college.

Von described his reaction to the distraction some students were experiencing when many began

bringing laptop computers and phones to class each day, and the response he offered out of consideration for students with learning and attention differences.

> I was banning computers from my room, which was a total oxymoron for who I am as a
>
> person. However, because of my sensitivity to ASC kids, and other kids with different
>
> learning styles, it very much helps them to create. So now as the computers are coming
>
> back to class, rather than just banning them, I told them if you're going to bring your
>
> computer in here you sit in the first three rows. That way it opens it up for ASC
>
> [students] to sit in the first three rows. Now actually kids in the front rows are very
>
> mixed. (Von, personal communication, October 4, 2017)

He identified those who would excel in his course early on, then offered them an incentive to participate on a different level. He asked them to assist the students on the other end of the spectrum, who were struggling with the material.

> What I try to inculcate into these really bright students is 'How can you use your learning,
>
> not in the future or something, how can you use it to help other kids and others in the next
>
> generation of kids that are coming through. I try to get them to think about learning as
>
> helping. And some of the brighter kids get it. And it motivates them because [they]
>
> realize they're helping somebody. So, these kids help on the top end. (Von, personal
>
> communication, October 4, 2017)

When Rose saw a need to help students persist, she proposed a special seminar course to help students considering a science major to see that they would have a mentor to stand with as the course sequence becomes challenging.

> We have students diverge from the major after the first semester. We looked at all the
>
> reasons why we think that's happening. And one of them was I think, preparation and

just adjustment of expectations, and realizing there are tough components to it, how to be

successful. So, I also have peer mentors teach, upperclassmen that come in and they

share their thoughts and wisdom, do [incoming students] have good resources to go to

and to ask questions. So, it started off as just being for the first-year incoming freshman

science majors, but we also opened it to deciding majors who are thinking science. It's

not required for them to take it, but it's strongly recommended because they get a really

good idea of what our program is like and they get to meet their cohort. (Rose, personal

communication, October 4, 2017)

Rose confirmed that the upperclassmen serving as peer mentors continued to reach out to

younger students beyond the first year, the former continuing to learn as much as the latter.

Many of the instructors interviewed shared the value of meeting directly with students,

equipping them through mentorship, coaching, or advisement.

I've mentored research students that have serious documented learning disabilities. I also

try to get people into internships, because an internship is a place where people can often

get a higher grade. I have even begged for a student to be allowed to take an internship

when they had below the GPA requirement, because that's the group that needs them

more. I will look for people, especially . . . who are brilliant but shy, and try and find

some niche for them in the department. But there's also this group that's like really

bright, but maybe they have ADHD. If you do field work, that group of people is

fearless, brave, and usually good at figuring things out like physically, and usually very

enthusiastic. So, they often are good with field courses. And I've tried to route people

into opportunities I've thought would match them. In internships, you often don't want

the top students. The top students can do whatever they want. It is the [one] who isn't

the top student that needs to walk out with something on their resume. (Marie, personal

communication, October 4, 2017)

Each professor offered examples of creative solutions to help students with learning and

attention differences. An instructor at RU presented a novel perspective, challenging paradigms

common to postsecondary instructors.

Why do we have limits on our tests? What is that accomplishing? What is the purpose of

this? What is the learning objective associated with this? I'm kind of a fan of the

universal design model. I can make changes to my own curriculum to meet students'

needs, and how I balance and that is if I would do this for any student with this challenge,

I will do it for any student. I just have to make sure I'm consistent in that anybody who

asks me, I would do it for. The things that I used to have to do as accommodations for

very few I don't have to do anymore because I've changed the way I approach my course

overall. (Jennifer, personal communication, September 21, 2017)

Universal design implemented. The introduction of the concept of Universal Design for

Learning (UDL) initially occurred over two decades ago. It proposed the imperative of

providing multiple means of representation, action and expression, and engagement; the what,

how, and why of learning (Burgstahler, & Cory 2008). UDL advocates for reducing physical,

cognitive, intellectual, and organizational barriers to learning, under the auspices that this type of

preparation by instructors will address the needs of many types of learners. Subsequently, the

level of need to provide accommodations to students with a variety of learning differences is also

sharply reduced, while incorporating many considerations into the curriculum from the onset.

Much discussion of Universal Design dealt with application in postsecondary

environments, addressing both the instructors' and the academic support centers' roles. The

collaborative effort from these entities facilitated extended support to students with learning in

ways that potentially benefitted the entire student body, and it often began with instructors'

personal commitment to doing their best in their roles as educators.

> I think it is important, even for someone who has personal experience in my own family,
>
> but also classroom experience with students, to stay on top of what is being found out,
>
> what are resources, what are better ways of helping these students and providing for these
>
> students. (Kelly, personal communication, October 3, 2017)

Many instructors brought up this topic or issues related to UDL, and how they were

adjusting their instruction accordingly. At RU, an education professor spoke with conviction

about the importance of making learning accessible. "I believe [regarding] Universal Design . . .

if I'm their instructor, my role is to help them to be successful learners. That means they don't

have walls and they have to look for them" (Wally, personal communication, September 21,

2017). A social science professor with great influence through her role as an administrator at RU

was fluent in the tenets of UDL and gave an example of one tool she has implemented.

> I make sure that I have captions on everything I show whether I have a hearing-impaired
>
> student or not because it helps everyone and that's easy. I don't have to wait until there's
>
> a student with a hearing impairment in my class to remember to turn it on. It's just the
>
> way that I'll do it. (Jennifer, personal communication, September 21, 2017)

Like Jennifer, a member of the faculty at CU posted tests and quizzes online, allowing

students to arrange for their accommodations in a testing center, or find a quiet environment on

their own. This meant that students with learning and attention differences with

accommodations for testing were not suspiciously absent when other students arrived for these

evaluations. Typically, if a window for taking the exam is available, students can arrange to log

in and complete them at a time most suitable to their schedule. It is also beneficial to students who gain additional instructional time since exams are open outside of class time.

I always give them a few days' notice on quizzes. I'll tell when it is posted on Canvas. Any assignments they have to post are posted on Canvas. And when we do things like compositions, I often give them a choice of subjects and you know instead of just one and give them as much ability to choose as we can. I design the tests, so they are long enough to cover things but not so long that people are going to be sitting in there like all day. And so, students who had formerly maybe had to go to the ASC to take the test can complete them within the class because they are a reasonable length, but they cover everything pretty thoroughly. (Betty, personal communication, October 18, 2017)

At II, a science professor expressed openness to eliminating some tests, for the sake of those who performed poorly with that type of evaluation when they know and can explain the material at a mastery level.

I'd like to explore more about how we can use alternative forms to show mastery in the sciences, that's something I'm interested in. And I do feel like a verbal exam is one way to get at that. Like if they can be conversant in that thing that we're talking about isn't that the point? And in some cases, like in this science course for non-science majors, it has a big science literacy component to it. So, can they converse on that level. (Rose, personal communication, October 4, 2017)

A colleague at II shared her experience utilizing electronic tools outside class periods. She made materials available in advance, so that students could prepare for discussions, and then instructed them to share ideas in small groups. This maximized use of instructional time while

also giving every student an opportunity to contribute. She also posted notes online, so students could review lectures after class.

> I'll ask a question to small groups and people will talk to two or three people around them and then I'll have the group reflect back so that if somebody is afraid to say something to a class of 50 they've at least participated in a group of three. I do a lot of those kinds of things and I think they benefit everybody for sure. I put things up on Blackboard. All the power points and then sometimes we'll have some other things. I've always been really intentional so for example if we're going to have a discussion, I will often ask a question in advance and have them walk into the class having already thought; and that accommodates the people who can't do anything on the spur of the moment. But it also just makes everything goes smoother, right. Or I'll have people do a discussion thread too on blackboard before they walk in. (Marie, personal communication, October 4, 2017)

A third instructor from II shared the choices he considers when determining how to meet the learning needs of students, with consideration for all students regarding financial responsibility and processing ability. His approach does not single out any student or group; he intentionally seeks to make all instruction accessible to every kind of learning.

> I use a digital medium, so there are no textbooks in the class. That's purposely done because I was very poor growing up, and basically, they don't want to buy textbooks. They end up paying twenty dollars for the course materials, but basically the course materials are online, or you can download and print them if you want. All the readings are accompanied by total audio, so there's audio for everything in my classes, there is MP3 audios for everything, that includes scripture, the articles, everything. So that way

if somebody is blind then they can listen to the course including the lectures that have

been taped. The lectures are available in full text; they're also available on video and

then also full audio for that. Some of the kids like to listen as they walk around. And

then what I did was the lectures were like 90 minutes, which were too long for students to

be bored out of their minds watching this crazy video. So, I got into YouTube. I noticed

that on YouTube the average time for watching on my site [was] actually twelve minutes

and eight seconds, so what I did was I chopped my lectures up into 10-minute segments.

I also developed kind of what I call interactive video. There's ten minutes of lecture, ten

questions, [in that pattern]. So then for the student that says I have ADHD or whatever,

like their professor does, they can watch for ten minutes [and] answer ten questions, and

the ten questions cause them to reflect on [the material]. (Von, personal communication,

October 4, 2017

Extended support. The general verbiage of laws describing provided support at

postsecondary institutions is intended for broad application, to include people with disabilities

rather than allow for exclusions. However, budget constraints and limited personnel often set

margins for ASC directors, causing them to establish policies that provided only mandated

supports. As described in the theme content section for eligibility, the institutions in this study

gave deference to the needs of students with learning and attention differences over fiscal issues.

In this study, I specifically selected cases because of a known capacity for extending support

beyond the letter of the law. They started by looking at familiar accommodations already

arranged for students with other types of disabilities and developed practices for modeling self-

advocacy to students to aid in their adoption of unfamiliar practices in settings that drew

attention to their differences. Coaching students one-on-one or working with them in groups

intentionally supported the development of self-determination skills their peers had already synthesized. Many extended supports were available at little or no additional cost to their institutions, but for the costlier ones, offering these supports to all enrolled students mitigated the need to increase budget allocations for direct support to students with learning and attention differences.

 Advocacy promoted through modeling. During college, students with learning and attention differences struggled significantly more than their peers. The introduction of Universal Design and accessibility to accommodative technologies has made it possible for the increasing numbers of this population not only attend but also complete their degrees. There was evidence that when they received extended support, their rate of graduation almost matched that of their peers. This period provided an opportunity for further development of self-determination skills when it was facilitated by those who shared advocacy as students matured in pursuit of that independence. Shared advocacy begins when a student applies to college, and because each has a unique pace, is complete when the student developed these inherent growth tendencies: effort, agency, and commitment.

 Perspectives of academic support team members reflected examples as individual to their institutions as the students themselves. These snapshots demonstrated the ability of every type of institution to offer shared advocacy in the ways that met each student's needs. For instance, two ASC directors mentioned cases when a member of their team might walk a student to another office.

> 'Let me walk out with you, and I'll show you how it works.' Then I walk up to the desk.
>
> I will introduce them to Eddy, who is working at the desk. And how easy is that for us to
>
> do, right? It is good to get up and move, it takes an extra two minutes, you make the

connection. Our desk staff is very friendly, and I think the student feels like I don't do it

with them the second time because then they've kind of seen how to do it, so I do think

we do quite a bit of modeling." (Margaret, personal communication, October 3, 2017)

At CU, the mentors that worked one-on-one with the students did not just recommend

additional services.

The mentor's job is to reinforce what's learned in the group and make sure they master

what's in the group; to assess what services they do need and get them to those services,

sometimes even walking them to those services. (Drew, personal communication,

October 18, 2017)

For most students, this may seem unnecessary, but for those with learning and attention

differences, modeling and practicing are key aspects of synthesis that set students up to register

for additional services and get back to those locations without assistance. One of the mentors

shared another important aspect of the coaching she practiced.

At times, it's difficult to get them to come in and they are constantly rescheduling or not

showing . . . we discuss how that might be frustrating for others and how real-world

consequences might impact them as well. We struggle with, 'OK you're learning these

skills and you've got to work on using them independently.' And also, 'We want to keep

you in this program, so we'll remind you as many times as it takes.' (Cara, personal

communication, October 18, 2017)

Promoting self-determination was not associated with dependence on others. However, the CU

mentors' commitment to not give up on students in their program communicated value while

modeling the commitment they were helping students achieve. This same commitment was

evident in the academic support at IC from the point of intake.

I create an intake folder for students, and they leave the appointment with these

documents and a copy of their letter. And I touch on it when we're talking about, 'What

has been your experience with teachers in the past? Were accommodations handled

behind the scenes at your high school or were you responsible for talking to your

teachers?' We do role-play, using the best language, I'll give them the script. I don't do

this with all students, just the ones that bring it up by saying, 'I'm scared to talk to my

instructors,' which I don't hear as much, anymore. What I hear more now is like, 'I've

never, you know these are instructors, how do I talk to them?' So, I don't have anything

formal, but I'll say, 'Maybe it's better to be open-ended with questions rather than

confrontational,' and things like that depending on their communication style." (Barb,

personal communication, November 2, 2017)

The academic support team at II described several instances of shared advocacy, and their

desire to see students move from needing extrinsic motivation to practicing independence.

Sometimes I'll say, 'Do you want to meet with your professor in my office? Sometimes I

help them script an email to them. I do a lot of that actually. If it looks like they could

do the email, then they copy me on it; or if they're really paralyzed, I'll write the email,

and copy them. That sort of gets the ball rolling. Sometimes just having you copied on

the email makes them feel like – empowered. They have you; your name's on it. I help

them make that movement toward maturity, taking one step closer. (Laura, personal

communication, October 4, 2017)

When these victories were observed, the ASC team members shared how gratified they

were to have facilitated forward progress. Their goal was to empower, and it was the students'

victories that they celebrated when they experienced self-advocacy.

I'll have the student bring the technology to their classroom. It's something they're using

for note-taking or something like that, and ask the faculty member's permission. It's on

their accommodations form so they should have no problem, but it opens communication

with the faculty member. In some cases, then it's gone from, 'Well I'm using this device'

to 'I'm using this technology to help me with my classwork' to 'Here's what I need from

you as a faculty member to get my classwork back up to speed.' So those little steps are

usually what I encourage. (Trey, personal communication, October 4, 2017)

Molly put the essential value of her work into perspective, noting that what mattered

would not only be skills employed at II, but also how students with learning and attention

differences employed these skills in life after college.

I think that is opening up a bigger conversation now, too, about how can we help students

with disabilities have practical experience for their career. Because they might get this

degree from this institution, but then what? For a lot of them, they may not necessarily

have practical experience, but they may know how to advocate for themselves in the

workplace or whatever it might be. These are just the seeds . . . for trying to figure out

how do we help our students with disabilities develop self-advocacy now, so they

practice it in the future. (Molly, personal communication, October 4, 2017)

Support extended from available services. Accommodations for students with learning

and attention differences vary because each student has a unique package of learning abilities,

learning styles, and challenges. While a student with a severe aural processing deficit may

benefit from having a transcriptionist attend each of his classes as much as a hearing-impaired

student, he is not eligible for this costly accommodation. A blind student is not required to

finance the conversion of books to an alternative format, yet with the technology available on

campus, schools now extended this option to students with a variety of learning differences. Though some institutional leaders encourage professors to post lecture notes and outlines of presentations, many professors express hesitations to make this a requirement. On many campuses, technology has been installed for lectures to be recorded and easily uploaded to campus e-learning websites. Knowing that these types of information transfer would benefit students with learning and attention differences is enough to motivate some professors to develop and practice these functions, and this group of educators is expanding.

Assistive technology. Due to the advances in technology and ease of obtaining personal devices, schools have curbed the focus on providing individuals with assistive technology. "Technology has really leveled the playing field for a lot of these kids . . . it has made all of the difference, particularly for students with some of these executive function issues" (Margaret, personal communication, October 3, 2017). Less common devices and expensive software subscriptions limit access for college students, but some institutions are investing in effective tools and making them available to students with learning and attention differences. Institutions purchase subscriptions share them with students holding appropriate accommodations. At CU, Kurzweil was available in certain labs scattered across campus, so students could visit those labs and listen to their texts being read while they read along silently. RU, also offered this access offered to students for use on their personal devices.

> We use a software program called Kurzweil Firefly where we've got a site license to where we can get the software for free to all of our students. Folks in our technology lab can get their textbooks into an accessible format, download them into the cloud, students get a username and password, then the computer reads aloud the text to them and

highlights word-by-word on the screen what's being read. (Mitch, personal

communication, September 21, 2017)

At II, a member of the ASC investigated new technologies frequently, and equipped

students with them after applicability is determined.

Regarding assistive technology, students come to me and say hey there's this interesting

thing on whatever website and I'll research that to see if that's something that's

appropriate. for students who need some kind of technology to help with their classwork

or their studies skills. Usually I'll talk to the advisor beforehand and make a

determination what's appropriate. Then I'll sit with the student and discuss it. I'll train

them let them use it and follow up throughout the semester just to make sure they've got a

good handle on it-if there are any problems they've come up with. (Trey, personal

communication, October 4, 2017)

Note-taking. Procedures providing for note-taking assistance vary among institutions,

but students with learning and attention differences sometimes have received this

accommodation. At IC, the ASC director explained that note-takers were strictly volunteers.

The ASC provided NCR (no carbon required) paper to any student with an accommodation for

note-taking support. The student could ask a peer in the class to use this mechanism, or if the

student preferred to remain anonymous, he could ask the professor to help identify an

appropriate peer note-taker.

[Students] are able to use their laptops to take their own notes or they may [get] peer

notes. Let's say they're in all math classes; a laptop [is] not going to help. They need

someone to write it, so they get supplemental notes to supplement their own as a peer

note accommodation. So, we kind of walk through that with them, the ways that they're

describing the impact. They may just not have thought about all those things before.

(Liz, personal communication, November 2, 2017)

Students were encouraged to use laptops to take notes and faculty were encouraged to post their notes online for the benefit of all students. At RU, each class requested a volunteer where a student with that accommodation was enrolled. The student volunteering became a paid contractor, reporting to the ASC to ensure attendance and provided accurate notes covering each class lecture, discussion, presentation, and notes on a board. There was full transparency as the student and note-taker interacted directly, exchanging email addresses and potentially meeting outside of class time to discuss the notes. TC, employed a higher level of confidentiality.

We train note-takers to respect the privacy and dignity of the person that is using this service. We can't be an extra burden to them, and so we really try through note-taking to [mitigate] that stress. I have a form that the student fills out and they say would you want to stay anonymous or are you okay with it being shared with a note-taker? And their [responses vary]. We share a Google drive folder, and it's connected to both of them and the note-taker uploads and the student has access to retrieve the notes. If the student with the accommodation prefers to be anonymous, then an [ASC team member] takes the notes out from the note-taker and moves files over to the [student receiving support]. (Sabina, personal communication, October 4, 2017)

At II, note-takers were provided through the ASC as well. However, when a proactive instructor posted a variety of tools online, students without accommodations were still benefitting from extended support measures.

I have note-takers in class that take notes and those notes are made available to these students [with accommodations]. There are always at least 10 [students] in each of these

[large lecture hall] classes that have that accommodation. All the [videos of lectures] and PowerPoints are online, [and] the audio is available [online] to everybody in class. So, for a lot of the kids that have accommodations . . . it's baked into the class before the class even starts. (Von, personal communication, October 4, 2017)

Notes posted by professors. A math instructor at II expressed her intention to make outlines accessible, though she typically posted them for all students at the conclusion of class sessions.

If they wanted my PowerPoints and particularly if a student who had ADHD thought they were helpful, I point them to where to find them ahead of time; then it's up to them to print out their own. I always [offer them] after class 'if anybody wants these take them.' (Jane, personal communication, October 4, 2017)

Posting of notes by instructors is becoming more common at TC, though many discussion-based courses are still an exception to this trend.

Some professors will say, 'I'll give the student my own notes.' I do that in my class. They tell every student, regardless of disability if you want my notes I will give them to you. I post everything online ahead of time. So, when I meet with students I ask, 'Are you sure the professor is not posting things online?' That has to be more and more of a conversation, because, it's really a lot of work to find note-takers. (Brenda, personal communication, October 4, 2017)

A senior faculty member at CU described her efforts to make notes available to students, stating that she did not create these files, but makes them accessible.

I do like some of the PowerPoints provided by the textbooks, so I will have those online and they're available. But, when I go to class, I teach from the teaching station. And I

write my notes down like this on regular paper, and it comes up on the overhead. And

then after class I do a PDF of these and put them online in Canvas. (Mary, personal

communication, October 18, 2017)

Betty, a language instructor at CU intentionally tried to make all materials available to all

students, posting everything on the institution's e-learning site and referencing it repeatedly

during classroom instruction periods. She recognized the need for this type of accessibility and

responded by creating a model e-learning classroom.

I post in one place, for instance on 'Canvas' which is you know our system . . . the

calendar is posted on the supersite, that's got the calendar for those assignments. But I

post everything . . . I put [up] two class days ahead . . . that makes me more flexible, too .

. . And I always give them a few days' notice on quizzes. I'll tell when it is posted on

Canvas. Any assignments they have to post are posted on Canvas. And when we do

things like compositions, I often give them a choice of subjects . . . and give them as

much ability to choose as [I] can. (Betty, personal communication, October 18, 2017)

Alternative text formats. At II, students with learning and attention differences may

request an accommodation for alternative text formats. Alternative text formats offered to

visually-impaired students often required the book to be scanned and stored electronically. This

accommodation may prove highly beneficial to a student with limited visual processing ability

because the text can be read aloud by that student's personal computer while the student reads

along, capitalizing on aural processing skills to compensate for visual processing deficits. While

not automatically provided to students with learning disabilities and ADHD documentation,

schools often provided it if the student benefitted from using an electronic copy. Consideration

given to students with processing differences accounted for a student's need to have text read aloud while reading along, even when that student had excellent vision.

Typically, a student with an accommodation for an alternative format of a textbook is required to purchase the resource, just as any other student. When presented at the ASC, a technician breaks the binding and scans the text into a readable pdf form. Both public universities in this study provided a description of this practice, RU in the Midwest, and CU, in the Mid-Atlantic region. The website for CU stated, "In the event that students cannot secure materials in an alternative format, the ASC will either train the student in text conversion, assist in requesting text conversion or will provide converted text." Publishers can provide a pdf form of textbooks purchased by students with an accommodation for alternative text format. However, they require supporting documentation from an ASC leader, two to four weeks for processing the request and will only release the document to the ASC to disburse it to students with this accommodation. Instructors may make a request for alternative text format for their own use as a person with a documented disability.

Recording of lectures. Lecture recording was addressed on varying levels, though it has become more commonly considered as an accommodation upon request for students with learning and attention differences. A hearing student with .04% aural processing speed may benefit just as much from lecture transcription as a hearing-impaired student; however, hiring a transcriptionist is among the more costly accommodations, and unlikely to be extended to students without hearing loss. While all enrolled students do not have the right to record, academic support staff may approve it as an accommodation while requiring students to demonstrate that it is reasonable for them personally.

In the regulations when 504 was implemented in the 70s, there was a little section on

accommodations in postsecondary, and one of the things it specifically says a student

with a disability has a right to do is record lectures. And so, I say they don't have to get

permission. However, I always think it's a courtesy for the student to tell the faculty

member that they are recording a lecture. (Mitch, personal communication, September

21, 2017)

Lecture capture offers an alternative to individuals with disabilities securing an

accommodation for recording lectures. This technology empowers faculty members to capture

their lectures and post them to course web pages for all students to access along with their notes.

In this case, all students benefit, and no student with a learning or attention difference must

qualify for an accommodative service. Besides being easy for faculty to utilize, it improves

accessibility for all students and diminishes the need for students with disabilities to request an

accommodation for the recording of lectures. All students can use it to review content outside of

class, and professors observed greater engagement when students can process presentations with

less focus on note-taking because they have the assurance that they can review content again

asynchronously. Multiple technology companies have developed competing products, so it is

available in the form of software that can be installed in any classroom and has become

increasingly portable through a cloud-based application.

The institutions in this study varied greatly in their use of lecture capture technology. CU

explored the potential for using it and declined to pursue it. However, RU installed lecture

capture early in its development, and a large number of lecture hall classes necessitated its

employment, though this was not mandated. While at least one instructor used it skillfully for

every lecture at II, it was not the standard since the majority of that college's courses were not

taught in large lecture halls where the equipment-based system existed. TC equipped certain lecture halls this school year and expressed an intention to record all lectures, touting multiple benefits to faculty in particular. IC was reviewing lecture capture at the time of this study, investigating how to incorporate the cloud-based technology with existing e-learning tools currently available to all enrolled students without the required equipping of classrooms.

   Accountability through weekly meetings. Though coaching and tutoring are similar in concept, each can be tweaked to address serving the needs of the population. For students with learning and attention differences, some academic support centers are hiring certified ADHD coaches to work with these students one-on-one, while others are sending members of their team for training to develop this focused skill set. The student mentorship program at RU paired students with learning and attention differences with faculty members in their majors. While this was voluntary for both parties, there were usually more faculty members available to participate than the number of students requesting mentorship. The program was formal and sponsored by the Academic Support Center, who planned a large group meeting for all participants once per term, but provided 'lunch and learn' training sessions to faculty mentors every month. Appointments between mentor and mentee could be informal; some met weekly or biweekly during the student's first term of enrollment and had the potential to carry on through their senior year with less frequency.

   CU offered a mentorship program for students with ADHD for several years, utilizing graduate students to work with screened participants one-on-one upon a complete evaluation. "During the first semester, students receive individual mentoring weekly for eight to ten weeks. Then the second semester of the program they get four to six sessions of mentoring" (Stephanie, personal communication, October 18, 2017). Data were collected regarding this mentorship

program and analyzed to demonstrate effectiveness over time. The results strongly supported the intervention of mentorship, holding students accountable to aid students with ADHD in their development of self-determination during college. RU had just initiated a pilot program to provide focused academic skill development through peer-coaching at the time of this study. Experienced peer-tutors were recruited to receive coach training and had served a small number of students. The program was to be reviewed periodically throughout that term and a determination made regarding continuation and adjustments, based on assessments regarding participation and effectiveness.

At TC, all enrolled students were eligible for academic coaching, though often recommended for students with learning and attention differences. This extended support was appropriate for students who determined that they wanted to improve reading and retention ability, develop better study habits, manage their time more effectively, and synthesize learning more efficiently. Students were assigned to work with a graduate student, usually from the School of Education.

> They are in my office and show hesitation about coaching and I say, 'OK, you need to book an appointment.' So, they can book, it's like any other tutoring, you just book a coaching appointment. The students that we see, they are committed to once a week and I'll have anywhere between seven to 10 students that I see weekly. Those students are our priority, those registered with us with learning disabilities and/or ADHD. (Brenda, personal communication, October 4, 2017)

At IC, the academic support team split the coaching responsibilities and were committed to placing every student who sought coaching in that one-on-one accountability environment. While many services offered at IC were open to all students, academic coaching targeted those

with learning and attention differences; however, it included both students registered with academic support to receive accommodations, and others not affiliated with the ASC.

> We've got multiple attempts at success with multiple failures. We've got a kid that just didn't show much focus. Sometimes it's a late diagnosis. I can probably predict that they're not comfortable with where they are and so coaching might be that good transition piece. Many times, when I'm doing the intake appointment, it's how the student presents. You know and they're giving me the self-report of how they fall apart have procrastination tendencies or feel overwhelmed. Those are red flags to me that, I think, 'This could be a perfect coaching student for the coaching intervention. As a learning specialist, I work strictly with students with learning and attention differences; setting realistic goals, time management, organization are probably the top three things, and skill building from there as needed; those appointments are weekly. They can be as short as 15 to 20 minutes, if the student doesn't have a lot going on that particular week. But they can go definitely 45 minutes to an hour if there's more they are dealing with. (Barb, personal communication, November 2, 2017)

II strongly recommended academic coaching for their students with learning and attention differences, and after working with them more frequently as freshmen, they may receive services throughout their tenure at this institution, progressing through self-determination skill development at the pace that works for each one as an individual.

> I feel like with the kids with disabilities, when we meet with them the first time we say, 'this is what you know, yes we would like at least for the first semester we would like to meet with you every week.' I mean it is still their choice. But we'll pursue them, you know 'I haven't heard from you why don't you come in, let's see how it's going' and then

'Let's make another meeting' and then we put it right in their outlook calendar so that

they're reminded of it every week. (Grace, personal communication, October 4, 2017)

This institution recognized that each student had unique skills and deficits to work with as they

moved toward self-regulation and self-advocacy. When asked about the role of coaching in the

self-determination process, the director at II said,

> Every student is a case-by-case basis of what they're able to do at that point in time and
>
> some need just little baby steps towards completion. Just getting out of bed and showing
>
> up for class--you know, that's a victory right there . . . we have to look at the student
>
> individually and really tailor . . . the movement to what they're able to handle and do.
>
> (Grace, personal communication, October 4, 2017)

Group options for reinforcement. Each institution in this study offered a different level

of group support for students with learning and attention differences. In every case, the shared-

advocacy demonstrated by ASC staff facilitated greater awareness of their abilities, increased

understanding of their challenges, and development of participants as capable members of this

population and society at large. At RU, the associate director explained that the ASC made

students aware of organizations on campus where connecting could make a difference in their

college success.

> Knowing the student population that gets registered with us and also being familiar with
>
> the generational shift that we're going through, they just need a lot more contact.
>
> Actually, there are multiple avenues on campus for students to kind of figure out what
>
> kind of group would help. Disability Awareness Association is the student group that is
>
> affiliated with us, and is a university sponsored organization, which is great, because they
>
> get funding every year. (Millie, personal communication, September 21, 2017)

At CU, the group that met was a mix of students who also saw ADHD coaches individually. Bell described how affirmed students felt after learning about their condition and how best to make it work for them and hearing the experiences of other students in the group with similar challenges.

Students get eight weeks of a group meetings focused on coping with attention differences in addition to, of course, just the assessment in general of ADHD which is done in-house. I think students often think it's their fault. Like some of the people I coach don't really know if they had ADHD or what it even means . . . it feels like it's their fault or someone has told them that they're not trying hard enough. I think it's really validating for them as well to come and have a group setting where they see other students who are also struggling with similar issues or for those that haven't been diagnosed to get diagnosed and get confirmation that the things that they're struggling with kind of have an explanation and that there are ways to help. (Bell, personal communication, October 18, 2017)

A group that operated as a club on the II campus offered a place to belong. They planned monthly outings and an ASC representative lead discussions at meetings, selecting topics that students in this population struggle with most.

The transitions group we started that four or five years ago, mainly targeting freshmen as they're entering, students on the spectrum, students with social skills issues, pragmatic issues, students with ADHD. It's something that's also voluntary but it's highly encouraged for students to register. Last night they were doing a fun activity, they were going to sky zone which is trampolines or something like that. And then every other

week they do like a talk about stress or dating or hygiene or diet, whatever. (Grace,

personal communication, October 4, 2017)

At IC, a member of the academic support team oversaw a support group and instructed a

course designed specifically to assist students with learning and attention differences in the

development of self-determination skills.

> The student support group also serves as a networking group; it is student-led and
>
> student-driven. We usually have anywhere between two and four officers. I work with
>
> the officers to pick topics. We meet three times in the Fall and three times in the Spring.
>
> It started as more of a support group, but I'm moving toward a combination of support
>
> and also outreach. And again, like the other services that I provide here, they don't have
>
> to have documentation [of learning and attention differences] to be a member of the
>
> group; the director of academic support established this nine years ago. This time around
>
> the first session was different because we didn't have the leaders carry over from last
>
> year. It was a leadership recruitment session, discussing what direction we want to take
>
> for this organization. I still had 10 students show up to that one, it was a big draw and I
>
> had students up on white boards, like drawing mind maps, and saying, 'We could do this,
>
> we could try that.' It was a great brainstorming session and when it went that direction, I
>
> just stood back and started taking pictures of the board for reference. The most recent,
>
> the second meeting of each semester we always have a roundtable discussion, where
>
> students discuss what their experiences have been, certain instructors, and certain classes,
>
> who is available outside of class for office hours, who goes the extra mile. This is
>
> working, this is not working; this instructor's awesome, this one, I wouldn't take again. I
>
> don't get involved in that, I let them work that solution out. They get more done without

me having to push and it makes my job easier. As far as attendance goes, when we do good programming, they come. We have presentations, like the one that I'm going to do at the middle of this month, it's going to be a workshop that I'll lead on finals prep; we're going to go over tools. What does it look like to cram if you have to? Because that comes up. So, it's going to be kind of a continuation of the course I teach. It is like the last piece.

I'm always in attendance in the meetings, but I tend to get them started and then let the discussions happen with the leaders going from there. But this is one outcome from the good participation I've had in the class: they're spreading the word to their friends with learning and attention differences, good advertising for the group. I thought it would be a good workshop to have. I mean we have workshops for finals prep for all students, but we have not had one that's specific for students with learning and attention differences before. During my second year, I talked with the leaders and started moving it toward outreach, education and networking. There was always a networking piece to it, but from what I could tell just looking at what had happened before, limited outreach opportunities there. One of the things that I still haven't been able to implement, working on it is trying to get a group to go out and read to students with elementary school students with learning differences. We are considering working with a local public school, specifically with students with learning and attention differences. I think it would be a great partnership, symmetry even, you know kids seeing this as a college student and they're successful, they're making it. That's what I want to get them thinking about. (Tyrone, personal communication, November 2, 2017)

During the data collection event, the ASC director at TC stated that although students
with learning and attention differences had not participated in a support group per se, they had
organized as a community service unit.

> We have a club here on campus, Eye to Eye; it's a national organization that promotes
> this self-advocacy and mentoring, and so we have about maybe 15 students who [go]
> every Thursday . . . students here with learning disabilities and ADHD who walk to a
> local public middle school, and they mentor those students around what it's like to have a
> learning disability, what it felt like when [they were] in middle school. It makes a very
> profound difference . . . and I went one day. I would probably go once per year to
> observe. They have an art room, and they just do art projects, but the art is just a medium
> to get the kids to talk and, you know, I think it was the end of the first year when I was
> like, I have to figure out if this is really working, if it is worth our money, and I just
> observed. I think it was Christmas, and they were having a party, and I was sitting there,
> and a woman that I didn't know came up to me and she said, 'Are you with the chapter
> from TC?' And I said yes, and she told me how much she loved the kids and how great it
> was. She was a licensed social worker in the building, and she pointed to a boy, a 12-
> year-old boy, and she said to me, 'Do you see that boy over there? He never spoke a
> word in this school until your students came here. People had been figuring [him] out for
> years, like we knew he perceptively was understanding, but he never verbally spoke a
> word, and he comes here every Thursday, he has connected with these kids, he is
> speaking, you know, it's amazing." I heard another girl tell one of my girls that she
> thought she was going to have to stay back and the girl just sat right down next to her and
> said, 'Hey, I stayed back in,' you know, whatever grade, 'and this is what it felt like,' and

then had this conversation, and it was just so powerful. It is like one and a half hours [per

week]. I think they're after school for one and a half hours and they walk, and it is

probably a 15-minute walk . . . it is a city public school that, you know, has kids with

significant poverty, so that's been a really great addition to what we do here. (Margaret,

personal communication, October 3, 2017)

This significant insight evidenced a critical aspect of development as referenced by

Costello and Stone (2012) that a drive from within to help others is a natural response to the

development of self-advocacy. Coaching offered at TC empowered students to build that skill,

and the outcome has been a relevant application for service to others.

Focus on self-determination development. Shared-advocacy promotes an empowered

perspective, as students work at their own pace, developing self-determination skills as they take

responsibility for themselves. Evidence of a commitment to facilitate the development of self-

determination skills presented at each site. While some institutions demonstrated a dynamic

mode of operation, always seeking ways to strengthen and expand effective options for students

with learning and attention differences, others were making strides in that direction. At RU, the

ASC director shared a paradigm initiated by his predecessor. "We have this empowerment

model, where hopefully, we're giving the tools and skills that student needs to be able to do that

for herself or for himself" (Mitch, personal communication, September 21, 2017). Another

member of the ASC team at RU shared a new initiative in the works at the time of this study,

with enthusiasm about its potential to reach students and aid them in developing academic

independence.

We're creating these new positions: academic coaches. It's geared more toward study and

organization skills and includes input from the academic support center, if there are

students that they would recommend. We work with advising to target specific students.

So, the academic coach is much more concentrated than a tutor and a student would be

required to meet with an academic coach, a specific number of times to outline and

determine deficits. In those sessions, they start off ideally, focusing on what the student

comes to them with, concerns about whatever specific skill, and then branching out and

making that connection. So, eventually they're covering note-taking, reading for

synthesis, prepping for a test in several different ways, managing time, becoming

involved across campus and those sorts of things. (Jerry, personal communication,

September 21, 2017)

The coaching curriculum employed at CU also tackled these and specifically targeted

students with ADHD in their coaching program. Many institutions in this study found that when

the systems in place encouraged participation among students with learning and attention

differences, it broke down barriers to access not addressed by other programs.

Self-advocacy is part of our 'getting the most from your classes' skill module, where we

talk about reaching out to professors, not only when you need help, but also kind of

proactively before, and trying to build skills and use office hours. We do a lot to address

barriers to going to office hours for example, 'Are you anxious about going to office

hours? Is it not fitting in with your schedule? Do you not feel like you need it?' Things

like that. So, we spend a lot of time really individualizing those types of experiences in

coaching. (Jami, personal communication, October 18, 017)

This statement confirmed an approach previously described by a colleague at CU, indicating that

while a skill development curriculum was employed in the coaching program, concentrating on

the areas needed most by each student was the priority. An instructor from TC has been

involved in the development of individual students through an optional course addressing the same skillset.

> It's a practicum-based course where you learn a method for doing your work, from lecture notes, to reading, to papers, to time management, all sorts exam preparation, post exam. So, it's a set of skills, it's one method for doing your work and if you take this class, then in class twice a week, you learn about the method and then you apply it to all the other classes you're taking that semester, and you meet once a week with an undergraduate TA in her office who evaluates the weekly work that you're doing applying the skills. (Sue, personal communication, October 3, 2017)

The opportunity for application of strategies to current-day challenges has been appreciated extensively among those at TC who have taken it, and there were rarely open seats in any section of this course. The website from IC introduced the mission of the academic support center to engage in self-determination development through its academic support center. Essentially, the ASC promoted development of successful strategies geared to support undergraduates with learning and attention differences while aiding in their growth as independent learners. It listed the types of services available for any person searching to locate, whether a current or future student, parent, or interested faculty member. Options included a class offering assistance with study skills development, tutoring and writing workshops, and coaching sessions determined to promote organization strategies, time management, and self-advocacy through mentorship. Participants from the academic support center broke down these options and offered insight regarding their areas of expertise.

> In the learning strategies course, we talk about the philosophical implications of that, and what it means to not only know thyself as a learner, like, 'How do I learn best?' But

when you layer things like, 'I'm a student with dyslexia, who is a visual learner' how,

does that work together? It's a constant conversation I guess—a discussion in the class

throughout every topic that we go through. (Tyrone, personal communication, November

2, 2017)

Tyrone typically worked with groups of students, capitalizing on their interest in offering

input or asking questions after hearing presentations from experts, as students then pushed one

another to apply the instruction they received. Barb worked one-on-one with students, helping

them build on their strengths and overcome weaknesses by teaching executive function skills and

holding students accountable to apply them between weekly conferences.

The executive functioning piece, that's going to be things like setting realistic goals,

because I find that students, especially with ADHD will overcommit. They don't have a

clear sense of time and how much time different tasks, different meetings, different

organizations, plus the studying, plus social relaxation--how much time all those things

take. And then managing time, being organized, confronting procrastination by self-

activating or self-initiating, actually getting started with a task or sticking with it, after

you take a five-minute break, coming back and picking it up again. Students that I work

with have trouble with that sometimes. They're trying to approach a whole problem, all

at once rather than breaking it into parts, or looking at all the things that are due over the

next two weeks, as one big problem rather than breaking them up into parts. Helping

them do that and scheduling time each day rather than like putting it in big lumps,

especially right before the test, with cramming or trying to write a paper the night before

it's due. That's the executive functioning we address. (Barb, personal communication,

November 2, 2017)

Similarly, both coaching and a special course were incorporated into the extended support options and were the most extensively utilized at II.

Through coaching, we try to teach them to have grit, to have a growth mindset. To not have a fixed mindset about something. And a lot of them do come in with fixed mindsets about their disability or about their limitations. A member of our team co-teaches a class with the director addressing the whole growth mindset. (Molly, personal communication, October 4, 2017)

Thinking about thinking or metacognition is a strategy that guides students to reflect on the results of choices, apply their learning, and make choices that reflect wisdom in the future.

Students that we work with [in coaching] or in [the class I co-teach] . . . we teach test-taking skills and one of those skills is debriefing, 'What went well? You didn't spend enough time in your notes. But you did well with the text. So next time . . .' reflection and metacognition you know like what's the definition of insanity doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results. And we have them de-brief after an exam like 'What went well on that exam, what didn't go well?' (Grace, personal communication, October 4, 2017)

II reached a new level of mindfulness in that they were thinking about what skills students would take with them into the workplace and whether they would apply them in other areas of their lives. They offered practical experiences for students with learning and attention differences to give back, applying what they have learned and wanting others to benefit from support in the same way.

We have a lot of activities that students will use in the academic support center, but we also have activities where students who might have a learning disability or ADHD

actually might have skills they use to serve as tutors. The students that have come to me

with that have developed an enthusiasm because they see that it's working for them, it's

helping them in their studies so they get excited about it and they do a little more digging

on a topic or technology, and they find, sometimes it's things that we already knew about,

sometimes it's things that aren't exactly appropriate as an accommodation, but the fact

that they're out and looking is self-empowering. (Laura, personal communication,

October 4, 2017)

The desire to share advocacy with students who struggle and encourage them to take on

greater proportions of that responsibility fosters a guiding perspective that brings each of these

ASC team members together.

I think it started out as sort of a philosophical conclusion that has developed over the

years this that is most helpful for the student in the sense that I don't want them to

graduate and not know how to do their own thing. For a generation of students that have

had their parents doing a lot for them, we all want them to be empowered to do it on their

own and having that gradual movement toward maturity is very important to all of us.

(Serena, personal communication, October 4, 2017)

Based on the successes academic support centers have described, where students with

learning and attention differences moved toward self-determination, shared-advocacy works

through a variety of settings.

Research Question Responses

Within the framework of the research questions, I analyzed themes, relating data

collected to the overarching research question via the sub-questions. Rich details supplied

through data collection provided answers to the sub-questions, examining how and why

academic support providers extended support to students with learning and attention differences beyond legally mandated accommodations. The holistic multiple-case study yielded results that presented flexible interpretations of eligibility, practical applications of accessibility, and creative innovations for instructional and support delivery.

Research question. The overarching question central to this investigation was: How do academic support providers offer shared-advocacy at postsecondary institutions, promoting intrinsic motivation through accommodative intervention strategies for students with learning disabilities and/or ADHD?

Academic support providers play an integral role in determining eligibility, making services accessible, facilitating supports provided through other offices, and promoting self-determination for this growing population of learners. Results of this study describe how ASC staff promoted the development of self-advocacy through each of these forms of shared advocacy. They networked with other departments to provide visibility, trained faculty across disciplines to expand awareness, equipped leadership throughout campus to promote creative responses, and offered expanded services within their own offices to continuously offer new opportunities to students. This study explored each of these intentional actions, revealing the motivation and initiative required to break down barriers and build bridges that lead students with learning and attention differences to experience postsecondary education success.

First sub-question. How do academic support providers facilitate self-determination among postsecondary students with learning disabilities and/or ADHD on their campuses? The theme of connectivity emerged from the data collection tools designed to answer this research sub-question, describing practices of ASC directors to connect students with their campus support options through a relationship with their academic support centers.

When students with learning and attention differences enroll in college, they often do not take into account the level of support they may need and whether a particular institution offers it. Even if applicants were to consult the institutional websites, the ASC page is usually buried deep within and may not even appear as a link; it must be searched for through the website or an external search engine. Though some academic support centers have a strong presence on their institutional websites, most emphasize the submission of documentation over personal engagement and offer a cursory list of standardized accommodations or a generalized paragraph indicating their agreement to abide by federal legislation. The results of the preliminary investigation for this study concluded that a small percentage of postsecondary institutions offered more than what could be interpreted as mandatory support, and even fewer from among these institutions offered it without additional fees for service.

The academic support centers represented by cases in this study were purposefully selected based on published research, online presence, reputation among AHEAD communities, or responses through initial consultations. Locating institutions that offered supplemental support provided a list of approximately 75, from which vetting by calls and other investigation reduced that to about 50. From that list, 10 were determined to have programs in place to support students with learning and attention differences without charging additional fees to these students; three located in the Western United States, and the others scattered across the Southern, Eastern, and Midwestern states. One institution declined to participate, one served as the case for the pilot study, and the other five committed to participate in the multiple-case study. The cases represented both publicly and privately funded institutions of small, medium, and large enrollment sizes; they ranged from very selective to high acceptance ratios with locations in suburban, urban, and rural areas.

Academic support providers serving in the postsecondary institutions featured in this study held integrated roles, as they worked diligently to develop connections throughout their campuses. They contributed from a variety of preparations, but often had a strong devotion to their institutions and current student population because of their own positive academic experiences there. Each served in a related leadership role previously, and some worked as associate directors in academic support centers prior to taking their current roles. They earned reputations for being accessible and visible and their efforts to share information were received well. Faculty who participated in seminars and workshops presented by the ASC attempted to utilize the training they received. A faculty member at RU consulted with the ASC when assistance was needed implementing supports.

> I can e-mail the director any time, call the director anytime and say here's the problem, because if it's a problem for the [student] then it's . . . going to be a problem for me if I don't address her or his challenge. (Monica, personal communication, September 21, 2017)

While many leaders are well-suited for networking and being the face of their departments, these skills must be joined with a particular commitment to students with disabilities to lead long-term dynamic development of academic support. At TC, the director expressed how they continually connected with students receiving support. "By talking to students, meeting with them regularly, seeing how those accommodations are working, maybe getting feedback from a faculty member," she expressed how diligently their support team has worked to track student progress. "We keep track of everything, so we take very good notes when we are talking with students" (Margaret, personal communication, October 3, 2017).

Academic support professionals participating in this investigation offered rich descriptions of the progress made over multiple decades, equipping students to develop self-determination.

> We had an initial study published I think in 2009 . . . And then we've done a follow up study that's in press now . . . We're finding . . . students with disabilities . . . are being retained at the same rates as students without disabilities. They're graduating [from this institution] at the same rates as students without disabilities. (Mitch, personal communication, September 21, 2017)

At the time of the current study, those consistently seeking improvement had plans in the works for deeper, thicker service options. At II, an effective summer orientation program led the academic support director to research a potential cohort program.

> One of the things that we proposed last year was a first-year program that at-risk students or potential students, anybody at risk [could] take and they would be sort of handpicked classes and maybe even a small summer component. (Grace, personal communication, October 4, 2017)

A member of the ASC team further explained that it would benefit a particular type of student, like those with learning and attention differences who have the aptitude for academic rigor but need more time to develop self-determination skills. "Somebody who might take a gap year because their parents might not think they are mature enough or something like that. This might encourage them. We have this program to help you" (Laura, personal communication, October 4, 2017). Effective academic support centers proactively assess what is effective, building on those options rather than investing where needs have shifted, and benefits to faculty and students have diminished.

Connectivity is a powerful asset, reminding both students and faculty that academic support centers exist to moderate awareness, facilitate inclusion, and promote mindfulness regarding a population of students who are still learning about their needs and how to advocate for themselves.

Second sub-question. How do academic support providers discern the accommodations to offer postsecondary students with learning disabilities and/or ADHD on their campuses? In the process of answering the questions designed to address this sub-question, themes of accessibility and eligibility revealed the need of students to physically connect with the ASC to access services available on their campuses, and the process of qualifying for those services.

The first challenge most students with learning and attention differences encounter in attempting to secure accommodations is locating the academic support center. In preparation for this study, I personally visited 13 college academic support offices, making notes on locations and facilities from a personal use perspective. On some campuses, this office is tucked away at the dead end of an old building on a remote portion of the campus, with no signs identifying it. Also, some institutions' websites did not refer to academic support office locations or the type of services a student might receive when registering for support, other than references to ADA legislation. Marrying the lack of access to students' concerns regarding stigma associated with their differences results in a paralyzing lack of accessibility.

In this study, ASC directors were well-networked on their campuses, serving in leadership roles outside their offices and performing training sessions to promote awareness and facilitate incorporation of universal design. They kept positive communication lines open between their offices and those providing other services, so that they could recommend students for support outside their immediate offerings. They left their doors open, responded quickly to

email, and accepted calls from instructors consulting about struggling students they observed. Some oversaw a move of the ASC to a central location on campus, or a facility frequented by students for a variety of reasons so as not to draw attention to those with learning and attention differences. They advised students, instructed learning strategies courses, sponsored clubs, and oversaw support groups in the effort to equip students with self-determination skills essential to success in college and life.

Exceptional performance at the extremes often characterizes students with learning and attention differences. While many have great aptitudes and selective institutions accept them, they also demonstrate deficits in their capacity to keep pace with their peers. Time is their mortal enemy, yet while they move ahead, a gap remains between themselves and those without disabilities. At CU, the director described the challenge of assessing needs for students, specifically with ADHD.

> Part of our conceptualization is that if . . . the match between your capacity for self-regulation and the demands are this much, for a non-ADHD college student the gap is much, much bigger. And so, we use that conceptualization to explain why we think they can get in the college but can't stay. (Drew, personal communication, October 18, 2017)

These students often experience frustration when trying to catch up or being pushed to catch up with others. They are certain they are capable as their scores have reflected this, but tasks that other students take in stride often seem impossible for students with learning and attention differences to manage.

Every student must identify a point of contact in the institutions where they have applied to determine whether the support they will need is accessible on those campuses. Frequently, it is difficult to determine how to connect with academic support centers on campus. Some have

posted extensive information on their webpages within institutional websites, empowering students with information so they can weigh this into their enrollment decisions. Discerning how to locate the ASC on campus can still be daunting, and students need to determine eligibility to use specific accommodations through an individual meeting with an academic support team member.

Assessing eligibility and following guidelines established for interpreting current legislation determines appropriate accommodations. Current guidelines from AHEAD emphasize the merit of meeting with students individually, having a conversation about their needs and experience, making observations, and reviewing documentation. Students typically submit documentation for validation before their initial course attendance, and either during the week before the term's start or the first few weeks of classes, individual meetings are held with students accordingly.

For the students who determine they learn differently after entering college, the process is often more of a crisis. They do not know how to process all the aspects of life that are not going well or even how to ask for help. This inability is another aspect of self-determination that requires more opportunities for development.

> It's a big deal where it's trying to sort through all of those things, and the students are feeling the pressure to do well, to represent or to lift up their families. So, all of those things are going on at the same time and the idea of, 'Oh by the way you might learn differently,' is not something that they're saying. Some people do feel the relief of that once they are documented . . . that's usually my question, 'So how do you feel about it . . . that you have ADHD or something?' And they are like, 'I don't know; part of me feels

good that there's something, and part of me feels like, Oh no! Now, what?!' (Sue,

personal communication, October 3, 2017)

The ASC director at IC described the grasp of incoming and newly diagnosed students on

the concept of eligibility, stating, "They're not that aware of what kinds of accommodations are

maybe reasonable and appropriate at this level for their condition. And we don't know it until we

have kind of gone through reviewing and talking with them" (Liz, personal communication,

November 2, 2017).

Whether in advance of entering college or as a response to the challenges of college life,

this personal conversation introduces students to potential resources both within the ASC and

other support centers, often located in the same building. Designing an appropriate combination

of accommodations and recommendations for support takes into account all the needs and

experiences expressed by the student.

It's highly individualized, like holistic—the whole person approach . . . I help students

work on executive function skills, things that we take for granted. I have the person I am

coaching set the objectives for what they want to work on. (Brenda, personal

communication, October 3, 2017).

The director of academic support at IC described their center's policy for determining the

supports to offer to students, addressing them as individuals with a unique set of academic needs.

When we're working with someone and we see a need, we can be flexible and determine,

'What does this person need beyond standard accommodations? What can help this

person be as independent and self-advocating and successful as possible?'

Accommodations are one thing. It may help some . . . You don't stop there. So being

sort of creative with that particular person's need and what level they are at. What they're

already using . . . It doesn't cost much to do these kinds of things that we're talking about.

(Liz, personal communication, November 2, 2017)

The role of academic support staff is to not only to determine appropriate accommodations for students with learning and attention differences, but also to help facilitate effective delivery of these services. When students get stuck, and their accommodations are not working for them, ASC staff meet with them and work out the kinks to get them going again in the right direction. This shared advocacy aids students in their own development of self-determination.

For students with executive function deficits or self-determination issues, things like anxiety, depression, fear, [and] shame can get them stuck. A lot of students will feel if they don't go to class, and they get behind, they don't know how to approach a professor to get caught up. A lot of students have not reached that maturity of realizing, Oh, I need to do this to be a successful student. (Molly, personal communication, October 4, 2017)

Among the cases in this study, a majority reported that their ASC offered extended services, including routine coaching sessions. At IC, Barb said, "I work strictly with students with learning and attention differences; setting realistic goals, time management, organization are probably the top three things, and skill building from there as needed" (Barb, personal communication, November 2, 2017). This type of support provides opportunities for students to develop as they share progress with their coaches, a form of extrinsic motivation. Ultimately, the coaches transfer this accountability to the student as they develop self-determination and demonstrate that they can hold themselves accountable. The ASC director at IC stated, "You should expect as much from them as you would someone else. Don't lower your expectations. Don't go with biases that you might have had that they are not going to do well or that they can't

do well" (Liz, personal communication, November 2, 2017).

The transition to postsecondary education environments is replete with challenges for all students, but exponentially more so for students with learning and attention differences. Making academic support centers accessible and providing diligent processes for determining eligibility for accommodations bridges the gap, drawing these students in by equipping them with the tools they need to develop and persist in college.

Third sub-question. How do academic support providers use positive psychology to determine the shared-advocacy needs of postsecondary students with learning disabilities and/or ADHD? Questions employed in this study's data collection tools answered this inquiry through examples of responsivity faculty have demonstrated to students in their classes.

On the campuses of each institution in this multiple-case study, ASC staff engaged faculty members to play key roles in the positive psychology vital to supporting students with learning and attention differences. They provided workshops promoting awareness about students with learning and attention differences, offered training to inform instructors about accommodations in practice, and made themselves accessible to faculty when they were not sure how to help students. Essentially, they equip faculty to be responsive to students who are struggling, since the students receiving accommodations are attending classes more frequently than they visit the ASC. Connection with a student begins with a conversation. A social science professor at RU put it this way:

> We want them to sit with us and have a conversation . . . I think the academic support
> office feels this way, too--that they are their best advocates. And they know best what
> has worked for them in the past and what will work in the future. (Jennifer, personal
> communication, September 21, 2017)

At IC, a math instructor shared that she met with students individually to discuss their accommodations and concluded by reinforcing her availability to them by offering, "If anything changes, or if you need anything else, my door is open, just come in at any time, because sometimes you think something is working, but it doesn't work" (Carol, personal communication, November 2, 2017). She does all planning from home because her office hours remain packed with the students who come to her weekly, fondly called her 'regulars' because of this predictable need for them to reach out for help. If she observed a student that was not doing well or not keeping up, she extended an invitation.

> I might just grab them at the end of the class and say, 'Hang around, let me talk to you for a minute.' I might send an email and say, "Would you come in and let's talk about how we can make things right for you . . . see how we can help you have more success?" (Carol, personal communication, November 2, 2017)

This effort kept her quite busy serving students outside of class hours; exactly as she preferred. A social science instructor at RU described her commitment to helping students, stating, "My job is to reach all my students; whatever those resources are . . . if I don't provide them, and my campus does, then I will connect you with those resources" (Jennifer, personal communication, September 21, 2017). A colleague at RU invested in other instructors, who networked to share positive strategies for helping students develop. She shared that one approached her, saying,

> Professor, I've had students tell me about what you always ask them or you're prompting them, and I do that too because I tell them, 'Don't wait until it's a problem. Come see me now. What can we do now?'. (Monica, personal communication, September 21, 2017)

> The collaborative partnership shared between the ASC and faculty on each campus in this study proved instrumental in facilitating skill development for students when standard

accommodations did not level the playing field. A writing professor at IC shared her efforts to make herself available:

> I can say, "Is what's happening in class enough? If you need to talk more . . . come on over during office hours. Bring your text. Let's see what we can do to make sure you're on top of this." I don't require it, I offer it. And I would say one time out of three, they take me up on it. (Holly, personal communication, November 2, 2017)

Instructors in the practice of reaching out in response to students consider it the norm. They look for ways to build positive psychology for students with learning and attention differences through reinforcement and accept the challenges it creates for their instruction. A psychology professor at CU described a technique that worked well for students with learning and attention differences but emphasized the transferability to benefit all students.

> I have told my students, that sometimes the things you feel the weakest on are good things to study with someone else; but take on the calling out role. In other words, . . . just because you think you don't know this well, it actually might be better for you to be on the other side and quizzing the person who seems to know a lot, because you actually will learn more by the corrections you give them. (Rhonda, personal communication, October 18, 2017)

A modified language program at CU is designed to help bridge a gap for students with learning disabilities; specifically, because they have a barrier to learning a foreign language. One term of foreign language study is broken down into two terms, allowing students to receive full instruction over a longer period. The professor described her employment of teaching techniques specially designed for students with learning and language challenges as focused on assessing student learning, expanding learning experiences, and establishing an inclusive

experience for all learners. She shared that she incorporated these instructional strategies in all of her course sections, stating, "I found out that anything used for them is a great idea for other students, too. It works!" (Betty, personal communication, October 18, 2017).

At RU, Monica expressed concern for the students she instructed with learning and attention differences because she could see their potential, but also observed roadblocks that have stymied their progress in her classes. For a student who needed extended time, it was not as straightforward as utilizing the testing center, so she adjusted her evaluation tools without compromising the rigor of the course curriculum.

> I broke all the lesson segments down so that [the student] could get a good understanding of what he was doing. He took his tests at a slower rate of speed. I doubled the number of exams so that he wasn't trying to do as much at one time as the other students . . . I gave him every chance to take control of his learning and to let me know which parts he understood and what he didn't. (Monica, personal communication, September 21, 2017)

Faculty members described the creative development of assignments to provide practical application, accessible design of evaluation to reflect proficiency in the subject rather than in test-taking, flexibility for location of testing, and initiation of conversations with students about one-on-one assistance or extended support. The examples shared demonstrated the responsivity that students with learning and attention differences needed to develop self-determination and persist in these institutions.

Fourth sub-question. How do academic support providers foster self-advocacy in postsecondary students with learning disabilities and/or ADHD? Academic support team members presented examples of extended support offered to students, including accounts of non-academic strategies that have contributed significantly to academic success.

Students with learning and attention differences attending postsecondary institutions are not recruited based on their disabilities, but on academic achievement experienced in secondary settings. Still, they apply with expectations that they will be able to succeed in this environment with limited preparation for the transition through which they will become completely responsible for any support they receive. While some students received support during high school, others developed coping strategies to compensate for learning challenges that fail to support the functions needed to achieve in college. Many do not prepare for this transition due to lack of advice; other students find that locating the academic support center on campus is often difficult; still, others want to shed the stigma associated with the disability they have felt and start afresh (Connor, 2012).

Those who do not find the academic support office, fail to present their documentation and do not receive letters of accommodation often find they are struggling by mid-term. A faculty member may observe them or find out through other sources how to get help. In contrast, students who learn of and follow the protocols for disclosure, may find that part of the process workable. According to the ASC director at IC, "Our online disclosure form contributes to this idea of self-advocacy . . . it's really designed for the student to stop and think about what their experience is like and communicate that to us, so we can use that to line up [appropriate] accommodations" (Liz, personal communication, November 2, 2017). However, late reporters, their peers who disclose but then do not present their accommodations letters to their instructors, and even those who follow all the protocols, are vulnerable without the development of self-advocacy skills.

Those students who are resistant to advocating for themselves; there's a lack of

confidence. It's not that they actually do then go do it for themselves, because some of

them will, but then some of them just don't really want to talk about it because they don't

know how to. (Laura, personal communication, October 4, 2017)

Identifying with the ASC potentially connects students to the supports on their campuses;

for the colleges in this study, those supports extended far beyond classroom accommodations. In

the process of interviewing and observing a student, and reviewing documentation, services may

be recommended that supplement standard supports. Infrastructure built to network these

supports begins with the accessibility of the ASC team to meet with instructors who have

concerns about students. A science professor at II shared an example of one student's success.

> We [sat down] with people at academic support, and that was a huge help. We talked
>
> through [the student's] whole curriculum and what she had to take because she was so
>
> panicky about advocating for herself, and that made a safe space. (Marie, personal
>
> communication, October 4, 2017)

Marie continued to serve as an advisor to the student, observing her progress as a self-advocate

through to graduation. Involving academic support in the discussion alleviated some of the

tension, and then Marie was able to see her start to speak for herself and take more accountability

for seeing her accommodations implemented.

A majority of the cases in this study had a mechanism for alerting the ASC team when a

student was not thriving. This happened at multiple points at IC, and this feedback provided an

opportunity to reconnect with students in their programs.

> IC does early progress reports, so we scan those lists for our supported students. When
>
> there is one who appears to be struggling, we reach out to that student and ask that they
>
> come. We make sure they're tapping into the resources that we've introduced them to
>
> during intake. If they're not, we figure out why they're not doing that, and what's going

on that would warrant some additional support from our office. (Tyrone, personal

communication, November 2, 2017)

This intentional contact reflected the same kind of commitment described through responsivity

from instructors. Among the institutions where this connection was employed, it was pervasive,

reflecting a policy in practice across ASC staff rather than a single person's protocol; as the

director modeled this type of support, it was emulated by all serving in that center.

Each institution in this study ascribed to the legal requirements for providing reasonable

accommodations, but each also offered something more based on students' demonstrated needs.

In all five cases, extended services offered were the result of proposals made by and granted to

the interviewed current director of academic support. Students with learning disabilities and

attention differences benefitted from the extended support of faculty mentoring, one-on-one

coaching with professional academic coaches, LD/ADHD group support and clubs, and learning

strategies courses. The support provided by faculty offered shared advocacy to aid students with

learning and attention differences in their development of self-advocacy to employ not only

while in college and as they pursue employment, but also through every aspect of their lives.

At RU, a long-term education professor served as a faculty mentor for multiple decades,

after having been mentored in college himself as an undergraduate. "Mentoring affords students

the opportunity to realize they're not alone," He reflected. "You have ownership, but you also

have a responsibility to me . . . What am I going to teach you? How are you going to apply it?

And how do you use it across the lifespan?" (Wally, personal communication, September 21,

2017). He promoted the mentorship program among faculty and recruited others to serve, as

matches were made between students and professors in their majors. His positive mentoring

experiences led to ongoing friendships as mentees remained connected beyond graduation.

Coaching was determined to be a common practice among the institutions in this study. Typically, experienced coaches with graduate preparation served in this role, building on years of investment in aiding students with the development of self-advocacy. At IC, students met with two levels of coaches, as described by one of the ASC team members

The student would meet with a coach once a week and lay out what the weekly plan is . . . then the student would have multiple points of contact throughout the week, for two or three hours at a time, with a study strategist, to make sure those goals we set up at the beginning of the week are being met, but also change the goals if things changed during the week, so that it's not the seven days between check-ins before a problem is addressed. (Barb, personal communication, November 2, 2017)

The assistant director for the ASC at TC shared the type of conversation she had when coaching students to help them develop self-advocacy.

I'll say to students . . . 'Tell me what you're doing and how much time it takes. What's that look like? Oh, what thought process went into that? Walk me through your week.' There might be a gap there but something simple like, walk me through it. Tell me about your calendar. What have you set up? This sort of discussion is really helpful for students. (Sabina, personal communication, October 3, 2017)

She described the way she held students accountable to come prepared to coaching sessions by giving them strategies to apply and having them report at subsequent meetings regarding their progress. The ASC director at II reported an interaction that put responsibility on students to advocate for support or take more accountability as they developed:

We meet with them as they come in; we'll see how it's going and we may say, 'Hey you're doing great . . . Let's check-in in another three weeks and see how it's going' or

'We're happy to meet every week if you want that' some will say, 'Yeah, I really want

that' and some will say, 'No, I'm good. I'll let you know when . . .' So, it's all up to

them. But it's definitely a coaching model. (Grace, personal communication, October 4,

2017)

Graduate psychology students at CU served as coaches and led support groups with the

students they coached. The director, a psychology professor and researcher, described the value

of offering group meetings to students, to facilitate their discussions about learning challenges.

While the students who received support had individualized coaching sessions, they valued

meeting others with similarities when they otherwise felt their differences set them apart.

[There's] accountability to the other group members . . . that's another thing that might

speak to the issue raised . . . about self-determination . . . exposing them to other students

who are dealing with the same thing has been eye-opening for many of them. They

frequently tell stories and thought it was just them and find out it's not. (Drew, personal

communication, October 18, 2017)

Multiple types of support aid students in moving toward greater self-determination by

practicing what they have learned independently with those in the group. At IC, a variety of

group experiences interconnected students with learning and attention differences, again,

providing ways for them to help one another develop.

We have a student support group promoting advocacy; it meets once a month. They're

welcome to participate in. The associate director heads that group. And then we offer a

one-hour credit course called Learning Strategies, which really attacks reading and

writing strategies, how to transition into college, through the lens of learning and

attention differences. (Barb, personal communication, November 2, 2017)

Students have an adjustment period for synthesizing these strategies, and each works at their own pace, but they make measurable progress during the first year. Though students often continue to meet with a cohort developed through their support group or course, many find their need for coaching tapers off after the first or second year. They develop the determination and self-advocacy to move themselves forward, keeping a routine, initiating collaborative relationships with fellow students, and approaching instructors for support when they are struggling with a situation or an assignment.

Summary

While much of the data collected confirmed each of the defined propositions, it also shed light on unforeseen strategies offered by faculty and unpredicted innovations implemented through the participating staff in postsecondary academic support centers. Inquiries opened through data collection tools to address the research questions yielded themes of connectivity, accessibility, eligibility, responsivity, and extended support. When the intentional work of ASC directors connects faculty with resources to support students, and students with the services they need to succeed, faculty members are sensitive to the needs of students with learning and attention differences. They work collaboratively with the ASC team to provide extended support, so these students are retained and persist to reach their educational goals. For each of the cases in this multiple-case study, the name of the academic support director emanates trustworthiness and respect, consideration, and compassion; precisely the qualities a director of academic support services needs to promote dynamic improvement in this integral leadership role.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Overview

The purpose of this holistic multiple-case study was to explore the work of postsecondary academic support providers who choose to offer services outside those mandated by legislation. This chapter reviews themes that emerged through analysis of participants' responses to data collection inquiries and presents relevant findings for consideration by practitioners offering shared-advocacy as they facilitate the development of self-determination and self-advocacy among this population of students. Methodological and practical implications suggest ways the findings may be valuable for consideration by policymakers and future researchers as well as those currently practicing in academic support leadership roles. A description of delimitations established in the design of the study and limitations for generalizability ensue as well as suggestions for future research. Associated recommendations urge leaders in each of these roles to take action, promoting incorporation of the effective practices examined to provide the essential support missing on a majority of college campuses in the United States.

Summary of Findings

The work of academic support providers is not diminishing, though technological advances have demanded a dynamic response to serve students with learning and attention differences effectively. Academic support providers in this study worked collaboratively with faculty, intentionally incorporating shared-advocacy measures to aid these students in their development of self-determination and self-advocacy. The overarching question central to this investigation was as follows: How do academic support providers offer shared-advocacy at postsecondary institutions, promoting intrinsic motivation through accommodative intervention strategies for students with learning disabilities and/or ADHD? In this multiple-case study,

directors of academic support programs interceded to offer accessibility and promote awareness and developed unique systems of extended support incorporating self-determination skill development through coaching, group support, and collaboration with faculty members. Specialists serving on the ASC teams delivered training, modeled advocacy, and offered positive reinforcement while holding students accountable to demonstrate application of the training they received. The four sub-questions are answered in more detail below.

First sub-question: How do academic support providers facilitate self-determination among postsecondary students with learning disabilities and/or ADHD on their campuses? Academic support directors in the cases represented described their connections with faculty, administration, and their respective staff as positive and interactive. The theme of connectivity aligned with the initiatives they led to promote awareness, train faculty, and collaborate with other campus departments to offer optimal support to students with learning and attention differences. The ASC in each case served as a starting point to connect students through eligibility for accommodations, ultimately equipping them to advocate for themselves in confidence and exercise the determination to pursue their educational goals. Academic support providers promoted not only awareness, but also mindfulness about how to be a positive contributor to a solution that worked for each learner. Actively maintaining connections among departments facilitated communication between all stakeholders and supported the engagement of students who had tendencies to disengage when frustrated with details they could not manage.

Second sub-question: How do academic support providers discern the accommodations to offer postsecondary students with learning disabilities and/or ADHD on their campuses? Federal legislation guided academic support providers to determine reasonable accommodations for any enrolled student disclosing a disability in each of these cases. Consideration was given to

AHEAD's formal recommendations to educational leaders about the interpretation of these laws. Some accommodations previously delivered for one segment of the population registering with academic support offices were being offered to students with other diagnoses. Academic support directors who had made investments in a specific technology had discerned transferability of these accommodations. While offering additional accommodations to students with learning and attention differences may defer independence, institutions in this study provided these tools instead of others that were not effective. For example, textbooks not available in audio copies except through special subscriptions and electronic formats of texts available only through agreements with textbook publishers had been made available to visually impaired students. Academic support providers in this study had determined that this technology could also benefit students with processing disorders who previously may have requested an accommodation for a human reader or permission to read aloud. However, after the initial investment on behalf of students with visible disabilities, offering this accommodation to students with learning and attention differences has extended access to many who were poorly served by other means.

Transitioning to college is challenging on many levels and ultimately impacts all students by some measure. However, the effects felt by students with learning and attention differences are exponentially greater (Cortiella & Horowitz, 2014; Lee et al., 2015; Mamiseishvili & Koch, 2011; Richman, 2013; Wizikowski, 2013). The first challenge for a student seeking support is to locate the academic support center and muster the courage to make an appointment to disclose what makes them unable to function like other students on campus. The locations of centers outside of this study were often difficult to identify and carried with them the stigma of a title associated with a disability rather than accessibility. However, academic support centers in this study were often intentionally located in facilities central to campus, many of which also housed

a variety of services and offices frequented by a majority of students, such as the library. These centers often used a title that conveyed support over deficits and inclusivity rather than exclusion; inviting students to seek support as an avenue to success rather than asking them to affiliate with a stigma they are desperate to relinquish. The next challenge facing these students is producing appropriate documentation to qualify for disability support. Many cases in this study had found it efficient to request this documentation in advance of students' transition to campus, so files representing these students could be accessible when students made initial appointments to discuss eligibility. AHEAD's guidelines promote a policy of eligibility determination based on interviews, observations, and documentation and a majority of cases in this study follow this recommendation rather than basing accommodation determination on documented diagnoses alone. This flexibility was evidenced through the data collection tools utilized for this multiple-case study, revealing a determination among the participants to offer supports that are beneficial based on student input rather than a prescribed set insensitive to the uniqueness of individuals.

Third sub-question: How do academic support providers use positive psychology to determine the shared-advocacy needs of postsecondary students with learning disabilities and/or ADHD? Evidence that the academic support specialists promoted positive psychology surfaced through individual interviews with faculty members. They described the ease of access they enjoyed when consulting with their ASC teams, benefits of practical workshops and awareness presentations, and collaborative experiences that led to inclusive practices and changes in instructional design. The influence of ASC directors was noted particularly, yet also the value of presentations given by other members of ASC staff. This influence passed through faculty members to reach students who benefited from increased access through universal design,

positive reinforcement and vested concern through faculty mentorship, and a sensitivity to providing the best application of accommodations. Several instructors had adopted universal design practices and expressed commitment to constantly seeking new ways to make instruction accessible. Responsivity described the dedication of faculty members to apply training and employ strategies they learned through academic support specialists, acting in response to observations of students who did not have their needs met with equitable access through standard accommodations. They shared personal experiences of reaching out to engage students and hold them accountable to help them develop self-advocacy.

Fourth sub-question: How do academic support providers foster self-advocacy in postsecondary students with learning disabilities and ADHD? Every participant in this study made diligent efforts to promote self-advocacy among students with learning and attention differences. Though the ASC directors proposed and developed the extended support programs in place, ASC team members were immediately accessible to students, offering accountability to these students for both academic and non-academic strategies that contributed significantly to academic success. Students paced through accountability programs as differently as the set of challenges documented in their files. However, the consistency of meeting with coaches, reporting progress and roadblocks, and learning new strategies to apply kept students from losing ground and ultimately equipped them to move forward in their pursuit of self-determination. New practices they had learned included developing a routine that incorporated obligations with flexibility, approaching instructors for support, and initiating collaborative relationships with other students. These strategies equipped students with skills they may employ successfully throughout their college journeys. Some came to the ASC on their campuses not knowing what

they needed and months later had acquired tools to aid them in utilizing self-advocacy skills through graduate school or into post-college job placement.

Discussion

Colleges strive for increased enrollment and retention, preparing not only learners but also ambassadors for their institutions and potential alumni investors to support future endeavors. Bright inventors and innovators have extensively impacted industry and technology after unsuccessful educational experiences. Students with excellent aptitudes who are challenged by learning and attention differences merit equitable consideration, as they represent future students with untapped potential, seeking responsive educational leaders within inclusive environments. Students who received support during primary and secondary school years stand equipped to understand their eligibility for accommodations, though not necessarily the differences in provision at the postsecondary level.

Academic support providers are uniquely positioned to bridge the gap in support provision by equipping students with learning and attention differences through extended support practices. ASC directors participating in this study represented institutions from multiple regions of the United States and their educational preparations varied from social science to exceptional education, counseling, and clinical psychology. They shared a common concern for serving students with learning and attention differences and became driven to explore options to offer students who were not thriving under the provision of standard accommodations due to a lack of confidence and motivation related to their learning challenges. The following discussion substantiates the responses of academic support providers referencing the empirical and theoretical literature that guided this inquiry.

Empirical Literature

Recent literature documented the perspectives of students with learning, and attention differences who received support as they transitioned to postsecondary education environments, presenting valuable insight for consideration regarding the level and types of support students have considered helpful (Grieve et al., 2014; Stamp et al., 2014). However, this research did not examine the decisions of academic support providers who had responded to students' needs by offering extended support. The current study extends previous research as it examined how and why academic support providers chose to offer extended support to students with learning and attention differences in response to critical needs for development of self-determination and self-advocacy (Burgstahler & Doe, 2006; Murray et al., 2014; O'Shea & Meyer, 2016).

The successful interventions developed by ASC directors in this study required tenacity, collaboration, and connections with high-level administrators to secure related resources. Multiple ASC directors explained that their position reported directly to the provost of their institutions; this access to authority proved crucial for receiving timely responses regarding proposed initiatives. Each institution in this study provided for virtual registration with academic support as suggested by O'Shea and Meyer (2016). All cases also addressed recommendations to publicize resources in multiple ways, including paper forms with acceptance letters, website visibility and descriptions of services available, and presentations during orientation sessions (Mamiseishvili & Koch, 2011; O'Shea & Meyer, 2016). Literature also indicated the value of identifying students early in their transition to college to provide skill development opportunities at the onset of their college experience that would continue through job placement or entry into graduate school (Grieve et al., 2014; Harrison et al., 2012; Stamp et al., 2014). One institution in this study had offered a summer program to identify strengths and weaknesses in planning for

accommodations. They had proposed a cohort program for entering students to support one another throughout their 4-year programs; other institutions provided pre-term intervention during welcome week and arranged appointments for the first week of the term. Another institution held a group meeting reminding students that they could make appointments to secure accommodations.

A proposal to train existing staff and hire additional staff served as integral components to providing extended support measures among several researchers (Harrison et al., 2012; O'Shea & Meyer, 2016). In multiple cases, a promotion to the ASC director position by its current occupant provided an opening to hire a new assistant who brought expertise supplementing the skills of others already serving in the ASC. In other circumstances, schools recruited and trained graduate students to manage a portion of the accountability interfaces with underclassmen. Coordinating to balance delivery of new supports meant assessing staff abilities, streamlining responsibilities, and hiring additional professionals to ensure effective service for all students. ASC directors capitalized on the expertise each staff member brought to the team and encouraged input and collaboration. Recommendations in research included extended support measures such as mentorship through pairing with faculty, learning strategies courses, executive function skill development through individual coaching, and accountability through facilitated support groups (Farmer et al., 2015; Grieve et al., 2014; Harris et al., 2011; Mamiseishvili & Koch, 2011; Mitchell & Gansemer-Topf, 2016; Stamp et al., 2014). Most of the academic support centers represented in this study had created coaching programs in-house, assigning students to learning-support coaches or graduate student learning strategists; one had developed an ongoing faculty mentorship program pairing students with a faculty member in their discipline major to consult throughout their years of study. Proposed services were

purposefully aligned to institutional missions, and this factor contributed significantly to receiving approval for implementation. Studies revealed a deficit in self-determination among students with learning and attention differences. Additionally, the literature indicated an opportunity for academic support providers to address that deficit through training, modeling, and practice (Harrison et al., 2012; Mitchell & Gansemer-Topf, 2016; Murray et al., 2014; O'Shea & Meyer, 2016; Stamp et al., 2014). Extended support initiatives at the institutions in this study incorporated an educational component to coaching and mentorship that aided students in their understanding of their learning and attention differences, modeled advocacy, and held students accountable to develop agency through practice.

New programs proposed at three institutions in this study were designed to serve all enrolled students, rather than targeting one sector of the population. This consideration was not addressed in published research and proved a critical factor in the successful funding of programs which, according to institutional websites cost students at those colleges thousands of dollars every term because they target those receiving accommodations. With the supports in place for all, students not registered for academic support who perceived they needed accountability to develop executive function skills or learning strategies signed on for coaching of their own initiative. However, the availability of these services allowed academic support providers to refer students with learning and attention differences when they ascertained this need during intake appointments or visits after student realized they were overwhelmed with the organizational aspects of collegiate life. Current studies also indicated the importance of removing barriers to access for students with learning and attention differences, noting stigma and lack of awareness as considerations (Mamiseishvili & Koch, 2011; Murray et al., 2014; Stamp et al., 2014). Academic support providers contributing to this study offered presentations

in departments across campus and annual faculty training sessions, and one provided campus-wide awareness events impacting all members of campus including staff, faculty, and students. Though not addressed in existing literature, suggestions about location barriers were also addressed by locating academic support centers centrally and relocating those offices to buildings frequented by all students instead of just those registered for support. ASC directors described the success of their unique programs with confidence, yet generally referenced the efforts of the ASC team rather than taking individual credit for their accomplishments. This perspective reflects the motivation of ASC leaders in higher education sincerely seeking to improve conditions for students with learning and attention differences; as ASC directors equipped and encouraged ASC specialists, this team provided the supports necessary to facilitate students' effective use of accommodations.

Theoretical Literature

A holistic multiple-case study approach was employed to present a cross-case picture of how and why extended support is offered by academic support providers to aid students with learning and attention differences in their development of self-determination and self-advocacy. The examination of shared-advocacy practices presented the opportunity to demonstrate the theoretical precepts of self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2002); advocating for the provision of external supports to students with learning and attention differences as they developed intrinsic motivation. Coaching practices intentionally incorporated self-determination skill development through training, modeling, and accountability through application. Shared-advocacy practices among academic support providers presented a stratified model for extended support, facilitating development initially through role-play and other examples, and ultimately through the initiative of students as they developed the self-determination to support themselves.

Positive psychology (Seligman, 2002) also contributed to the theoretical basis for this study, as it promotes the positive reinforcement delivered by academic support specialists investing in accountability and the engagement facilitated by faculty members who proactively responded when observing students in need. Partnerships between academic support providers and faculty proved crucial to the development and reinforcement of self-advocacy skills among the students served through the unique learning support programs described in this study. When students with learning and attention differences determined what motivated them to live and learn, they flourished and gave of themselves to invest in others, helping them achieve this same positive resolution.

Implications

Using a multiple-case study design, I examined the practices of academic support providers responding to the needs of students with learning and attention differences. Data collection tools designed to answer the research questions presented extensive insights supporting the theoretical bases for the study, confirming propositions through empirical evidence, and presenting strategies for practical application. A description of the implications follows, including how the implications listed affect various stakeholders.

Theoretical

Rather than outlining procedures for a student to practice advocacy, modeling these practices through shared-advocacy facilitates the development of self-determination skills that lead to self-advocacy. This mindset promotes priorities for meeting the student's immediate needs, then teaching the student how to identify and develop strategies to maximize use of accommodations and apply learning consistently across a variety of courses with a diverse group of instructors.

Some students may have mastered self-determination before postsecondary enrollment, but schools can expect deficits in this critical aspect of development from students with learning disabilities and attention differences who have focused on achieving academic success at the expense of other achievements. Research documented the executive function deficits of learners who are both gifted and diagnosed with learning and attention differences. If students have not developed these skills by the time they enter postsecondary education, this period presents an opportunity to learn more about themselves and how to employ strengths to cultivate growth in areas of weakness. Understanding learning and attention differences is a critical aspect of development for these learners. Coaching, mentorship, group support, and learning strategies courses are efficient conduits for teaching this population about the ways their brains work and how to succeed by tapping into their unique abilities while strengthening motivation and self-advocacy.

Quantitative measures reflecting the success of students who received extended support services were published at both the public institutions, documenting the successful retention of a particular sect of students with disabilities as a phase of research supported by grant funding. Extended support for students with learning and attention differences may not close the gap between their academic focus and that of their peers; however, accountability through coaching and other services has prevented students from losing ground. Consideration is merited for the provision of ongoing support while students work through self-determination development at their own pace since persistence is preferable to alternatives that do not lead to retention.

Empirical

Attending college should not be about trying to figure out the location of the ASC or trying not to be noticed when visiting it, proving eligibility for accommodations or fighting to be

able to use them. There is enough fight in trying to get projects organized and submitted on time the first year, persuading colleagues to work on your team to produce a class presentation the second year, and with those skills, moving into leadership in a campus organization thereafter.

Combining the facilities of all support services on campus into one centralized facility reduces the stigma associated with satellite offices known for working with students based on their differences. Offering these services in a facility frequented by all students, such as the library, further incorporates the need for learning support into the overarching need for support shared by all students.

While the names of institutional centers providing academic support varied among cases, the term 'academic support center' was assigned for generalizability. The actual names of these offices varied greatly across institutions and consideration should be given to office titles to reduce stigma. Under the umbrella of support may be resources such as learning support, counseling, coaching, and tutoring, none of which include a reference to disability support. Removing disability from an office's title does not compromise the ability of the unit to provide support, rather expands access for students. Institutions are adjusting the titles of their centers to reflect this positive psychology perspective and promote accessibility with titles such as *Accessibility Resource Center*.

Similarly, students with great ability find it challenging to have confidence in their potential with a disability label qualifying them for the very services that may facilitate academic and social development. This study purposefully addressed students with learning and attention differences rather than labeling them LD and ADHD. While these terms reference psychological and medical diagnoses, a resource for people living with these conditions needs to view their differences from a lens of possibility instead of disability. Multiple cases in this study

intentionally changed references to learning different in response to an observation that while students often want to be noticed for their uniqueness, they do not revel in a label that infers less able or not able.

Promoting awareness through campus events destigmatizes disability. On multiple campuses in this study, disability awareness events made available to students, leaders, and faculty, increased acceptance of learning and attention differences. With this reduced bias and increased understanding, campus administrators participated in committees supporting student advocacy and sponsored student-led organizations promoting awareness. Faculty members expressed greater interest in universal design and began incorporating effective tools into their instruction while offering flexibility through interactions with students. Students revitalized clubs promoting awareness and offering support and formed service organizations to promote self-determination and encourage persistence among those like them in the community.

Practical

With the development of self-advocacy, positive psychology theory teaches the natural next phase is looking for ways to help others. This change in perception already exists at multiple campuses in this study. The preparation students had early on has led them through the phase of identity to determination and equipped them to lead others and give back to their campus communities, or even beyond, serving others who are still developing.

Effective academic support providers intentionally seek visibility and accessibility through networking and department level presentations. This practice keeps them connected to faculty and continuously raises awareness, so faculty members already considering universal design are encouraged to keep investigating and incorporating it into their instruction plan. Training faculty and including them in awareness opportunities builds support for accessibility

applications in the classroom to be incorporated for the benefit of all students, reducing the need for extensive accommodations to be provided to the increasing number of student with learning and attention differences enrolling in postsecondary institutions.

Providing sufficient documents must be a mutual exchange between academic support providers and students self-identifying to qualify for accommodations. Some of the cases in this study provided copies of brochures available to students, reference cards provided to students receiving services, and newsletters published for either students or faculty. Each ASC posted available details regarding available support on their institutions' websites. Although several cases in this study offered extensive details and multiple links to services offered in partnership with the ASC, others used a singular webpage to list basic requirements for documentation, typical conditions meriting support, and legally mandated accommodations. Both potential applicants and current students discovering their needs for support benefit from the accessibility conveyed through an inviting web presence that encourages the pursuit of these services. Describing the benefits of academic support removes barriers to disclosure, so students secure help early and begin to apply the skills they develop sooner.

At the large public universities in this study, extended support was available only to students with learning and attention differences, based on grants securing funding to support particular initiatives for these students. In contrast, academic support providers in the private institutions represented had aligned their proposals for extended support with their institutions' missions and secured staff and resources based on a commitment to offer support to all students rather than singling out a limited population to benefit from the investment. To secure funding for extended support, do not single out students with learning and attention differences, or students qualifying for disability support according to government standards; offer the services to

all students on campus. The ASC team shares the institution's desire for all students to thrive in this learning environment, becoming equipped for completion of their degrees and confidently contributing to the welfare of society and the global community at large. Students might perceive that they need the accountability and learning strategies available through academic coaching. Making it available to all students makes it accessible to those with learning and attention differences who can benefit even if they do not know themselves well enough to see they have this need.

Students with learning and attention differences face greater challenges acquiring work experience vital to job placement. Teaching assistantships on campus strengthen students' employability either as research assistants in graduate programs or through internships. Purposefully designing work experience opportunities for these students can provide practical skill development that will increase their employability upon graduation.

The resounding takeaway from this investigation is an understanding that any academic support leader can provide the extended support described through collaboration with other leaders and a commitment to providing optimal support. Determined academic support specialists can develop innovative services that facilitate self-determination and self-advocacy skills that will equip students to persist in college, thrive academically, and succeed in the pursuit of educational goals and life.

Delimitations and Limitations

Diligent research to determine appropriate cases for participation in this study preceded agreements with any institutions. Delimitations purposefully defined the boundaries of this study, so focus could be given to institutions providing the richest insight regarding extended support offered to students with learning and attention differences. Initial criteria delineating

geographic locations, enrollment sizes, and an intentional effort to work with public institutions proved unsubstantial. After much investigation, a determination was made to identify cases from a broader geographic area, with a variety of enrollment sizes, from both public and private governance models. One distinguishing factor proved essential for identifying potential cases: verifiable extended support offered at no additional cost to students. The rationale for this delimitation was that if institutions of any size, from any geographic region in the nation, funded either publicly or privately could respond to the needs of students with learning and attention differences by providing extended support, this would support a theory that any institution could adopt this practice. Potential weaknesses of the study surfaced in the process of data collection, as participants had considerable contributions to make and adhered to limited time for interviews and focus groups out of consideration for their teaching and service obligations.

Delimitations

I selected the institutions for participation in this study after extensive research identifying a need for extended academic support to be offered to students with learning and attention differences. Though several institutions scattered across the United States developed programs serving this population to promote self-determination and teach executive function skills, the majority charge fees for these additional supports. These programs are embedded in both private and public institutions and provided valuable insight about programs that specifically serve this population. However, while other academically gifted students at these institutions received scholarships in exchange for pursuing degrees, those who utilized the extended support programs were charged thousands of dollars for this privilege. Identifying institutions that offered supplemental services at no additional cost to students proved a rigorous challenge, but the services provided proved comparable or even more extensive and embedded in

the cost of tuition. Outcomes of the study may have been different had the pay-for-service options been included, particularly because they are accountable to document demonstrated success meriting the additional expenses charged.

Often, descriptions of institutions in publications designed to inform students weighing college options were vague and inconclusive. Vetting through conferences with ASC directors at those institutions or by digging into their institutional websites yielded results that disqualified them from consideration in the examination. At the onset of this study, I identified and verified a few other institutions as providing supplemental services without cost, but with greater understanding of what to search for, a few more surfaced. Had time and budget permitted, collecting data from public and private institutions in all geographic regions of the United States could have strengthened the findings of this study.

I did not invite students on the campuses of cooperating institutions to participate because recent studies have documented the experiences of students with learning and attention differences extensively. After considering the merit of student perspectives, that input was deemed less pertinent to answering the research question than insight from other stakeholders. Had students been invited, their participation was expected to be low, and possibly insufficient to merit review. The choice to not include students does not infer that the study is richer without their contributions, rather that because researchers had published student perspectives in other studies, the untapped insight represented in this work may present alternative views while adding to the body of knowledge.

In addition to seeking the perspectives of academic support directors who had created unique supplemental support options in response to the needs of students, members of the ASC teams were gathered to offer insight collectively through focus groups. While ASC directors still

worked directly with a portion of the students and remained connected through the other ASC providers, those who work extensively to implement supplemental support initiatives created by those directors get greater face-to-face time with students. I extended an invitation for faculty to participate because they had overseen implementation of accommodations in their classrooms and could offer a third viewpoint to balance those of ASC staff and directors.

Limitations

Initial commitments to participate made on behalf of the institutions were granted by the directors of academic support at those institutions, though institutional approval still was secured. Subsequently, these directors served as points of contact for establishing data collection event dates, recommending support staff to participate in the focus groups, and referring potential faculty members to be invited for interviews. With this selection process, many members were able to contribute and give a full picture of each case's practices. However, because of the selection of the faculty members for invitation, it is possible that they did not effectively represent the perspectives of other faculty on their respective campuses.

While some academic support centers referenced well-written documents and well-designed web-pages, others had posted minimal information on the institution's website or offered few documents to communicate the accessibility of their staff and availability of resources. Some support centers attempted efforts to document student progress in association with the supports available, but with few exceptions, had not yielded significant insight. Surveys had been employed to assess students' perspectives on effectiveness and had revealed supports where greater investment would be merited and in those investing less emphasis. This practice had been incorporated into the systems at a few of the institutions and proven beneficial for developing and hiring support experts to manage caseloads and expand service capacity.

Recommendations for Future Research

In light of the findings presented in this multiple-case study, future research could include further investigation of any of the extended supports presented. Several faculty members discussed the employment of online quiz programs such as Quizlet © and the ways it has enhanced engagement for their students. A future study could explore cases where this technology has been implemented throughout a department or across the curriculum at a campus and how it impacted retention of instruction.

Summer programs are offered at some institutions, providing a bridge for students enrolling in the Fall term to aid in their transition to college. Students with learning and attention differences have had difficulties acclimating to postsecondary environments, and the opportunity to practice utilizing facilities and accessing instruction has made these changes more fluid. Some institutions offer generalizable summer programs, preparing students for the academic transition while teaching courses in learning strategies or self-determination skills. A future study could examine cases that have offered these programs so other institutions can assess feasibility for facilitating the transition to college this way.

Another transition strategy, generally implemented in the pay-for-support programs not included in this study, recommended cohort-style programs for entering freshmen. Through the layering of group accountability, individual coaching, and learning strategies courses, the incoming students with learning and attention differences work through their first year supporting one another and participating in activities that promote self-determination. A future longitudinal case study could investigate the outcomes of this intervention, marking beginning, middle, and end points for student progress through assessments.

Multiple institutions in this study subscribed to a lecture capture program or were assessing its application on their campuses. This technology reduces the need for students to record lectures individually since faculty can accomplish this for all students with ease and post recordings to the web at the end of each class period. Marketed as a tool, it also serves professors by providing access to previous lectures, including guest speakers, and to reference instruction for evaluation. A student missing a lecture can download the recording, while instructors who must miss a class period can post a previously recorded lecture rather than postponing instruction. While the potential benefits to both parties are extensive, and use of this technology has been incremental. A future descriptive case study could present the insights of instructors and students utilizing lecture capture, listing the ways and extent it has been useful from their perspectives, proposing additional employment of this technology in ways discovered through access.

Though universal design has been part of the conversation around instruction for decades, instructors continue to discover methods for application. Postsecondary application for this approach would be particularly beneficial on campuses where the majority of faculty employ it for all instruction. An investigation of the usage could present new options for application, presenting those that have proven effective by exploring insights from students, faculty, and academic support providers who have promoted its implementation.

The educational component of learning and attention differences merits greater consideration for incorporation into group support, coaching, and learning support courses. Students often do not understand their diagnoses and consequently have weak positions advocating for their accommodations. Similarly, self-determination training can be incorporated into course curriculum to aid students in developing these skills through academic application.

Equipping students with psychoeducational training has previously been offered experimentally, measuring outcomes against initial knowledge about learning and attention differences. A phenomenological study could produce interview responses from students about the effects of learning about themselves or applying self-determination skills and how it has aided in their development of self-advocacy.

Extended support reflecting shared advocacy takes on many forms to meet the needs of individual learners. An experimental case study could examine the creation of a tool to assess the value of extended support in the development of self-determination and any potential association with retention, graduation rates, post-graduation employment, or acceptance into graduate-level programs. Students with learning and attention differences who are college-bound juniors in high school should see published results. Dissemination could occur through guidance counselors, educational consultants, and parents so these students could make decisions about the levels of support to anticipate and incorporate plans to visit campuses offering these supports so they can maximize their potential for persistence through college.

Summary

Postsecondary academic support providers are uniquely positioned to offer shared-advocacy support to students with learning and attention differences. While legal obligations dictate the standard for providing support in many institutions, this study examined the practices of leaders who saw the need for optimal support extending beyond mandated accommodations. For each of the cases represented, ASC directors positioned themselves to connect students they served with equitable access to institutional supports. This connection occurred through the accountability of individualized mentorship or coaching, technologies that improved independence, and group opportunities that promoted inclusivity. Faculty members participated

in training that reduced stigma while increasing awareness, then implemented inclusive techniques to reach students who learned differently, making instruction accessible to all learners. Academic support specialists developed creative strategies to respond to students' individual needs, modeling behaviors that led to the development of academic independence and success.

For each of the cases in this study, collaborative efforts facilitated the development of students' self-advocacy by offering stratified accountability with greater involvement initially, tapering off as students demonstrated intrinsic motivation reflective of self-determination. Institutions of varying sizes, utilizing public or private funding, representing diverse geographic regions shared their responses to the needs of academically gifted students who learn differently. While each institution's academic support team approached this challenge uniquely, they shared the intention to serve students with learning and attention differences by utilizing a system of supports that promoted the positive self-perception and determination leading to persistence in college and in life.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: IRB Approval Letter

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY.
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

August 14, 2017

Julie McNair
IRB Approval 2949.081417: Shared Advocacy: A Multiple-Case Examination of Practices
Supporting Postsecondary Students with Learning and Attention Differences

Dear Julie McNair,

We are pleased to inform you that your study has been approved by the Liberty University IRB. This approval is extended to you for one year from the date provided above with your protocol number. If data collection proceeds past one year, or if you make changes in the methodology as it pertains to human subjects, you must submit an appropriate update form to the IRB. The forms for these cases were attached to your approval email.

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB, and we wish you well with your research project.

Sincerely,

Administrative Chair of Institutional Research
The Graduate School

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Appendix B: Recruitment Letter

September 1st, 2017

[Recipient]
[Title]
[Company]
[Address 1]
[Address 2]
[Address 3]

Dear [Recipient]:

As a graduate student in the School of Education at Liberty University, I am conducting research to fulfill the requirements for a doctoral degree in Educational Leadership. The purpose of my research is to examine the responses of academic support providers in postsecondary institutions, promoting intrinsic motivation through accommodative intervention strategies for students with learning disabilities and/or ADHD. I am writing to invite you to participate in this study based on your role facilitating the implementation of these accommodations.

Your time commitment for participation will be approximately 60-75 minutes, allowing you to complete an individual interview or focus group meeting. Your participation will be completely confidential, and no personal, identifying information will be required outside of your signature on a consent document.

To participate, please reply to the researcher, Julie McNair, at jmcnair1@liberty.edu, granting permission to set up an interview appointment. The attached consent document contains additional information about my research. Please sign the consent document and return it to me at the time of the interview and/or focus group

Sincerely,

Julie McNair
Researcher

Appendix C: Informed Consent

CONSENT FORM
Shared advocacy: A multiple-case examination of practices supporting
postsecondary students with learning and attention differences
Julie McNair
Liberty University
School of Education

You are invited to participate in a research study of practices of postsecondary academic support providers. You were selected as a possible participant because of your role as a director or support staff member in a postsecondary support office, or as a faculty member working with your institution's academic support office to provide accommodations to students with learning disabilities. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Julie McNair, a doctoral candidate in the School of Education at Liberty University, is conducting this study.

Background Information: The purpose of this study is to examine how academic support providers offer shared-advocacy at postsecondary institutions, promoting intrinsic motivation through accommodative intervention strategies for students with learning disabilities and/or ADHD.

Procedures: If you agree to be in this study, I would ask you to do one the following things. Please highlight your role and note which data collection tool you are agreeing to participate in by signing this form:
1. As a director of academic support services, participate in an audio-recorded interview, approximately 60-75 minutes in length.
2. As a faculty member, participate in an audio-recorded interview, approximately 30-45 minutes in length.
3. As a member of the academic support services staff, participate in an audio-recorded focus group, approximately 45-60 minutes in length.

Risks and Benefits of being in the Study: The risks to you as a participant are no more than you would encounter in everyday life. Participation in this study will not affect your eligibility for benefits or any employment opportunities. Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study. Benefits to society from this study may include providing insight to decision makers as they plan for future students transitioning to a postsecondary institution.

Compensation: Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

Confidentiality: The records of this study will be kept private. Research data and recordings will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records. I will conduct the interviews in a location where others will not easily overhear the discussions. Data will be stored

securely online, in a password protected database and any data sent via email for member checking will be secured through encryption. Federal regulations require that data be retained for three years upon completion of the study, at which time recordings will be erased. Findings will be shared through publication of this dissertation and other professional journal entries or through conference presentations, but identities of participants will be protected in each case so that only the outcomes of research and not individual contributions are highlighted. Though the researcher will take every precaution to protect participants' identities, participants of a focus group cannot be assured that other members of such a group will not share what is discussed with persons outside of the group.

Voluntary Nature of the Study: Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

How to Withdraw from the Study: If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you, **apart from focus group data**, will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study. **Focus group data will not be destroyed, but your contributions to the focus group will not be included in the study if you choose to withdraw.**

Contacts and Questions: The researcher conducting this study is Julie McNair. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact her at (jmcnair1@liberty.edu. You may also contact the researcher's faculty advisor, Dr. Gail Collins at gcollins2@liberty.edu.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 1887, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

Please notify the researcher if you would like a copy of this information for your records.

Statement of Consent: I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

☐ The researcher has my permission to audio-record me as part of my participation in this study.

_____

Signature of   Participant   Date

_____

Signature of   Investigator   Date

Appendix D: Director of Support Services Interview Questions

Academic Support Director Interview Questions

1. How do you promote awareness of your center's services to incoming students?

2. What facilitation techniques effectively prompt students to speak to their professors?

3. What accommodations or support services have you consistently offered?

4. As students enroll beyond their first term, how does their involvement in support activities that your office provides vary?

5. Please describe the accommodations and services prescribed by ADA that are utilized most commonly in your institution.

6. How do you observe students registered for Academic Support Services to discern whether supports are effective?

7. How do you determine which services may be offered to address non-academic or social deficits?

8. Self-determination theory promotes intrinsic motivation through the development of self-awareness, self-regulation, self-efficacy, and self-advocacy.

9. What strategies have you employed to facilitate the development of self-determination among students with learning disabilities and/or ADHD?

10. What supports have you been able to provide even though they were not mandated by legislation?

11. What types of coaching or mentoring opportunities have you provided through your office?

12. Please describe the level of rapport experienced between the Academic Support Services office and other departments on campus.

13. What statistics have you collected regarding retention and graduation for students with disabilities?

14. How do you collect feedback from students regarding effectiveness of supports?

15. What vehicles do you make available for students, faculty, or administrators to recommend supplemental supports in response to their own observations?

Appendix E: Faculty Interview Questions

Faculty Member Interview Questions

1. Based on training you received from administrators in Academic Support Services, what have you found beneficial in preparing you to accommodate students with learning and attention differences in your classes?

2. In what capacities would you benefit from additional training?

3. How many students do you receive support requirement notices for each term?

4. At what point in the term do you receive these accommodation notices?

5. What are the students' responsibilities for communicating with you about notices?

6. In what ways have you been required to offer support to students?

7. If students do not communicate a need for support with you, but you observe a need, what protocols do you follow to help them?

8. Beyond what is required, what supports have you extended to students with learning and attention differences enrolled in your classes?

9. If you have mentored any students with learning and attention differences either formally or informally, in what ways do you think that benefited the students?

10. How would you describe the responses of students to your efforts to provide support?

11. How has Academic Support Services facilitated your efforts to provide optimal support for students with learning and attention differences?

12. Please tell me about any particular cases when you observed the system for providing Academic Support working especially well.

Appendix F: Focus Group Questions

Academic Support Services Team Focus Group Questions

1. In what activities do students with learning disabilities and/or ADHD participate through the academic support office?

2. What observations have you made of students with learning disabilities and/or ADHD who desired to participate fully in their classes but experienced limitations in the form of executive function and self-determination challenges?

3. What efforts has the Academic Support Services office initiated in response to these observations and reports of students describing their non-academic challenges to full participation?

4. What circumstances have led you to consider coaching intervention for students with learning disabilities and/or ADHD in their determination to be fully included?

5. How have you provided coaching to students with learning disabilities and/or ADHD regarding their interactions with faculty members or to promote self-advocacy?

6. What reports have you received describing responses of faculty members or administrators to students receiving supports?

7. How has the training of faculty and administrators developed while you have been on staff in the Academic Support Services office?

8. Please describe any requests by students or support providers for other supplementary services that have been implemented.

9. What plans are still under development in response to students' needs?

Appendix G: Audit Trail

DATE	EVENT
6/22	Secured permission letter from 1st participating site
7/11	Obtained IRB approval letter from 2nd site
7/13	Secured permission letter from 2nd participating site
7/24	Contacted 6th site to serve as Pilot Study
8/4	Obtained IRB approval letter from 1st site
8/8	Secured permission letter from 3rd participating site
8/8	Secured permission letter from 5th participating site
8/9	Secured permission letter from 4th participating site
8/22	Obtained IRB approval letter from 4th site
8/22	Secured permission letter from site for Pilot Study
8/22	Obtained IRB approval letter for Pilot Study
8/23	Obtained IRB approval letter from 3rd site
8/23	Scheduled appointment date with Provost for Pilot Study on Tuesday, 8/29
8/23	Confirmed appointment with Provost for Pilot Study
8/24	Created list of potential participants for Pilot Study
8/24	Forwarded questions to Director at Pilot Study site
8/24	Forwarded questions to Faculty members for Pilot Study
8/24	Forwarded questions to all focus group participants for Pilot Study
8/25	Confirmed appointment with Faculty member A for Pilot Study
8/25	Confirmed appointment with Faculty member B for Pilot Study
8/25	Coordinated meal order/payment for Lunch meeting with focus group
8/28	Confirmed appointment with 4 members of focus group for Pilot Study
8/29	Received consent from Director for Pilot Study
8/29	Received consent from Faculty member A for Pilot Study
8/29	Received consent from Faculty member B for Pilot Study
8/29	Received consent from last of 4 focus group participants for Pilot Study
9/1	Obtained IRB approval letter from 5th site
9/5	Created list of 6 potential participants at 1st site
9/7	Scheduled appointment date with Director at 2nd site on Tuesday, 10/3
9/7	Scheduled appointment date with Director at 5th site on Thursday, 11/2
9/8	Scheduled appointment date with Director at 1st site on Thursday, 9/21
9/8	Scheduled appointment date with Director at 4th site on Wednesday, 10/18
9/10	Invited potential participants at 1st site
9/10	Confirmed appointment for Director at 1st site
9/11	Confirmed appointment with Faculty member A at 1st site
9/11	Confirmed appointment with Faculty member B at 1st site
9/13	Confirmed appointment with last of 2 members of focus group at 1st site
9/13	Forwarded questions to Faculty members at 1st site
9/13	Received consent from last of 2 focus group participants at 1st site

9/13	Forwarded questions to Director at 4th site
9/14	Created list of 7 potential participants at 5th site
9/14	Confirmed appointment with Faculty member C at 1st site
9/14	Forwarded questions to Director at 1st site
9/14	Forwarded questions to focus group participants at 1st site
9/18	Scheduled appointment date with Director at 3rd site on Wednesday, 10/4
9/18	Confirmed appointment for Director at 3rd site
9/19	Created list of 3 potential focus group participants at 2nd site
9/19	Confirmed appointment for Director at 2nd site
9/19	Confirmed appointment with last of 2 members of focus group at 2nd site
9/20	Invited potential focus group participants at 2nd site
9/20	Received consent from 2 focus group participants at 2nd site
9/21	Created list of 11 potential participants at 3rd site
9/21	Invited potential participants at 5th site
9/21	Received consent from Director at 1st site
9/21	Received consent from Faculty member A at 1st site
9/21	Received consent from Faculty member B at 1st site
9/21	Received consent from Faculty member C at 1st site
9/22	Created list of 3 potential interview participants at 2nd site
9/22	Invited potential interview participants at 2nd site
9/24	Invited potential interview participants at 3rd site
9/24	Received consent from Director at 3rd site
9/25	Created list of 4 potential interview participants at 4th site
9/25	Reinvited potential interview participants at 2nd site
9/25	Reinvited potential focus group participants at 2nd site
9/25	Invited potential interview participants at 4th site
9/25	Received consent from Faculty member B at 2nd site
9/25	Confirmed appointment with Faculty member A at 3rd site
9/25	Received consent from Faculty member A at 3rd site
9/25	Confirmed appointment with Faculty member B at 4th site
9/25	Confirmed appointment with Faculty member C at 4th site
9/25	Received consent from Faculty member A at 4th site
9/25	Confirmed appointment for Director at 5th site
9/25	Received consent from Faculty member A at 5th site
9/26	Invited potential focus group participants at 3rd site
9/26	Confirmed appointment with Faculty member A at 2nd site
9/26	Confirmed appointment with Faculty member B at 2nd site
9/26	Forwarded questions to Faculty members at 2nd site
9/26	Forwarded questions to focus group participants at 2nd site
9/27	Received consent from Director at 2nd site
9/27	Forwarded questions to Director at 2nd site
9/28	Received consent from Faculty member D at 3rd site
9/29	Confirmed appointment with Faculty member C at 3rd site

9/29	Received consent from Faculty member B at 3rd site
9/29	Received consent from Faculty member C at 3rd site
9/29	Received consent from Faculty member D at 5th site
10/1	Confirmed appointment with Faculty member D at 3rd site
10/1	Forwarded questions to Faculty members at 3rd site
10/2	Forwarded questions to Director at 3rd site
10/2	Forwarded questions to focus group participants at 3rd site
10/3	Received consent from Faculty member A at 2nd site
10/3	Confirmed appointment with Faculty member B at 3rd site
10/3	Confirmed appointment with last 7 members of focus group at 3rd site
10/3	Received consent from last of 5 focus group participants at 3rd site
10/6	Confirmed appointment with last of 2 members of focus group at 5th site
10/6	Received consent from last of 2 focus group participants at 5th site
10/9	Received consent from Faculty member C at 4th site
10/9	Forwarded questions to Faculty members at 4th site
10/10	Created list of 5 potential interview participants at 4th site
10/11	Invited potential focus group participants at 4th site
10/11	Forwarded questions to focus group participants at 4th site
10/12	Confirmed appointment for Director at 4th site
10/13	Received consent from Faculty member B at 5th site
10/16	Confirmed appointment with Faculty member A at 4th site
10/16	Received consent from last of 5 focus group participants at 4th site
10/17	Received consent from Faculty member B at 4th site
10/18	Confirmed appointment with last of 5 members of focus group at 4th site
10/18	Received consent from Director at 4th site
10/21	Confirmed appointment with Faculty member C at 5th site
10/22	Forwarded questions to Faculty members at 5th site
10/23	Received consent from Faculty member C at 5th site
10/24	Confirmed appointment with Faculty member A at 5th site
10/24	Confirmed appointment with Faculty member B at 5th site
10/24	Confirmed appointment with Faculty member D at 5th site
10/24	Received consent from Director at 5th site
11/1	Forwarded questions to Director at 5th site
11/1	Forwarded questions to focus group participants at 5th site
1/25	Completed transcription including 5 sites and Pilot Study
1/30	Prepared transcripts for member checking
2/1	Distributed transcripts to participants for member checking
2/7	Received 75% of responses validating transcripts
2/8	Redistributed transcripts to nonresponsive participants
2/9	Began coding for questions
2/14	Received final member check responses validating transcripts
2/15	Began coding for themes
2/21	Exported excerpts of transcripts from Dedoose for incorporation into results

Appendix H: Propositions

Propositions

While I anticipate that propositions will emerge through data analysis as data intersect, I have

listed some possible ideas in advance. Further interaction throughout the study will allow for

these intersections to be diagrammed, demonstrating their interrelationships.

- Few institutions track the success of students with disabilities and even fewer look beyond retention to rates for a 6-year period or break down success rates among those with disabilities to track those with learning disabilities and/or ADHD

- Identifying participating institutions will be challenging

- Students with learning and attention differences benefit from mentorship and coaching for self-determination more than all other interventions

- Regardless of the size of the institution, responses of academic support providers will be the critical factor for students in developing self-determination, exercising self-advocacy, and recognizing their own strengths, ultimately becoming open to giving of themselves to help others

- Faculty members who express confidence in working to support students with learning and attention differences will have participated in training sessions offered by academic support providers

- Academic support providers and support staff will contribute positively to a focus group with the opportunity to share observations they have made and responses they have offered, as well as the successes students have reported

- Academic support providers will be interested in learning the practices of support providers in other institutions and the reasons these were put into practice, particularly at schools similar to the ones where they serve

- Academic support providers may want to steer the study to include certain faculty members who are perceived as observant of policies and sensitive to the needs of students with learning and attention differences

Appendix I: Enumeration Table

Open Codes	Enumeration of open code appearance across data sets	Themes
1a - ASC networked with other departments	38	Connectivity
1b - ASC team accessible to faculty	33	
1c - ASC training provided to faculty	42	
1d - Universal design encouraged	18	
2a - Combination centers reducing stigma	16	Accessibility
2b - Well-located centers provide convenience	14	
2c – Entering freshmen visit ASC	14	
3a – Students receive individualized plans	22	Eligibility
3b - Flexibility regarding types of accommodations	17	
3c - Student responsibilities for notification	37	
4a - Faculty reach out to students	16	Responsivity
4b - Faculty initiate alerts	25	
4c - Faculty encourage students to contact ASC	29	
4e - Faculty sensitive to students	46	
4f - Creative responses to students' needs	32	
4g - Universal design implemented	17	
5a - Advocacy promoted through modeling	18	Shared Advocacy
5b - Support extended from available services	79	
5e - Accountability through weekly meetings	31	
5h - Group options for reinforcement	27	
5f - Focus on self-determination development	28	

Appendix J: Reflexive Journal

DATE	THOUGHTS
1/2017	Learned that sites could have already been secured and began contacting colleges with initial calls to institutional administration, follow up calls through gatekeepers and ultimately, was directed to potential participants
2/2017	Contacted department directors within institutions and learned that institutions I had intended to work with could not provide important contributions to this study and that they were not supportive of my investigation.
3/2017	Researched other approaches for identifying sites as potential participants
4/2017	Contacted institutions based on a new profile, but still without success
5/2017	Researched further approaches for identifying sites
6/2017	Contacted researchers who had published articles related to the topic and received encouragement and referrals for possible contacts
6/2017	Researched institutional websites to locate information regarding the accessibility of academic support centers, types of disability awareness, documentation required for accommodations, openness
6/2017	Contacted numerous institutions; some agreed to discuss/consider study
6/2017	Learned of new initiative to provide funding for research through the Center for Research and Scholarship
6/2017	Followed up with previously contacted directors of academic support centers; learned that many are less accessible over the summer
6/2017	Contacted LU's Center for Research & Scholarship; learned basic details of new PRI award and committed to follow up when it becomes available
7/2017	Acquired application for PRI funding; completed my portion and forwarded to chair for evaluation and escalation to the next level.
7/2017	Secured permission from 2 of the needed 3 sites for multiple case study; received approval from committee chair to submit provisional proposal
7/2017	Submitted proposal to chair; gained insight for correction & presentation
7/2017	Revised proposal for committee applying recommended changes; received approval to submit provisional IRB application pending 1 additional site's commitment to participate
7/2017	Scheduled proposal defense; committee was very accommodating with the schedule since each were preparing for their Fall term responsibilities and I was going to be travelling just prior to Fall term
7/2017	Completed practice defense; noted feedback in preparation for defense
7/2017	Defended proposal for committee; members were very supportive and offered corrections and feedback for me to apply prior to IRB submission
7/2017	Received proposal approval; made corrections in preparation for IRB submission
7/2017	Secured application for PRI funding; completing the application will require multiple phases and approvals at escalating levels; almost as complicated as the IRB application itself

8/2017	Submitted application to IRB: awaiting approval from 2 additional sites and commitment form from 3rd site
8/2017	Received feedback from IRB: I observed that this process was much smoother and faster than I had anticipated
8/2017	Learned that IRB approval at participant sites must be considered even though students are not involved
8/2017	Submitted Change of Protocol to include 2 additional institutions and including commitment letters from these plus the 3rd site of 5
8/2017	Received approval from IRB to include a total of 5 institutions in 4 different regions of the US; again, the turnaround time provided by IRB was astonishingly quick
8/2017	Received completed Application for PRI funding with needed approvals; submitted to Center for Research & Scholarship for consideration
8/2017	Approached Beacon College about serving as site for Pilot Study; redirected from academic support office to provost's office where both commitment to participate and IRB approval were provided within hours.
8/2017	Updated Committee on progress of appointments with sites
8/2017	Arranged travel for Pilot Study trip with exceptionally receptive site
8/2017	Arranged travel for 1st site visit including airfare, car rental, hotel stays; compared options for driving to remote college town location from 1 of 4 surrounding airports and learned of on-campus hotel ideal for this stay; discerned that site locale inconvenient to an airport will require 2 overnight stays rather than my preference for 1 overnight.
8/2017	Completed Pilot Study in a single 12-hour day, determining that this can be done at each location provided I arrive the day before. Provided lunch to participants in focus group in order to minimize their time away from serving students, facilitate in-person data collection, and maximize participation; learned that ordering lunch for a group in an unfamiliar place has unforeseeable complications and determined not to repeat lunch option.
9/2017	Determined that all institutions share similar policies regarding IRB approval where staff/faculty are concerned: that no such members can be involved in oversight of the project, IRB approval from LU must be provided, and participant institutional IRB approval is not necessary provided these statements are true. Small/medium institutions want their IRB to be consulted, but larger institutions just want the website to be consulted; letters from participant institutional IRB stating that IRB approval is not required are considered an inconvenience by ALL institutions.
9/2017	
9/2017	Researched 1st site, planned driving routes, reviewed publications
9/2017	Arranged travel for 2nd/3rd site visits including airfare, car rental, hotel stays; noted mass transit in metropolitan area would not accommodate efficient movement to/from airport and between sites.
9/2017	Arranged travel for 4th site visit including airfare, car rental, hotel stays; learned that I would be in town during annual 'furniture week' at this location, increasing the estimated cost of my trip by 100% and forcing me to stay out of town.

9/2017	Completed travel for 1st site visit; excellent first experience, particularly because of the aid offered by director in arranging the schedule, recommending the on-campus hotel, and allowing his office to be used for multiple data collection events.
9/2017	Recorded field notes regarding observations and interactions
9/2017	Researched website again to locate references provided through interactions with participants
9/2017	Began transcription; noted that each initial transcription can take 16+ hours.
9/2017	Encouraged fellow doc students through collaborative conversation
10/2017	Received approval for funding from PRI; it took 9 weeks to receive PRI funding sponsorship as compared with 1 week for LU's IRB approval
10/2017	Updated Committee regarding PRI funding approval
10/2017	Researched websites for institutions and ASC webpages; read pertinent articles published by ASC directors, and about these ASC operations
10/2017	Arranged travel for 5th site visit including airfare, car rental, hotel stays; in order to minimize air time, one-way tickets booked on separate airlines at inconvenient times of day.
10/2017	Completed travel for 2nd/3rd site visits; the large metropolitan city presented many challenges related to traffic, driving distance, cost of accommodations, tolls, and parking in the city. Still, both sites provided rich data, rewarding the extra effort required. Faculty and staff were extraordinarily committed to providing ongoing support utilizing dynamic approaches.
10/2017	Completed travel for 4th site visit; had it not been 'furniture week' this would have been the easiest site visit to date. While staff were committed to serving students with innovative strategies, graduate students employed to serve those with learning differences perceived their work as a temporary job.
10/2017	Researched institutional website and ASC webpage for final site in study; reviewed recent publications by ASC personnel and about ASC operations
11/2017	Completed travel for 5th site visit; incredible data collection experience bookended by completely unreasonable traffic and accommodations
11/2017	Learned that new Fall 2017 IRB protocol substantially delayed many candidates from receiving approval and beginning data collection
11/2017	Updated fellow doc students through collaborative conversation; learned that my progress has encouraged others
11/2017	Updated committee member who wrote to inquire regarding my progress; learned that this is rare and was reinforced for having such a good committee
12/2017	Completed transcription phase I: 41 transcripts including pilot study and took a break to regroup and refocus in preparation for analysis
1/2018	Began transcription phase II: reformatting to send for member checking after realizing that the work I had done included many errors
1/2018	Researched institutional websites to collect data regarding credentials of participants, demographics about student population, graduation rates, mission and vision statements, historical origins, on-campus housing, clubs and organizations, percentage of faculty with terminal degrees, gender ratios, acceptance rates, and athletic divisions

2/2018	Booked RT ticket for myself and guest to attend SOE ceremony
2/2018	Created pseudonyms for institutions based on overarching messages communicated through my experiences visiting campuses to preserve confidentiality of both the participants and their employers
2/2018	Assigned codes to transcripts to preserve anonymity when distributing; created password protected pdf files for distribution
2/2018	Distributed all interview transcripts for member checking, followed through with those who did not response after receiving the bulk in return; discovered that several members received corrupted files and needed to recreate pdfs and redistribute them, but used the same passwords to reduce confusion
2/2018	Replied to each response from participants submitting validation of transcript with a thank you note, complimenting that person on a positive aspect of the data collection experience that stood out
2/2018	Created pseudonyms for participants based on people they reminded of who I respect for various reasons, so I could associate them without referencing them by their true names
2/2018	Encouraged fellow doc students through collaborative conversation; learned my progress is on track and received helpful tools for completing analysis
2/2018	Identified codes common to multiple documents and began the process of identifying them all and creating table to show frequencies
2/2018	Received encouragement from my chair and learned more about coding process from in depth review of dissertation handbook, sample sections, and recently published multiple-case studies from other education doc students
2/2018	Began creating pictures of institutions through descriptions based on data collected, personal observations and in-person experiences, field notes, documents, websites, and casual conversations for chapter 5
2/2018	Reviewed propositions to consider aspects of these to include in a priori codes; wrote responses to propositions to use in chapter 5
2/2018	Coded transcripts for responses applicable to research questions; noted how off track both the interviewer and participant got many times and how difficult that made it to identify specific responses; finding general responses to research questions was embedded in discussion and went well
2/2018	Initially as I coded, I looked for all responses regarding a code. I determined that I would not need to include every quote associated with a code in order to reach saturation and tried to identify 2-3 cases from which to draw for each code. As I tried to limit the quotes, I could not compromise by reducing rich contributions from the various cases and I resolved to include as many quotes as possible giving a voice to convey the experiences of these participants
3/2018	Completed chapter four. I perceived that it would be a long section of this manuscript, but did not foresee that it would be the same size as all the other chapters combined. I wanted to do my best, so I included as much of the voices of participants as possible.
4/2018	Completed chapter five and had to completely rewrite most of it. Submitted by deadline in order to be reviewed by committee prior to defense.